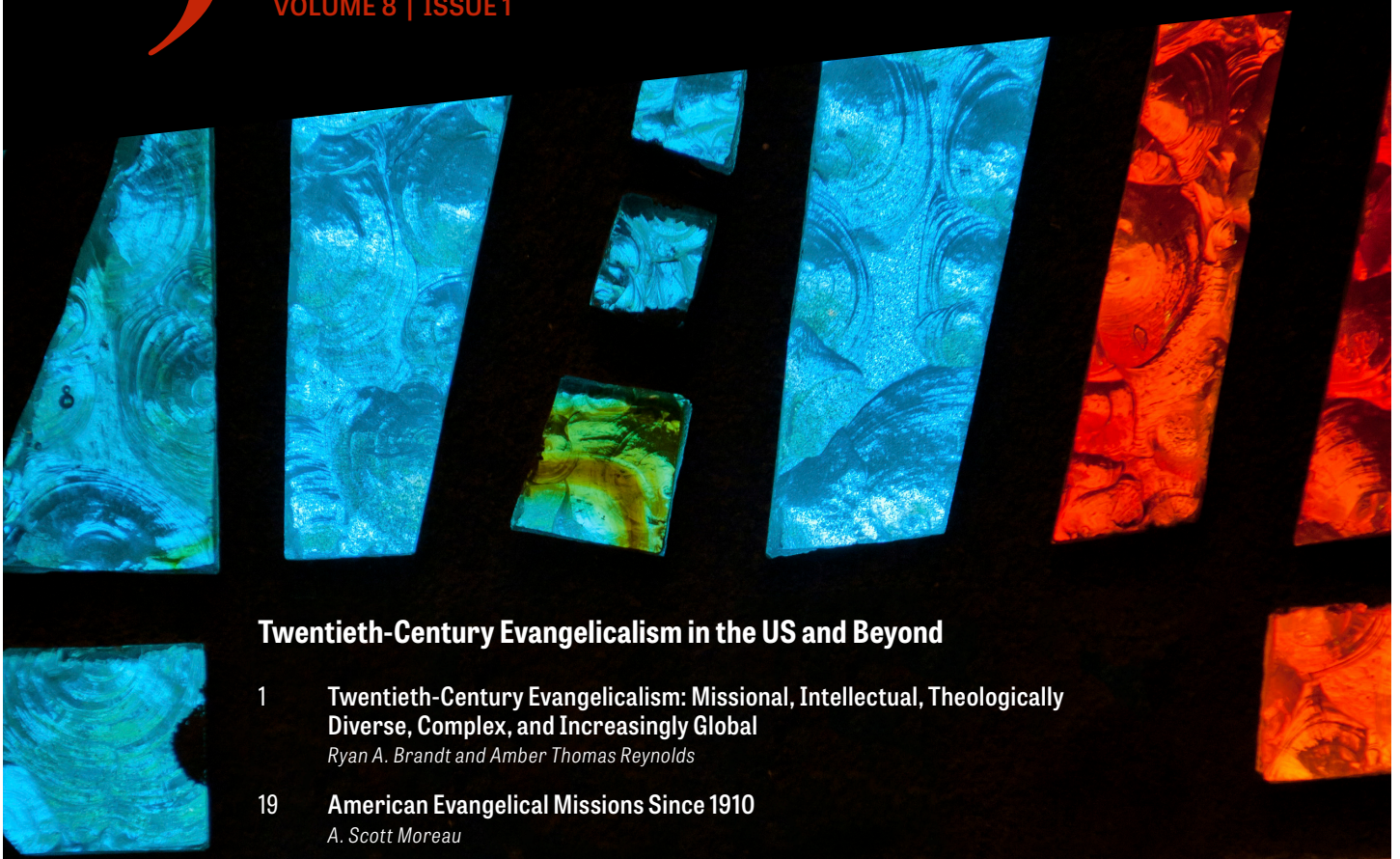
JBTS
Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies
VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 1



Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism in the US and Beyond

Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies

JBTS is published online at www.jbtsonline.org and in print through
Pickwick Publications, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers
199 West 8th Avenue, Suite 3, Eugene, OR 97401, USA

Print ISSN 2572-2832
Online ISSN 2572-2859

The *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies (JBTS)* is a peer reviewed academic journal focused on the fields of Bible and Theology from an inter-denominational point of view. The journal is comprised of an editorial board of scholars that represent several academic institutions throughout the world. *JBTS* is concerned with presenting high level original scholarship in an approachable way.

Academic journals are often written by scholars for other scholars. They are technical in nature, assuming a robust knowledge of the field. There are fewer journals that seek to introduce biblical and theological scholarship that is also accessible to students. *JBTS* seeks to provide high-level scholarship and research to both scholars and students, which results in original scholarship that is readable and accessible.

As an inter-denominational journal, *JBTS* is broadly evangelical. We accept contributions in all theological disciplines from any evangelical perspective. In particular, we encourage articles and book reviews within the fields of Old Testament, New Testament, Biblical Theology, Church History, Systematic Theology, Practical Theology, Philosophical Theology, Philosophy, and Ethics. Please see the guidelines for submission at jbtsonline.org.

Since *JBTS* is a broadly evangelical journal there will often be a variety of views that are represented that align with the evangelical Christian faith within each journal issue. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily the views of the editors or the institutions that they represent.

23COT0073

Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies

JBTS 8.1

Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies

JBTS 8.1 Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism in the US and Beyond

JBTS 8.1 (2023): 1 – 18

Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: Missional, Intellectual, Theologically Diverse, Complex, and Increasingly Global

Ryan A. Brandt and Amber Thomas Reynolds

Ryan A. Brandt is Professor of Christian History and Theology at Grand Canyon University; Amber Thomas Reynolds is Adjunct Assistant Professor of History at Wheaton College (IL)

Introduction

Twentieth-century evangelicalism: what a daunting subject to choose! The genesis of this special issue of JBTS was in February 2020. In the three plus years since then, the world changed. And although evangelical identity was already heavily contested prior to 2020, more than ever, whether it is possible to analyze modern "evangelicalism" as an essentially religious rather than a political or cultural movement is in question, especially among American academics and journalists. Important studies of the intersections between evangelicalism and race, politics, and gender have certainly revealed historical blind spots.[1] Yet, for all of the recent debate, it is important to remember that defining "evangelical" and "evangelicalism"—even whether or not to capitalize the term—has been debated for at least a century. The profusion of writing on evangelicalism, furthermore, frustrates any attempt to contribute something new to the discussion.[2] Thus, the editors have approached the topic with modest aims, recognizing our particular perspectives: one editor, trained in theology at a denominational seminary in the United States, teaches theology students at an evangelical university; the other, trained in cultural history of Christianity at a British university, teaches history courses in an evangelical liberal-arts setting. Although our vantage points may seem to be relatively similar, it became clear during the

1. A few recent examples include Anthea Butler, *White Evangelical Racism: The Politics of Morality in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021); Aaron Griffith, *God's Law and Order: the Politics of Punishment in Evangelical America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020); John Corrigan, Melani McAlister, and Axel R. Schäfer, eds., *Global Faith, Worldly Power: Evangelical Internationalism and U.S. Empire* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2022); and Kristen Kobes Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* (New York: Liveright, 2020).

2. Start with Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George M. Marsden, eds., *Evangelicals: Who They Have Been, Are Now, and Could Be* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019), and Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones, eds., *The Routledge Research Companion to the History of Evangelicalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019).

editorial planning stages that we were coming from two very different academic worlds. Like JBTS in general, we write with the evangelical undergraduate student in mind, who probably has heard much about evangelicals of late but may not, in fact, have a clue who they are.

In that light, this special issue of JBTS will certainly not seek to propose a brand-new definition of evangelicalism, or to throw its total weight behind one existing formulation. As a journal geared toward students, not just scholars, our aim is to, first, clarify some of the major questions involved in defining twentieth-century evangelicalism. Secondly, we explore several religious rather than social or political topics, some of which are well-recognized in the literature and others of which have arguably been overlooked in recent discussions—especially at the popular level—of the twentieth- and early twenty-first century movements. As part of this latter goal, we feature scholar-practitioners from a field that is sometimes under-represented in discussions of evangelical identity: missiology.

This present introductory article seeks to offer some background and cohesion for this special issue's articles. In the first part, we broadly survey definitions of evangelicalism, focusing on six successive historical developments in the twentieth century and how these developments illuminate and complicate such definition. In the second part, we introduce the five articles in this special issue as a way of highlighting some of these key debates today.

Defining Evangelicalism

Defining evangelicalism is notoriously challenging. To situate our own students, the editors would give the following, brief synopsis: The origins of evangelicalism can be traced back to at least the eighteenth century, uniting various kinds of Christians that identified the gospel at the center of their identity and purpose. Because such a description is admittedly inept and vague—indeed, what Christian is not focused upon the good news of Jesus Christ?—we have found it practically helpful to acknowledge precedents in the Protestant Reformation, namely, emphasis on biblical authority and the sufficiency of individual faith in Christ's person and work for salvation. Such teachings about the gospel were later rekindled and interiorized by groups such as the European Pietists (who wanted to recover the heart-changing spirituality of the Reformation for their current-day Lutherans) and English Puritans (who wanted the Church of England to further reform their teachings). These groups influenced early English and American evangelicals like John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards, who each in their own way contributed to the explosion of religious enthusiasm, especially in the United States, and are often regarded as central to the origination of evangelicalism for the current day.

Such a survey is indeed simplistic, but it highlights the difficulty of defining the evangelical identity, especially considering the sizeable scholarly literature on the

subject. Although it is not possible to review every formulation of evangelicalism, most in recent decades have been influenced by David Bebbington's definition or character sketch in his landmark 1989 study, *Evangelicalism and Modern Britain: A History from 1730 to the 1980s.* Primarily historical in nature, the Bebbington "Quadrilateral," as it has been called, reflected evangelicals' theology and practice. Evangelicals, he argued, were distinguished by their emphasis on the necessity of personal conversion for salvation, activism (reflected in evangelism, foreign missions, and social reform), the Bible as theological authority, and Christ's sacrifice on the cross.[3] Bebbington's scholarly achievement in a British academic context was undeniable: taking religion seriously as *religion* rather than as cover for economic or political motivations.[4] The five-volume InterVarsity Press series, *A History of Evangelicalism: People, Movement, and Ideas in the English-Speaking World* (IVP Academic, 2003-2017), used Bebbington's quadrilateral as its working definition to trace the movement from the 1700s to the year 2000. As Mark Noll noted about the rise of evangelicalism in the first volume, "These core evangelical commitments have never by themselves yielded cohesive, institutionally compact or clearly demarcated groups of Christians. But they do serve to identify a large kin-network of churches, voluntary societies, books and periodicals, personal networks and emphases of belief and practice."[5] Bebbington has continued to defend his thesis against scholarly critics.[6]

Examples of questions about the Quadrilateral which have been raised include the following: Was the Quadrilateral most applicable to British church history (which, of course, was its original intent)? Was it too convinced of the Enlightenment's and Romanticism's influences? Was it too disconnected from its Protestant antecedents? Was the Quadrilateral too broad theologically, allowing post-Vatican II Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians, and others who were not "orthodox Protestants" to identify as such? After *EMB's* publication, W. R. Ward underscored evangelicalism's rootedness in continental European Protestantism and Pietism.[7] Scholars such as Michael Haykin, Ken Stewart, and Douglas Sweeney also emphasized evangelicalism's

3. Bebbington writes that "there are … four qualities that have been the special marks of Evangelical religion: conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the gospel in effort; biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism." David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 2-3.

4. Timothy Larsen, "The Reception Given *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain,*" in *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities,* eds. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2008), 33.

5. Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 19.

6. David Bebbington, "Introduction: The Parameters of Evangelical Identity," in *The Evangelical Quadrilateral, Vol. 1: Characterizing the British Gospel Movement* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2021), 1-26.

7. W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

continuity with the Reformation.[8] Sweeney, specifically, has defined evangelicalism basically historically as "a movement that is rooted in classical Christian orthodoxy, shaped by a largely Protestant understanding of the gospel, and distinguished from other such movements by an eighteenth-century twist."[9] Others like Alister McGrath have tended to define evangelicalism more theologically in terms of clusters of ideas or doctrines.[10] *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology* (2008), *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (2010), *Introducing Evangelical Theology* (2019), and various evangelical confessional statements produced by denominations and organizations have all presented overlapping yet unique overviews of normative evangelical beliefs. Still others like John Stackhouse characterize evangelicalism as a religious style of sorts, a third way between the traditionalism of the past and the freedom of liberalism.[11] Finally, as noted above, the American context has occasioned calls to define "evangelicals" far more politically and sociologically.

With so much debate that is warranted and reasonable, we hesitate to land on one specific formulation. Nevertheless, historical overviews best help situate our special issue, focused as it is on a particular era—the twentieth century and, to a lesser extent, the early twenty-first. As the last two volumes of the IVP Academic series, along with numerous other secondary works, make clear, twentieth-century developments impacted evangelical identity in ways which—depending upon one's perspective—complicate or clarify it. We do not intend to settle the debate on every matter.

8. Haykin and Stewart, eds., *Advent of Evangelicalism*.

9. Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 23-24. Although suggesting that the term evangelical can apply to other Christian groups as well, he maintains, "Our uniqueness is best defined by our adherence to: (1) beliefs most clearly stated during the Protestant Reformation and (2) practices shaped by the so-called Great Awakening." Sweeney, *American Evangelical Story*, 24.

10. McGrath argued, "evangelicalism is grounded on a cluster of six controlling convictions, each of which is regarded as being true, of vital importance and grounded in Scripture. . . . These six fundamental convictions can be set out as follows:

1. The supreme authority of Scripture as a source of knowledge of God and a guide to Christian living.
2. The majesty of Jesus Christ, both as incarnate God and Lord and as the Savior of sinful humanity.
3. The lordship of the Holy Spirit.
4. The need for personal conversion.
5. The priority of evangelism for both individual Christians and the church as a whole.
6. The importance of the Christian community for spiritual nourishment, fellowship and growth."

See Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 55-56.

11. Stackhouse also uses six adjectives to define evangelicalism: Trinitarian, biblicist, conversionist, missional, populist, and pragmatic. See John G. Stackhouse, *Evangelicalism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 24-47.

Particular Developments of the Twentieth Century

Although more developments (especially outside of the US) certainly could be cited, when taking into consideration this special issue's articles, the following six are most important: (1) the rise of interdenominational fellowship, (2) revivalism emphasizing the Holy Spirit, (3) the birth of Fundamentalism, (4) the postwar neo-evangelical movement, (5) the fragmentation over various theological, social, and political issues, and (6) the globalization of evangelicals.

1. First, the rise of interdenominational fellowship. To be an "evangelical" by the early 1900s typically—but not always—entailed cooperation and fellowship with other believers outside of one's own denomination for shared gospel priorities. This interdenominationalism certainly had developed earlier, thanks to various mission and Bible societies, revival meetings, and events such as the 1846 establishment of the Evangelical Alliance in London.[12] However, Michael Hamilton has identified Dwight Moody's evangelistic ministry and Bible Institute (which continued well after his 1899 death) as a key force in unifying various conservative Protestants from numerous denominations, not to mention geographic areas in the US, UK, and broader English-speaking world, and ultimately uniting them against Modernism (discussed below).[13] Darren Dochuk has concurred about the importance of such fellowship.[14] That said, not all who held to evangelical *theology* were as keen on interdenominational fellowship, for example, more church-centered Anglican or Reformed Protestants.[15] In addition, especially in the first few decades of the twentieth century, such interdenominationalism did not come at the expense of identifying primarily as, say, a Baptist or Methodist, or simply as an individual Christian. However, as will be discussed further below, because the twentieth century witnessed the birth of numerous "evangelical," interdenominational and nondenominational organizations, as well as cultural and political developments uniting evangelicals in opposition, it is fair to include it on this list.

2. Second, revivalism emphasizing the Holy Spirit. Thomas Kidd has recently defined "Evangelicals" as "born-again Protestants who cherish the Bible as the Word

12. See David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 21-22, on the Evangelical Alliance's establishment.

13. Michael S. Hamilton, "The Interdenominational Evangelicalism of D. L. Moody and the Problem of Fundamentalism," in *American Evangelicalism: George Marsden and the State of American Religious History* eds. Darren Dochuk, Thomas S. Kidd, and Kurt W. Peterson (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2014), 230-80.

14. Darren Dochuk, "Revisiting Bebbington's Classic Rendering at New Points of Departure," in *Evangelicals,* eds. Noll, Bebbington, Marsden, 151.

15. See Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019)*,* 4n8. Conservative Presbyterian scholar and leader J. Gresham Machen's loyalty to church confessions and order as opposed to interdenominational organizations resembled the prevailing orientation of Old School, Southern Presbyterianism from the mid-1800s. See D. G. Hart, *Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of Conservative Protestantism in North America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

of God and who emphasize a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit."[16] His inclusion of "through the Holy Spirit" recognized the ecstatic revivalism shaping transatlantic Protestantism since the eighteenth century, the spread of the Holiness Movement in the nineteenth century, and the necessity of Trinitarian theology, thus echoing Timothy Larsen's inclusion of belief in the Holy Spirit in the 2007 *Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology.*[17] Whether or not the Holy Spirit should be included in any definition is made more complicated by the first decade of the twentieth century, when powerful revivals associated with phenomena attributed to the Holy Spirit emerged in the US, the UK, India, Chile, and Korea. From the American revivals, new Pentecostal denominations mandating a second baptism of the Holy Spirit (evidenced typically through tongues-speaking) spread worldwide, while less institutionally organized Pentecostal-charismatic varieties of spirituality also proliferated from multiple points of origin.[18] Should such believers be subsumed under the "evangelical" label or discussed as a parallel movement that merely overlapped with evangelicals? Do the differences between Pentecostal views of sanctification and, in some cases, the Holy Spirit's theological authority, necessitate distinct taxonomic classification? In addition, many non-Pentecostal evangelicals promulgated a Keswick or "Higher Life" view of the Holy Spirit, which would lead the individual to seek definite, post-conversion "infillings" of the Spirit for holy living, evangelistic power, and sometimes healing, as well as to expect personal, divine guidance in daily life.[19] We would suggest that there is a close kinship between Pentecostalism and evangelicalism, but the reality remains that the lines are not always clear and debates over this issue abound.

3. Third, the birth of Fundamentalism. Although certainly shaped by cultural attitudes (especially in the US), the rise of fundamentalism tended to focus evangelical debates into the nature and content of doctrine: What theological doctrines were absolutely necessary to the "evangelical" faith?[20] As higher criticism, Darwinism, and

16. Thomas Kidd, *Who is an Evangelical? The History of a Movement in Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 4. Kidd's inclusion of "born-again" refers to such believers' self-identification and outward commitments rather than actual, supernatural regeneration, about which the Christian historian would not speculate.

17. Timothy Larsen, "Defining and Locating Evangelicalism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, eds. Larsen and Daniel J. Treier (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1.

18. Two helpful surveys are Mark Shaw, *Global Awakening: How Twentieth-Century Revivals Triggered a Christian Revolution* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), and Alan Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). See also Brian Stanley, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century: A World History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), ch. 13.

19. Geoffrey Treloar, *The Disruption of Evangelicalism: The Age of Torrey, Mott, McPherson, and Hammond* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 59-61.

20. Treloar, *The Disruption of Evangelicalism*. For studies exploring the cultural and racial factors shaping fundamentalism, particularly in the US, see George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture,* 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), and Mary Beth Swetnam

liberal theology took root in the major Protestant denominations in the late nineteenth century, many evangelicals grew concerned to stress "fundamental" beliefs, prompting the publication of a 90-essay series entitled *The Fundamentals* from 1910 to 1915. As the essay titles display, the Anglo-American authors emphasized a much more comprehensive version of Protestant orthodoxy and evangelical spirituality than the bullet-pointed statements of "fundamentals" and narrow political battles over evolution animating the movement after 1920, when the term, "fundamentalist," was first championed by a northern Baptist newspaper editor.[21] Various statements of fundamentals included different points, too. For example, the 1910 statement of the northern Presbyterian Church required ordinands to affirm an inerrant Bible, the virgin birth, the substitutionary atonement, the physical resurrection, and the authenticity of Christ's miracles, while Minneapolis Baptist William Bell Riley's nine-point 1919 faith statement of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association also required assent to the premillennial return of Jesus Christ and (implicitly) required rejection of human evolution.[22] Additional groups of self-identifying "fundamentalists" in the UK and China produced their own distinctive statements.[23] Should only those who held to the basic five "fundamentals"—or a close approximation thereof—be considered evangelical in this era? Or, could one claim to be a "liberal evangelical," a concurrent movement mostly within the Church of England which embraced higher criticism, evolutionism, and theological relativism while maintaining a more orthodox view of Christ's deity and concern for evangelism and conversion?[24] Even today, it would be preposterous to suggest that the "evangelical" label requires no specific doctrinal content, but what specific doctrinal content is necessary to be an evangelical has been widely—and sometimes, hotly—contested. Finally, following development one (above), the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy was influenced

Matthews, *Doctrine and Race: African American Evangelicals and Fundamentalism Between the Wars* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2017).

21. https://digitalcommons.biola.edu/the-fundamentals/

22. See the contrasting lists at the following links: https://www.pcahistory.org/documents/deliverance.html; https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Page%3AThe_Doctrinal_Statement_of_the_World_Conference_on_Christian_Fundamentals_1919.pdf/1. In 1927 the northern Presbyterian church no longer required assent to the five doctrines._Regarding belief in biological evolution directed by God, *The Fundamentals* series contained differing perspectives on it, with contributor James Orr open to it. The Southern Baptist Convention adopted the conservative Baptist Faith and Message in 1925 but it was not enforced. See Anthony L. Chute, Nathan A. Finn, Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), 248-49.

23. See essays by Andrew Atherstone, Martin Wellings, David Bebbington, and Tim Grass in *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom During the Twentieth Century*, eds. David W. Bebbington and David Ceri Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Kevin Xiyi Yao, *The Fundamentalist Movement Among Protestant Missionaries in China* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003).

24. See Timothy Larsen, "Liberal Evangelicals and the Bible," in *Every Leaf, Line, and Letter,* ed. Larsen (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021), 172-95; Treloar, *Disruption of Evangelicalism*, 71-73, 179-80.

by and, in turn, prompted the formation of new interdenominational organizations. These included, for example, the Federal Council of Churches (est. 1908) and related Foreign Mission Conference of North America (est. 1911), which were increasingly marked by the Social Gospel, Modernism, and "ecumenical" ambitions; the fundamentalist Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (est. 1917), which formed in response to the ecumenical movement and united various independent, Keswick-oriented "faith" missions; and the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (est. 1928), which united theologically conservative university students in Britain before expanding internationally.[25]

4. Fourth, the postwar neo-evangelical movement. If distinguishing the fundamental components of the evangelical faith from "Modernist" or "ecumenical" Protestantism animated the first few decades of the twentieth century, then whether and how to distinguish "evangelicals" from "fundamentalists" animated the post-World War II era, at least in the US, where the term remained significant. In one sense, the postwar era clarified evangelical identity—because more organizations began actually using the term! The US-based National Association of Evangelicals, established in 1942-43, provided a middle path between the ecumenical Federal Council of Churches (National Council after 1948) and arch-Fundamentalist Carl McIntire's American Council of Christian Churches (est. 1941). Although promulgating fundamental doctrines, the NAE's founders (in contrast to McIntire) allowed individuals belonging to mainline-Protestant denominations and interdenominational, special-purpose organizations to join their fellowship.[26] Indeed, beyond simply fellowshipping with those outside their denomination, postwar neo-evangelicals had a penchant for the *parachurch*—ministries dedicated not only to missions and students but to media, charity, and many other causes, which tended to be managed and financially supported less like churches (by elders and expected tithes) than like generic non-governmental organizations or even businesses (with executive boards and marketing-informed fund-raising).[27]

After 1960, a common way of differentiating a "fundamentalist" from a "neo-evangelical" (or simply, "evangelical") was on the basis of the former's militant attitude and insistence upon separating from liberal Protestant fellowship.[28] Early

25. To clarify two terms, the twentieth-century "ecumenical" movement sought to overcome Protestantism's historic fractiousness by minimizing doctrinal distinctions and reuniting major denominations under new bureaucratic structures. Independent "faith" missions, e.g., the China Inland Mission (est. 1865) and the Africa Inland Mission (est. 1895), rejected the denominational and ecumenical mission boards' bureaucratic governance and fund-raising strategies.

26. Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), ch. 8.

27. See Michael S. Hamilton, "More Money, More Ministry: The Financing of American Evangelicalism Since 1945," in *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History,* eds. Larry Eskridge and Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 104-138.

28. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture,* 290. For an alternative view, see Dan D.

"neo-evangelicals" such as Harold Ockenga and Carl Henry also called for a more socially concerned, intellectual approach to the gospel, although the neo-evangelical record on especially the first objective was lackluster.[29] (Regarding the latter, as this special issue will demonstrate, many earlier leaders associated with fundamentalism were just as intellectual.) Perhaps "evangelicals," especially the younger set after the 1960s, were more likely to rethink rigid moral codes prohibiting drinking alcohol, dancing, movie-going, and the like?[30] Or, perhaps theological differences actually did matter, with "fundamentalists" being more likely to mandate a stricter view of biblical inerrancy and the end times and to reject the possible continuation of charismatic gifts?[31] Perhaps the easiest way to distinguish an *American* evangelical from a fundamentalist after World War II remains gauging whether or not one liked Billy Graham, whose ministry was parachurch-driven and inclusive of mainline-Protestant supporters.[32]

In the British context, a similar postwar movement of winsome evangelicals arose and had close ties with American evangelicals such as Graham, whose evangelistic crusades prompted denunciations from some non-Americans, too, due to his cooperation with ecumenical Protestants.[33] Meanwhile, the Inter-Varsity network, along with the English Tyndale House Fellowship, fostered evangelical scholarship. Anglican Rector John Stott and the more Reformed J. I. Packer, exemplars of the British wing of new evangelicalism, defended Fundamentalism, when defined as historic evangelical Protestantism, but rejected American-style excesses.[34] However, differentiating evangelicals from fundamentalists was not a pressing concern, given the latter term's minimal usage by conservative Britons; rather, differentiating evangelicals from more theologically liberal Protestants, particularly Anglicans, was

Crawford, "The Idea of Militancy in American Fundamentalism," in *Fundamentalism: Perspectives on a Contested History,* eds. David Harrington Watt and Simon A. Wood (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014), 36-54.

29. Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 26-35, 66.

30. This is, again, most applicable to the American environment. See, for example, sociologist James Davison Hunter's *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 56-64.

31. https://www.nae.org/statement-of-faith/. From its beginning, the NAE welcomed Pentecostals.

32. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 290-91. Daniel Silliman has defended this shorthand for defining the postwar, American movement. Although too critical of the Bebbington Quadrilateral, Silliman's essay offers important insight into the specific boundaries for evangelical identity formulated by the founders of *Christianity Today.* See Silliman, "An Evangelical is Anyone who Likes Billy Graham: Defining Evangelicalism with Carl Henry and Networks of Trust," *Church History* 90, no. 3 (Dec 2021): 621-43.

33. Hutchinson and Wolffe, *Short History of Global Evangelicalism,* 185.

34. Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 42-43.

still a nagging question.[35] One of the most significant differences between postwar British and American evangelicals was that the former were a much smaller minority, numerically and culturally, in their country compared to the latter.

5. Fifth, various theological, social, and political debates starting in the late twentieth century. To be sure, evangelicals' division and "crisis" did not begin with American socio-political conflicts of the past decade, as might be implied by the release of volumes lamenting recent developments such as *Who is an Evangelical?: The History of a Movement in Crisis* (2019) and *Evangelicals: Who They Have Been, Are Now, and Could Be* (2019). Such sentiments, in fact, have been expressed since at least the 1960s, and not just in the US. In Britain, whether evangelicals should separate from theologically liberal Protestants in their own denominations occasioned a public dispute in 1966 between Stott and Martin Lloyd-Jones, with the latter concerned to unite doctrinally like-minded evangelicals.[36] To what extent evangelicalism could accommodate the rapidly growing, new charismatic Christianity occasioned similar debate in the 1960s and 1970s. Competing perspectives on biblical inspiration and inerrancy, gender roles, and hermeneutics more broadly began to divide evangelicals throughout the English-speaking world.[37]

To zoom in on the American context, the editors of *Evangelicals: What they Believe, Who They Are, and Where They Are Changing* (1975, 1977)—compare this title to the just-mentioned 2019 title—sought to unite American evangelicals around the core convictions of "primitive Christianity" at a time of rising national prominence.[38] As insiders and outsiders at the time already recognized, the masses of those lumped together as "evangelicals" were rather an inchoate group, divided among social, theological, and political lines.[39] Were theologically conservative African-American Protestants "evangelicals," despite being organizationally and often politically distinct?[40] What about the new movement of self-identifying evangelicals who had joined the Eastern Orthodox church?[41] What about Southern

35. Stanley, *Global Diffusion,* 39.

36. See essays by David Ceri Jones, Alister Chapman, and Stephen Holmes in *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom During the Twentieth Century*, eds. Jones and Bebbington.

37. Stanley, *Global Diffusion,* chapters 7-8; and Worthen, *Apostles of Reason*.

38. David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975). Two years later, the editors revised and reissued the volume to incorporate Arminians (including Pentecostals), in Wells and Woodbridge, eds., *The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977).

39. According to a Gallup poll in 1976, one-third of Americans claimed to be "born again," prompting *Newsweek*'s "Year of the Evangelicals" cover story. Ken Woodward, "Born Again! (The Year of the Evangelicals)," *Newsweek,* October 25, 1976, 68.

40. Compare the still-relevant essays by William Pannell and William Bentley in the 1975/77 Wells and Woodbridge volumes to the more recent take by Jemar Tisby, "Are Black Christians 'evangelicals'?" in *Evangelicals,* eds. Noll, Bebbington, and Marsden, 262-78.

41. Robert Webber and Donald Bloesch, eds., *The Orthodox Evangelicals: Who They Are and*

Baptists, one of whom famously claimed that "evangelical" was a "Yankee" term too associated with "fundamentalism"? (Historians are now more likely to include Southern Baptists in the narrative of evangelicalism proper.)[42] Increasingly partisan politics divided American evangelicals, too, while laying the groundwork for new camaraderie with formerly spurned groups such as Catholics.[43] Denominational labels began to matter less than whether one identified as being "conservative" or "liberal."[44] Yet, despite the stereotypes of evangelicals (in the US) as "white Republicans," the overall movement has been far more ethnically and politically diverse.[45] This brings us to our final historical development.

6. Sixth, the globalization of evangelicals. That the above developments focus mostly on the US, and to a lesser extent, the UK, obscures perhaps the most significant headline of twentieth-century evangelicalism: its globalization. In 1900, over 80% of all Christians hailed from Europe and North America; by 2020, over 60% hailed from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.[46] Although Christianity's twentieth-century shift to the Global South from the North Atlantic world has been analyzed for several decades,[47] studies of global evangelicalism, specifically, have taken off more recently.[48] Evangelicalism was brought to the Global South (where the majority of the world's people live) via Euro-American missionaries, often (but not always) benefitting from imperial connections. But as the twentieth century progressed, evangelicalism took root and flourished in African, Asian, and Latin American cultural soil, often in terms which, if not quite Pentecostal-charismatic, emphasized the supernatural.[49]

What They Are Saying (Nashville: Nelson, 1978).

42. See Kidd, *Who is an Evangelical,* 123-24, on SBC executive Foy Valentine's infamous quotation in the *Newsweek* story. Southern Baptists and people of color feature prominently in Kidd's history.

43. Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission* (Dallas, TX: Word Publications, 1995).

44. Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

45. See, for example, Bebbington, "Evangelicals and Recent Politics in Britain," in *Evangelicals,* eds. Noll, Bebbington, and Marsden*,* 292-99. In contrast to British evangelicals' varied political affiliations, evangelicals in Brazil have tended to support conservative political candidates over the past decade.

46. Gina Zurlo, *Global Christianity: A Guide to the World's Largest Religion from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 3.

47. Pioneers of this field include Andrew Walls, Lamin Sanneh, David Barrett, Dana Robert, Philip Jenkins, and others. For a thematic, global overview, see Stanley, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century.*

48. For a good introduction, see Mark Hutchinson and John Wolffe, *A Short History of Global Evangelicalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), esp. chapters 6-9; and Stanley, *Global Diffusion*. For a popular-level, almanac-style overview, see Brian C. Stiller, Todd M. Johnson, Karen Stiller, and Mark Hutchinson, eds., *Evangelicals Around the World: A Global Handbook for the Twenty-First Century* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2015). See also David Bebbington, ed., *The Gospel in Latin America: Historical Studies of Evangelicalism in the Global South* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2022).

49. In addition to Shaw, *Global Awakening*, and Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth,* see also

The relationship between evangelicalism of the Global North and Global South is complex and multi-directional. After World War II, Western evangelists, including Pentecostals, contributed to evangelicalism's globalization, as did parachurch organizations and interdenominational fellowships such as the Scripture Union, International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, the NAE-related World Evangelical Fellowship (later, the World Evangelical Alliance), and the Lausanne movement. Although the brainchild of mainly British and American neo-evangelicals, the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland featured contributions from numerous Latin American, Asian, and African evangelical leaders such as Peruvian Samuel Escobar and Ugandan Festo Kivengere. This was merely one reflection of the Global South's increasing influence upon American and global evangelicalism, overall, since the 1930s.[50] A few additional examples include the East African Revival's echoes throughout the English-speaking world, Latin American Pentecostalism's influence on the church-growth and "signs and wonders" movements, African-instituted churches' growth in London, South Korean missionaries' presence in Asia and North America, the Australian-based Hillsong Church's dissemination of contemporary worship music, the conservative Global Anglican Futures Conference (GAFCON)'s ecclesiastical impact, and Chiang Mai, Thailand's emergence as a missions and parachurch hub. A few points should be noted. Many Global South evangelicals have relationships with historic, Western denominations or "big E" organizations such as the World Evangelical Alliance; they may also have theological-moral affinities with conservative Western evangelicals. Nevertheless, as Philip Jenkins has observed, typical "Bible Believers" in the Global South have forged their faith independently and should not be conflated with American-style fundamentalists, as scholars and journalists have sometimes done.[51] As Brian Stanley has argued, although the Bebbington Quadrilateral may hold up well in global perspective, it will

Donald E. Miller, Kimon H. Sargeant, and Richard Flory, eds., *Spirit and Power: The Growth and Global Impact of Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), which presents historical and sociological analyses of the global "Renewalist" movement; and Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

50. For the relationship between Global South and American evangelicalism, specifically, see Helen Jim Kim, *Race for Revival: How Cold War South Korea Shaped the American Evangelical Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022); David Swartz, *Facing West: American Evangelicalism in an Age of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020); Kathryn T. Long, *God in the Rainforest: A Tale of Martyrdom and Redemption in Amazonian Ecuador* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); Melanie McAllister, *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); and Mark Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009).

51. Jenkins, *New Faces of Christianity.* Jenkins's argument counters the perspectives of Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford, and Susan D. Rose, *Exporting the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

need important modifications acknowledging the Quadrilateral's original reference to a religious context shaped by the European Enlightenment. Activism, however, is most directly applicable to Global South evangelicals, particularly Pentecostals.[52]

Regardless of the reality, popular perceptions of evangelicalism remain, as demonstrated by the introduction to one of the most recent overviews of it. Expanding upon an illustration used by mission historian Dana Robert, Stackhouse contrasts the "*stereotypical* evangelical" of the 2020s—a "white, middle-aged, and middle-class" man, from the Midwest or Sunbelt, who is a media-savvy Baptist preacher and vocally political conservative—with the *typical* evangelical—a sub-Saharan African or Latin American lay-woman who is active in her local church but does not have a public voice.[53] This is powerful imagery that may stop readers in their tracks—then cause them to scratch their heads, as it further complicates the task of defining evangelicalism. For example, we challenge readers to attempt to fill in the following blank with a single person: "A global evangelical is anyone who likes [?]." Determining evangelicalism's representatives, leaders, and theological boundaries will undoubtedly shape the current century.

Overview of Articles

With the backdrop of twentieth-century evangelicalism in mind, the five articles assembled here help illuminate both consensus and more overlooked aspects of evangelicalism. The organizations, trends, and individuals discussed all reflect biblicism, conversionism, crucicentrism, and activism; at various points, they also specifically portray evangelicals as *missional, intellectual, theologically diverse, complex, and increasingly global.*

The articles have been arranged (loosely) in chronological and thematic order, starting with Scott Moreau's essay on missions. Moreau, Wheaton College Professor of Intercultural Studies Emeritus, traces the development and dominance of American evangelical missions over the course of the century. Indeed, at the 1910 Edinburgh (UK) World Missionary Conference, Britain still dominated the Western missionary movement; by century's end, this plaudit went to the United States. In addition, evangelicals had replaced mainline (or theologically liberal) Protestants on foreign fields.[54] Missions, a prime example of evangelicals' "activism," can serve as a lens through which to examine broader changes in American Christianity, as well as the US's twentieth-century political and cultural ascendancy.

52. Brian Stanley, "The Evangelical Christian Mind in History and Global Context," in *Every Leaf, Line, and Letter: Evangelicals and the Bible from the 1730s to the Present,* ed. Timothy Larsen (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021), 288, 294.

53. Dana Robert, "Shifting Southward: Global Christianity Since 1945," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 24, no. 2 (April 2000): 50-58; Stackhouse, *Evangelicalism*, 1-2.

54. Andrew Walls, "The American Dimension of the Missionary Movement," in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Mary Noll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 221-40.

From his perspective as a missiologist who has trained students for cross-cultural service, Moreau zeroes in on the major shifts in American evangelical missions themselves, looking particularly at organization and theology. His survey raises a few key questions. First, how does the fact that self-consciously "evangelical" missions activity was overwhelmingly shaped by independent mission agencies and other *parachurch* organizations rather than specific denominations affect its character? To be fair, Moreau does not highlight the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board (the International Mission Board after 1997), despite its numerical strength in missions. Although the technically-Southern Baptist Billy Graham convened the Lausanne Congress, the SBC's Foreign Mission Board did not often interact with independent, neo-evangelical agencies in organizing key missions gatherings and developing new concepts/strategies; and yet, strong thematic parallels are evident.[55] Second, how should evangelical mission *theology* relate to evangelical *identity,* overall? In addition to interreligious engagement and the gospel's contextualization, one of the most important components of such a theology is the relationship between evangelism and social reform, with evangelicals historically prioritizing the former and mainline Protestants prioritizing the Social Gospel from the 1920s to the 1960s. The 1974 Lausanne Covenant portrayed evangelism and social action as mutually inclusive objectives, which reflected Stott's and non-Western evangelicals' influence.[56] Could this statement of beliefs and objectives characterize evangelical identity by the late twentieth century? Mission theology matters quite a bit when considering that, as Moreau observes, relief and development work have increasingly overshadowed evangelism and church planting. Finally, with so many changes to American-evangelical missions, their future is uncertain. Who will dominate global, cross-cultural *evangelism* at the twenty-first century's end? Although historians are bad futurists, if recent trends continue, Global South-background missionaries will constitute the bulk of the force.[57]

Following Moreau's article, Covenant College Professor Emeritus of Church History Ken Stewart explores intellectualism's resurgent place in Anglo-American evangelicalism before World War II, challenging the prevailing emphasis on the postwar movement with a wealth of new bibliographical evidence. The Carl Henry-centered American "neo-evangelicals" were not the first to champion it or to revive it after its perceived nadir in 1920s-30s populist fundamentalism. Here, Stewart continues his contributions to defining evangelical identity by demonstrating its roots

55. For example, compare the IMB's twentieth-century milestones to the developments Moreau covers, using the following timeline: https://www.imb.org/175/.

56. https://lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant#cov. For the background and reception of the Covenant, see Stanley, *Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism,* ch. 6.

57. Gina A. Zurlo, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, "World Christianity and Mission 2021: Questions About the Future," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 45, no. 1 (2021): 15–25.

in earlier Protestant (and, specifically, Reformed) movements.[58] In addition, Stewart's piece underscores the continued connections between evangelicals across the Atlantic between the wars. Indeed, British and European scholars, universities, and publishers were crucial to the American and broader evangelical intellectual renaissance. Stewart's piece raises another question: To what extent should evangelical history be told via reference to theologians, professors, and other intellectual elites? One criticism of Bebbington's *EMB,* after all, was that his evidence tended to downplay popular voices, who represented the numerical majority of evangelicals.[59] Indeed, intellectualism would never be confused for a *defining* characteristic of evangelical identity, at least in the US, as testified by the 2022 re-release of Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind,* first published in 1994. In recent years, perhaps the temptation has been to overemphasize the need for evangelical intellectualism, unintentionally bifurcating evangelicals on the basis of educational attainment. Nevertheless, to ignore the witness of evangelical scholars—yes, even those dubbed "fundamentalists" in the 1920s-30s—who used the best scholarly tools to defend orthodoxy, would be to fundamentally misrepresent evangelicalism.

Despite the behind-the-scenes work of intellectually rigorous missiologists and theologians, twentieth-century evangelicals undeniably favored innovative, popular-level strategies to spread their faith. Historical theologian and Young Life evangelist Sean McGever analyzes The Four Spiritual Laws, an evangelistic message originated by Campus Crusade for Christ founder and major postwar-evangelical leader Bill Bright. The Four Spiritual Laws demonstrate the diversity possible within one of Bebbington's four planks: conversionism. As McGever maintains, twentieth-century views of conversion departed from those of early evangelicals such as Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, and, to a lesser extent, George Whitefield (whom McGever has analyzed in previous work).[60] At the heart of the issue is the relationship between conversion—the outward, recordable experience of acknowledging one's sin and coming to faith—and regeneration—the mysterious, invisible, divinely guided process of heart-change. According to McGever, the Four Spiritual Laws conflated the moment of conversion with supernatural regeneration, thus departing from Edwards's and Wesley's conceptions. The former salesman-turned-parachurch president Bright's methods of counting card-based "decisions for Christ," a technique also championed by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), differed from early evangelical practice, too. Indeed, Bright exemplified modern evangelicals' tendency toward pragmatism, or, of prioritizing what "works" over ideological

58. Ken Stewart, *Reformed and Evangelical Across Four Centuries: The Presbyterian Story in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2022); Stewart, *In Search of Ancient Roots: The Christian Past and the Evangelical Identity Crisis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017).

59. Larsen, "Reception Given *Evangelicalism,*" 34.

60. Sean McGever, *Born Again: The Evangelical Theology of Conversion in John Wesley and George Whitefield* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

considerations,[61] especially in his postwar American context, when mass culture and university-student enrollment boomed. Whether one interprets Bright's departure from early evangelicalism as a declension narrative, the subject's importance is underscored by the fact that 1.5 billion Four Spiritual Laws pamphlets have been distributed across the world in 200+ languages since its first official publication in 1965 (with origins a decade earlier), often through mass evangelistic campaigns such as Explo '74 in South Korea and Here's Life 1976 in India.[62]

The issue's fourth article helps enflesh abstract notions of twentieth-century evangelicalism by focusing on an exemplar of it: Boon Mark Gittisarn, a Thai Christian who laid the foundations for a national evangelical and Pentecostal movement in Thailand before his 1980s death. Boon Mark's religious journey is illuminated in rich detail through the ground-breaking research of author Karl Dahlfred, professor at Chiang Mai Theological Seminary, Thailand, and missionary with OMF International. Throughout his life, Boon Mark exhibited the Bebbington Quadrilateral—biblicism, activism, crucicentrism, and conversionism—as he engaged with numerous waves of evangelical history and changed affiliations when it best suited his beliefs and objectives. Although introduced to Christianity through the Western missionary movement, he was not a passive recipient but rather an active agent of evangelical leadership. Undoubtedly, his story reflects the complexity of modern evangelical identity.

Affiliating first with mainline American Presbyterian missionaries and the ecumenical Church of Christ in Thailand, Boon Mark objected to what he perceived as the missionaries' Modernist theology and disrespect for Thai leadership. After World War II, his theological conservatism and concern for his fellow Thai believers led him to affiliate with major leaders from widely disparate theological viewpoints: the fundamentalist Presbyterian Carl McIntire, followed by the American Pentecostal healing evangelist T. L. Osborn and Scandinavian Pentecostals, followed by an American-based oneness Pentecostal church. But later in life, Boon Mark affiliated with the Seventh Day Adventists. Although his religious flexibility could possibly reflect evangelicals' historic interdenominationalism or pragmatism, it undoubtedly raises questions of theological boundaries for evangelical identity: How did Seventh Day Adventism relate to mainstream evangelicalism? Can non-Trinitarian Pentecostals meaningfully be described as evangelical? What if his choice to affiliate with oneness Pentecostals and practice "Jesus only" baptism demonstrated continuity with his lifelong commitment to an unquestioned evangelical distinctive—crucicentrism? Theology aside, personal moral failings in his later life further complicate his evangelical testimony.

61. On evangelicals' pragmatism, see Barry Hankins, *American Evangelicalism: A Contemporary History of a Mainstream Religious Movement* (Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield, 2008), 164; and Stackhouse, *Evangelicalism*, 38.

62. John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

Boon Mark's story demonstrates the need for new, detailed biographies of evangelicals who have developed their faith in non-Western contexts. Twenty years after the *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* limited its scope mostly to the English-speaking world, and a bumper crop of scholarly biographies have also focused on Anglo-American evangelicals, some progress has been made with the publication of new biographies/autobiographies and online databases such as the Dictionary of African Christian Biography (https://dacb.org/) and the Dictionary of Christian Biography in Asia (https://dcbasia.org/) highlighting Global South evangelicals.[63] For the broader trajectory of twentieth-century church history, Dahlfred's article reflects the importance of "transdenominationalism," "localism," and "transnationality"—in other words, the push-and-pull between formal Christian networks, national leaders, indigenous cultures, and religious trends spanning multiple countries—in the globalization of evangelicalism, which brings us to the final article.[64]

Going from microcosm to macrocosm, this special issue concludes with an exploration of evangelicalism's increasingly global identity—and the implications thereof. Todd Johnson, longtime director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity and World Christian Database (WCD) at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, recounts the "Southern shift" of evangelicalism—using more of a sociological framework than a narrative, historical approach.[65] In an era when numerous sociologists, political scientists, demographers, and popular pollsters have been able to shape academic and public perceptions of American evangelicals, it would be a mistake to ignore the WCD's own statistical breakdown of global Christianity, generally, and evangelicals, specifically. Although any attempt to

63. Timothy Larsen, *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2003), 1. For a list of figures organized by global region, see Albert W. Hickman, "Evangelicals You Would Want to Know," in *Evangelicals Around the World*, eds. Stiller et al., 227-32. Although some of these individuals (e.g., Festo Kivengere and Pandita Ramabai) have been covered in popular and academic literature, the number of book-length, scholarly biographies of Global South evangelicals remains limited. Two recent, scholarly biographies are Thomas A. Harvey, *Acquainted with Grief: Wang Mingdao's Stand for the Persecuted Church in China* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2002), and B. E. Bharathi Nuthalapati, *Bakht Singh: Theologian and Father of the Indian Independent Christian Church Movement* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Monographs, 2017). For a notable study highlighting the contributions of Ecuadorian C. René Padilla and Peruvian Samuel Escobar, see David C. Kirkpatrick, *A Gospel for the Poor: Global Social Christianity and the Latin American Evangelical Left* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019). South Korean evangelist Billy Kim's memoir was published as Kim, *From Houseboy to World Evangelist: A Life of Billy Kim* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2015). Although not focused on an evangelical, world Christianity scholar Lamin Sanneh's autobiography, *Summoned from the Margins: Homecoming of an African* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), provides an enormously beneficial perspective on the effects of African, British, and American cultural contexts (including evangelicalism) on his religious journey.

64. Hutchinson and Wolffe, *Short History of Global Evangelicalism,* chapters 7, 9.

65. https://worldchristiandatabase.org/

count the world's largest religion will be fraught with difficulties, the figures have provided a benchmark for scholars.[66] Some unique features of the WCD's typology deserve mention: The World Christian Encyclopedia and Database counts anyone as "Christian" who self-identifies as such, following the United Nations. Then this nominally Christian world is divided into four macro groups comprising Catholics, Independents, Orthodox, and Protestants; two additional groups, Pentecostals and Evangelicals, then cut across the four main groups. In this typology, therefore, evangelicals do not necessarily belong to a Protestant denomination, and they can also be Pentecostal. This makes sense when considering that the twentieth century's revivalism made the boundaries increasingly porous. Readers should understand that Johnson's overview is prescriptive, not merely descriptive, as he challenges readers to countenance evangelicalism's "Western cultural captivity," a term favored by Soong-Chan Rah.[67] One's views of Western culture and Global South evangelicalism, as well as the general nature of Christian truth, will inform one's response to the argument. Nevertheless, American/Western evangelicals must recognize that the visible church's constituency, following the twentieth-century's remarkable developments, looks ever more like Revelation 7:9. How should its culture, theology, and leadership look?[68]

This special issue now turns to these five articles.

66. See Hutchinson and Wolffe, *Short History of Global Evangelicalism,* ch. 8, "'The Actual Arithmetic.'" For example, not all who say that they are a Christian, or who are counted as a Christian due to nominal membership in a state-recognized church, are actually so. Conversely, in countries where Christianity is persecuted, believers may be formally undercounted (but overestimated by hopeful outsiders). Philip Jenkins explains the possible issues but maintains that the "WCD data represent by far the best available statistics." See Jenkins, "Evangelicals and Globalization," in *Routledge Research Companion to Evangelicalism,* eds. Atherstone and Jones, 267n2.

67. Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

68. On theology, see Stephen Pardue, *Why Evangelical Theology Needs the Global Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2023).

JBTS 8.1 (2023): 19 – 42

American Evangelical Missions Since 1910

A. Scott Moreau

Scott is Professor of Intercultural Studies Emeritus and former Academic Dean of Wheaton College Graduate School

Abstract: This article provides a brief synopsis of US evangelical missions over the course of the twentieth century. Each of the four historical sections (1910 to 1945, 1946 to 1974, 1975 to 2000, 2001 to 2020) explores developments, challenges, and trends of the time period under consideration. From the nascent development of evangelical missions to the current climate of evangelical splintering, the twentieth century has seen a tumultuous, exciting, surprising, and challenging journey of American evangelical missions.[1]

Keywords: mission, missiology, missions, evangelical, ecumenical, conciliar, fundamentalist, Pentecostalism, contextualization, holistic mission.

Introduction

At the start of the twentieth century, rival forces were influencing European and American churches and pulling them in multiple directions simultaneously. The White American missional enterprise was set for splits in multiple directions during the century to follow.[2] What follows is the story of White American evangelical mission in four time periods: (1) 1910 to 1945, (2) 1946 to 1974, (3) 1975 to 2000, and (4) 2001-2022. In each period, developments within White American evangelical mission practice and thinking are sketched out.

1. Significantly condensed and adapted from A. Scott Moreau, "Evangelical Missions Development, 1910 to 2010, in the North American Setting: Reaction and Emergence," in *Evangelical and Frontier Mission Perspectives on the Global Progress of the Gospel*, ed. Beth Snodderly and A. Scott Moreau (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2011), 3-46. Used with permission from Regnum; book ISBN 978-1-870345-98-9.

2. To see some of the processes beyond those of White evangelicals, see, for example, Daniel Bare, *Black Fundamentalists* (New York: NYU Press, 2021), and Mary Beth Swetnam Matthews, *Doctrine and Race: African American Evangelicals and Fundamentalism Between the Wars* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2017).

American Evangelical Missions, 1910–1945: Shaken Foundations

After the ecumenical World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh (1910), evangelicals in the mainline denominations and mission structures experienced increasing marginalization and began questioning whether they should stay with their eroding organizations (and/or denominations) or leave. Those who stayed had to decide whether to remain quietly faithful to what God had called them to do or to join the fight to turn their organizations around. Throughout this period, the terms "evangelical," "fundamentalist," and "conservative" were all developing but generally could be applied to the same group of people who were distinguished primarily by the commitments to the five fundamentals (see below).[3]

Those who left their mainline organizations also had to choose between joining the more conservative faith missions movement, such as China Inland Mission, and starting their own evangelical mission organizations, denominations, and Bible colleges. Considering the stress on the individual in American culture, and the voluntary nature of churches and mission organizations, it is not surprising that the pattern of splintering of American denominations and mission structures, which started during this period of 1910–1945, has not stopped since then.

The flashpoint for the fundamentalist-modernist controversy came in 1909 with the ordination of three pastors in the Presbyterian Church in the USA who refused to affirm the virgin birth of Jesus. In the following 1910 General Assembly, the Presbyterians decided to accept five doctrines as fundamental to the Christian faith: (1) the inspiration of the Bible by the Holy Spirit and the inerrancy of Scripture as a result of this, (2) the virgin birth of Christ, (3) the belief that Christ's death was an atonement for sin, (4) the bodily resurrection of Christ, and (5) the historical reality of Christ's miracles.[4] Some proponents called these teachings *the fundamentals*, and those who promoted them were fundamentalists. Evangelicals, committed to these beliefs, were thus identified as fundamentalists. Initially the evangelical-fundamentalists did not insist on separating from the mainline denominations. Rather, they stayed within them and struggled for continued acceptance of their views.[5]

Preachers like Billy Sunday and Dwight Moody's successors (such as R. A. Torrey) were part of the fundamentalist movement and were largely disdained by intellectual mainline church leaders and members. As more US denominations engaged in their own versions of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, and as prominent denominational universities—most notably Princeton—publicly fought

3. Paul Merritt Bassett, "Evangelicals," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement,* eds. Nicholas Lossky et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 393-95. See also *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (Los Angeles: Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1917), a series of pamphlets written from 1910 to 1915 that explained core doctrinal positions.

4. See George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 117.

5. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 164-70.

theological battles, some evangelical-fundamentalists believed that becoming educated in liberal colleges and seminaries led to becoming liberal,[6] and this attitude carried to the end of this period. Bible institutes were started, but without the intention of becoming colleges or universities.

Because mainline church organizations and leaders so thoroughly dominated mission leadership and structures, the more conservative missionaries also eventually had to decide their own response. Many who stayed within their mainline missions did so at least in part because of the strong evangelical voices that still were part of the ecumenical International Missionary Council (IMC, established in 1921). It is easy to understand, however, that people on both sides closely watched everything the IMC and other mainline-associated bodies did.[7]

In 1917, after nondenominational agencies lost their vote in the Foreign Mission Conference of North America (FMCNA, a forerunner of the National Council of Churches in the USA), they banded together to found the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association (IFMA).[8] The splintering of mission over the modernist-fundamentalist divide was evident in that no fewer than fifty-six new agencies were founded from 1918 to 1945,[9] the vast bulk of them nondenominational faith agencies founded by conservatives. In a parallel development, at least in part due to the shocks of World War One and the increasingly secular vision of the mainline Christian internationalists, fundamentalists increasingly identified with Premillennial eschatology (a requirement for agencies affiliated with the IFMA).[10] They judged the promotion of building the Kingdom of God through human efforts and commitment to the social gospel as non-biblical waste of resources.

By and large mainline leaders ignored or ridiculed the fundamentalists during this time. Fundamentalists argued against liberal theology and how it was shifting the church and society (e.g., J. Gresham Machen and William Jennings Bryan).[11] Others were more irenic, focusing on personal piety and evangelism and found new organizations, including Bible colleges and other educational institutions, which

6. As related to the author by John Gration, Chair of Missions and Intercultural Studies at Wheaton College Graduate School, who indicated he heard this statement many times while growing up in the 1930s.

7. See Arthur Johnston, *The Battle for World Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1978). Johnston, a career missionary, published this survey of twentieth-century mainline and evangelical missions, as Chair of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

8. See E. L. Frizen, *75 Years of IFMA, 1917-1992: the Nondenominational Missions Movement* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992), 10.

9. See A. Scott Moreau, "Putting the Survey in Perspective," in *Missions Handbook: US and Canadian Christian Ministries Overseas 2001–2003*, 18th ed., ed. John A. Siewert and Dotsey Welliver (Wheaton, IL: Evangelism and Missions Information Service, 2000), 36-37.

10. See Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 125-32. Concerning the requirement for agencies, see Frizen, *75 Years of IFMA*, 110.

11. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 125-32.

eventually became the evangelical Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries of today and served at the time as the seedbeds of early evangelical intellectualism. By the 1930s, those who most explicitly identified themselves as fundamentalists—eventually called separatists—were demanding separation from any organization that had compromised at any level. Not all fundamentalists agreed, and by the end of World War Two, a more cooperative type of evangelical—initially called neo-evangelicals—began to surface which maintained fundamental doctrines but chose to engage the mainline church and culture rather than separate from it. With the founding of the National Association of Evangelicals (1942) and a commission within the NAE called the Evangelical Foreign Mission Association (EFMA) which was to "serve common interests of members in government relations (domestic and foreign); use of communication channels; cooperative purchasing/travel; and relations between each other,"[12] evangelical denominations and mission agencies both had means to associate under a non-separatist organizational umbrella.[13]

Finally, during this period a third stream of the church was born and began to grow rapidly. Pentecostals, growing from the holiness denominations, and experiencing God's presence in tongues and other signs and wonders, were disdained by both mainliners and fundamentalists. Pentecostals felt the sting of rejection from their very beginnings and knew that they had to grow their own missionaries and mission organizations from within. For example, in 1909, the Church of God (Cleveland) initiated international missions in the Bahamas.[14] By the end of World War Two, Pentecostals had started numerous denominations, many with vibrant international missions.

American Evangelical Missions, 1946–1974: New Opportunities

Mainstream American Evangelical Missions

From the explosion of new evangelical mission agencies in the immediate aftermath of World War Two to the Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne in 1974, evangelicals were the most active proponents of mission through this period.[15] In the 1950s neo-evangelicals lost the "neo" and became mainstream evangelicals. In

12. Billy Graham Center Archives, "Records of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (EFMA) - Collection 165," accessed August 2, 2022, https://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/guides/165.htm.

13. See Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 150, 180.

14. Church of God, "A Brief History of The Church of God," accessed August 15, 2012, https://churchofgod.org/about/a-brief-history-of-the-church-of-god/.

15. Dana Robert, "From Missions to Mission to Beyond Missions: The Historiography of American Protestant Foreign Missions since World War II," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 18 (October 1994): 50; see also Gerald H. Anderson, "Christian Mission in AD 2000: A Glance Backward," *Missiology* 28 (July 2000): 275-88.

the meantime, from the evangelical perspective, the fundamentalists had withdrawn from everyone but themselves.

Both the 1945 call of Douglas MacArthur for ten thousand missionaries to come to Japan and the organizational skills learned by many lay Christians in the military around the world contributed to the explosion of new evangelical organizations formed after World War Two. From student organizations to newly formed missions agencies, they built up evangelical missions in ways never before seen.

Over the 1950s the ecumenical movement reached its peak, but by the 1960s had begun to decline. Evangelicals, however, continually gathered personnel, organizational, and financial strength. The newly formed NAE and EFMA grew consistently after 1945, the latter becoming an umbrella for the new student ministries and mission agencies. Important highlights include evangelicals founding Fuller Theological Seminary (1947), Billy Graham holding numerous successful and well-publicized evangelistic crusades starting in Los Angeles (1951), the founding of the World Evangelical Fellowship (reorganized from The Evangelical Alliance in 1951) with four commissions (Evangelism, Missionary, Literature and Christian Action), Campus Crusade for Christ (now known as Cru) starting on the UCLA campus (1951), the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) being formed and in turn launching *Decision Magazine* (1960), the IFMA and EFMA jointly launching *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (1964), and Donald McGavran starting the Fuller School of World Missions (1965). Evangelicals founded at least 126 new missions agencies by the end of 1974,[16] clearly demonstrating evangelical mission vitality. As early as 1963 an ecumenical observer pointed to the explosive growth of evangelical missions and comparatively slow growth of mainline missions:

> The number of foreign missionaries of all agencies related to the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council increased from 1952 to 1960 by 4.5%; those of the conservative evangelicals by 149.5%; the income for 'foreign missions' of the former by 50.5%; of the latter by 167.3%.[17]

Further evidence of evangelical vitality was the numerous mission conferences and congresses organized by and for evangelicals from the end of World War Two to 1974. In 1936, evangelicals within the increasingly liberal, interdenominational Student Volunteer Movement (established in the 1880s) formed the Student Foreign Mission Fellowship (SFMF). InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) traces its origin to 1877 when a group of Cambridge students organized to pray and study the Bible together. The resulting organization came to the United States in 1938. In 1945, SFMF merged into IVCF, becoming its mission department.[18] In 1946 InterVarsity

16. Moreau, "Putting the Survey in Perspective," 36-37.

17. Eugene L Smith, "The Conservative Evangelicals and the World Council of Churches," *Ecumenical Review* 15, no. 2 (January 1963): 182; see also Anderson, "Christian Mission in AD 2000," 277.

18. Fred W. Beuttler, "Evangelical Missions in Modern America," in *The Great Commission:*

organized a missions conference for college students which, in spite of an ice storm on the first day, was attended by 576 students—three hundred of whom pledged to serve Christ overseas.[19] This blossomed into the much-anticipated triennial Urbana conferences. The last Urbana of this period took place in 1973 and welcomed 14,158 delegates.[20] In 1947, IVCF became one of the founding members of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students.[21]

In early 1966, the IFMA and EFMA jointly sponsored the Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission (Wheaton 1966). The 938 registered delegates represented over 258 evangelical mission-focused organizations. The two associations at that time represented more missionaries than the entire WCC, and the Congress redressed the fact that no explicitly evangelical mission conference had been held since Edinburgh 1910.[22] By 1972, Clyde Taylor, chair of the WEF Missionary Commission since 1951, reported,

> There are only 9 evangelical missions associations in the world.… The total missionary staff of these 9 fellowships approximates 20,000 overseas missionaries. For a total picture … there are at least 30,000 evangelical missionaries on active duty now. Of these two-thirds are directly or indirectly related to WEF.[23]

By 1966, concern on the part of Billy Graham and Carl Henry (then editor of *Christianity Today*) over the radical shift in Western theology—and the WCC in particular—framed the need for an international conference to unite evangelicals and clearly articulate and promote the evangelistic task of the Church. The result was the World Congress on Evangelism, held in Berlin (1966) with the theme "One Race, One Gospel, One Task." It was attended by nearly twelve hundred delegates from one hundred countries. This was followed by four regional conferences (in Europe, North America, Asia, and Latin America) from 1968 to 1971. With a total of just over eight thousand delegates, they were geared to ensure that evangelicals would remain focused on the primacy of evangelism and to generate sustained momentum for the anticipated Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne in 1974, the evangelical capstone of this period. In the same span and independently of Lausanne,

Evangelicals and the History of World Missions, ed. Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008), 124.

19. Jonathan Rice, "The New Missions Generation," *Christianity Today* 50, no. 9 (September 2006): 100-104.

20. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, "Urbana 73," accessed September 2, 2022, https://urbana.org/past-urbanas/urbana-73.

21. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, "InterVarsity and IFES History," accessed August 2, 2022, https://intervarsity.org/about-us/intervarsity-and-ifes-history?action.

22. A. Scott Moreau, "Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, gen. ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 222-23.

23. David Howard, *The Dream That Would Not Die: The Birth and Growth of the World Evangelical Fellowship, 1846–1986* (Exeter, UK: Paternoster, 1986), 173.

Campus Crusade organized Explo ’72 (Dallas) with eighty thousand participants and Explo ’74 (Seoul) in which three hundred thousand people received training in evangelism and discipleship.

The author chose 1974 as the final year of this period because it was the year of the Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne. Lausanne focused on evangelization (by which the organizers meant the whole task of the church) rather than evangelism (by which they meant the proclamation of the Gospel). Over twenty-seven hundred delegates came from one hundred fifty nations; including observers, media, and guests, more than four thousand were present. With almost one-half of the delegates from the Majority World, it was clear that evangelicals were not just Westerners. The report in *TIME* magazine noted that Lausanne ’74 was “a formidable forum, possibly the widest-ranging meeting of Christians ever held.”[24]

The Lausanne gathering had an immediate impact in at least two significant ways for evangelical mission. The first was the Lausanne Covenant, ratified by all delegates. In the decades ahead the Covenant became the statement of faith adopted by literally hundreds of organizations and institutions. Second, the energy generated at Lausanne for reaching people groups rather than nation states provided a significant shift in the way evangelicals thought about the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Further impact will be seen in the discussion of the next period (1975–2000).

While the Lausanne Congress clearly deserves to be the capstone of this period, the vitality of evangelical mission-focused organizations outside of the Lausanne orbit demonstrate healthy growth both in breadth across the world and in depth of theological commitment and missiological sophistication. Experiencing marginalization from ecumenical organizations through much of the first half of the twentieth century, by the end of 1974 evangelicals realized that they had their own significant people, organizational and financial resources. The age of the modern evangelical as a significant part of the world Church was dawning.

In the context of this dawning momentum, new foci were added to the evangelical missions agenda during this period. Bible translation was galvanized through the development of Wycliffe Bible Translators. Israel was born as a nation, generating intense interest in biblical prophecy and fueling conferences, political support, and financial support for missionary efforts. Evangelicals gained national prominence when five missionaries lost their lives while trying to reach an indigenous Indian group in Ecuador in 1956. The rise of communism and the blockade of missionary efforts behind the Iron Curtain eventuated in the development of Bible smuggling, made famous in evangelical circles by Brother Andrew. In 1963 the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) movement was launched in Guatemala by Ralph Winter and James Emery.

24. The Lausanne Movement, “The Legacy of the Lausanne Movement,” accessed August 2, 2022, https://lausanne.org/our-legacy.

The development of the terminology of "people groups" started with Donald McGavran's *Bridges of God* (1955) and was brought to the forefront by then-Fuller Seminary professor Ralph Winter's Lausanne 1974 address in which he demonstrated that more than two billion people were not only not yet reached, but would never be reached without important changes in missionary strategy and deployment.[25] At the same time, however, at Lausanne a significant number of evangelicals insisted that social concerns had a significant role in mission,[26] an issue that would grow and mature in the coming years. Finally, a new word—contextualization—appeared in the mission lexicon in 1972. While initial evangelical reaction was mixed in no small measure because it was coined in ecumenical circles and framed in terms of justice, this term would be incorporated—with shifts in its definition—into evangelical missiology by the end of the decade.[27]

American Pentecostal Missions

The remarkable growth of the Pentecostal movement and the developing growth of charismatics within mainline as well as evangelical denominations and organizations cannot be neglected or overlooked. Many have considered Pentecostals as evangelicals, but the explosion of American Pentecostal evangelical development merits separate focus.

Prior to the 1960s, despite their shared passion for Scripture and evangelism, evangelicals had largely dismissed the Pentecostal doctrines that evangelicals considered aberrant and the practices they had considered excessive. In the 1960s, when the Pentecostal and charismatic movements were gaining in numbers and momentum, their challenges to evangelical pneumatology in both doctrine and practice could no longer be ignored. At least in part because of disdain for perceived Pentecostal abuses, many evangelical organizations either dismissed or even banned specific Pentecostal and charismatic practices, especially speaking in tongues. Some were more willing to accommodate Pentecostal distinctives, but not many.[28]

As the evangelicals had felt about the ecumenical movement, so many Pentecostals felt about evangelicals. Marginalized (e.g., the IFMA did not allow Pentecostal organizations to join) and attacked (numerous evangelical books and

25. Donald Anderson McGavran, *The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Missions* (New York: Friendship Press, 1955); Ralph Winter, "The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism," in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: Official Reference Volume, Papers, and Responses. International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland. Minneapolis,* ed. J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications 1975), 226-41.

26. Anderson, "Christian Mission in AD 2000," 281-89.

27. A. Scott Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2012), especially chapter 1.

28. C. Peter Wagner, *Look Out! The Pentecostals Are Coming* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1973). Here, Fuller Seminary's Wagner touted Pentecostals' evangelistic success in Latin America, where he had been a missionary.

articles criticizing Pentecostal doctrines were published from the 1960s on), some responded in kind. Most Pentecostals, however, simply continued to be faithful to their understanding of God's call to being Spirit-filled and doing what the Spirit led them to do. Essentially left to their own devices, Pentecostals built their own organizations and associations largely without non-Pentecostal evangelical participation. Charismatics, on the other hand, stayed in evangelical and mainline denominations and mission organizations, initiated renewal movements from within and generated both interest and anxiety primarily because they wanted others to experience what God had given to them.

American Evangelical Missions, 1975–2000: From Marginalization to Prominence

The Demographic and Historiographical Shift

The vitality and energy of evangelical missions from the US grew almost exponentially from 1975 to 2000 so that by 1991,[29] for example, "Overseas missionary personnel of evangelical agencies outnumber those in mainline agencies by a ratio of 10 to 1."[30] The growth was so significant that American secular intellectuals could no longer ignore evangelicals, eventuating in a shift in the historiography of mission in the 1980s. Prior to then, secular intellectuals conceived of mission as nothing more than an ecumenical effort and the extension of American culture (and foreign imperialism). When they even bothered to portray evangelical missions, they did so as schismatic and ideologically driven. The massive changes in mission demographics together with the reluctant recognition of evangelical scholarship were such that secular religious historians began to disengage missions from American cultural extension and to acknowledge that evangelicals played significant roles in the story of American missional history.[31] Alongside this shift, in 1989 historian David Bebbington identified four key distinctives that characterized British evangelicals—but applied equally to American evangelicals: (1) conversion and a changed life, (2) activism (especially evangelism and missionary work, (3) being Bible-centered, and (4) being Christ-centered (especially on Christ's work on the cross on our behalf).[32] In 1997, missiologist Klaus Fielder noted,[33]

29. See, for example, Winston Crawley, *World Christianity 1970–2000: Toward a New Millennium* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001).

30. Robert T. Coote, "Evangelical Missions," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, eds. Nicholas Lossky et al., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 392.

31. See Robert, "From Missions, to Mission, to Beyond Missions."

32. David Bebbington, *Evangelicals in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

33. A scholar of the discipline of missiology, which incorporates history, theology, and the social sciences related to Christian mission.

> In spite of the pluriform expressions of the evangelical theology of mission, … the evangelical theology of mission is distinguished by certain common features: (a) a close relationship to holy scripture, which is regarded as inspired and all-sufficient for life and doctrine; (b) emphasis on the atoning and redemptive work of Christ; (c) emphasis on the necessity of a personal decision of faith (conversion); and (d) the priority of evangelization and the building up of congregations over all other work (e.g., social justice and interreligious dialogue) in the field of mission.[34]

In addition, missiologist James Scherer posited what evangelicals rejected, namely,

> It could not follow liberal Protestantism in embracing *(a)* the kinds of biblical criticism which undermined the deity of Christ and the authority of scripture, (*b*) evolutionary theory, or *(c)* a social gospel separated from the life-changing power of the proclaimed gospel.[35]

In the following section, our overview of evangelical missions during this late-century era of prominence will focus on the most important developments, as portrayed in five confluent "streams."

Agency Growth and Development

American evangelicals formed at least 210 mission agencies or organizations from 1975 to 2000.[36] By 1980 evangelicals comprised as much as 90 percent of the missionaries on the field,[37] and by 1999 US Protestant mission agencies which specifically defined themselves as "ecumenical" in ecclesiastical stance comprised only 1.1 percent of the US Protestant mission force (though their reported budget for overseas missions work was 9.1 percent of the Protestant agency total).[38]

From 1975 to 2000, US evangelical agencies developed numerous initiatives for recruiting new missionaries, being more effective in mass outreach and the managing of tasks of missions, including the 10/40 Window, people group thinking, and coming of AD 2000.

The 10/40 Window (coined in 1989) captured the imagination of evangelical missions and became a major focus (though not without debate) for missiologists, mission agencies and mission-minded churches.[39] The people group thinking that

34. Klaus Fielder, "Evangelical Mission Theology I," in *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspective*, eds. Karl Müller et al. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), S.V.

35. James A. Scherer, James A., Richard H. Bliese, and John Nyquist, "Evangelical Mission Theology II (Lausanne Movement)," in *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspective*, eds. Karl Müller et al. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), S.V.

36. See Moreau, "Putting the Survey in Perspective," 36-37.

37. Derived from Beuttler, "Evangelical Missions in Modern America," 119.

38. Moreau, "Putting the Survey in Perspective," 42.

39. Rick Love, "10/40 Window," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000), 938.

came onto the public stage at Lausanne became an organizing agenda for new missions efforts among people who had no access to the gospel in their own language or cultural frames of reference. The coming of the turn of the millennium was seen by evangelicals as a challenging target date for completing the task of the Great Commission now defined in people group categories, and they developed, announced and deployed literally hundreds of plans focused on AD 2000,[40] using tools such as the Jesus Film (developed in 1979),[41] SAT-7 satellite broadcasting, and Internet-based evangelism.

At the same time countries that had achieved their independence during the "winds of change" of the second era no longer welcomed overt missionary presence, and new strategies (e.g., nonresidential missionaries)[42] and terminology (e.g., "creative-access") were developed to describe and deploy people in such settings. While some doors closed in the 1950s and 1960s, others opened in the 1990s when the Soviet Union split into multiple independent countries. Such a massive missionary influx resulted that many agencies banded together to ensure better cooperation and less competition for their work in Russia.[43]

By the end of the century, however, evangelicals began discussing changes in the younger generation that would impact the entire evangelical missions enterprise. They urged mission agencies to change if they wanted to meet the new challenges in the coming century.[44]

Gatherings

Certainly, the ongoing gatherings of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) and World Evangelical Fellowship (later World Evangelical Alliance) in this period were among the most significant events that took place.[45] However, they do not give the complete story of American evangelical mission gatherings. Other groups and movements have perhaps been less visible in the larger public eye but were the engines that drove American evangelical missions to the end of the millennium.

40. David B. Barrett and James W. Reapsome, *Seven Hundred Plans to Evangelize the World: The Rise of a Global Evangelization Movement* (Birmingham, Alabama: New Hope, 1988); also, Todd M. Johnson and David B. Barrett, eds., *AD 2000 Global Monitor: Keeping Track of World Evangelization 1990–1994* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1995).

41. Paul A. Eshleman, "The 'Jesus' Film: A Contribution to World Evangelism," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 26 (April 2002): 66-73.

42. David Garrison, *The Nonresidential Missionary* (Monrovia, Calif.: MARC, 1990).

43. Donna Bahler, "The Co-Mission," *Mission Frontiers* 14 (March-April 1992): 3-4.

44. For example, see James Engel and William Dyrness, *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000); Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next: Quantum Changes in Christian Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000); George R. Hunter, III, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West Again* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000) and Leonard I. Sweet, *Soul Tsunami* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999).

45. For an expansion on this, see Moreau, "Evangelical Missions Development," 18-21.

In what the organizers called the only parallel to Edinburgh 1910 during the century, the First World Consultation on Frontier Missions was held in Edinburgh in 1980 and brought together 270 people representing 194 evangelical mission structures to focus on anticipated mission issues prior to the turn of the century.[46] A follow up conference took place in 1989.

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) sponsored three International Conferences of Itinerant Evangelists before the turn of the century (1983, 1986 and 2000), each of which had some ten thousand participants. The Billy Graham Center (BGC; established at Wheaton College in 1980) sponsored more than one hundred mission conferences and consultations between its founding in 1976 and 2000,[47] including A Century of World Evangelization: North American Evangelical Missions, 1886–1986 (1986), Conference on Evangelizing World Class Cities (1986), Evangelicalism in Transatlantic Perspective (1992), Evangelism Consultation 2000 (1995), Consultation on Support of Indigenous Christian Ministries in the Majority World (1996) and Internet Evangelism Conference (1999).

The AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, formed immediately after the LCWE Manila 1989 congress, sponsored three major Global Consultation on World Evangelization (GCOWE) meetings: Singapore (1989), Seoul, Korea (1995), and Pretoria, South Africa (1997). Their planned consultation for 2000 was cancelled, and they disbanded by constitutional provision in 2001.

InterVarsity continued the Urbana Student Mission conferences every three years, which grew from 17,112 delegates in 1976 to 18,818 in 2000, with further growth hampered by the size of the facilities. Campus Crusade organized the largest international conference linking ninety-five locations in fifty-five countries around the world by satellite feeds (Explo' 85[48]), and later brought together delegates from 102 countries to evangelize Manila in the 1990 "New Life 2000" campaign. Over a six-month span, participants shared the gospel with more than 3.3 million people.[49] In addition to the conferences and consultations, evangelicals gathered to publicly demonstrate their faith in Marches for Jesus which started in 1987.[50]

46. Ralph Winter, "Edinburgh 1980 Reports: World Consultation on Frontier Missions," *Mission Frontiers* 2, no. 12 (December 1980): 1, 4.

47. Billy Graham Center Archives, "Records of Billy Graham Center (BGC) - Collection 3," accessed August 2, 2022, https://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/guides/003.htm#501.

48. David B. Barrett and Todd Johnson, eds., *World Christian Trends AD 30–AD 2200: Interpreting the Annual Christian Megacensus* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001), 177.

49. Cru, "Cru Historical Fact Sheet," accessed August 15, 2023, https://www.cru.org/us/en/about/cru-press/background/cru-historical-fact-sheet.html.

50. A. Scott Moreau, "March for Jesus," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 597.

Evangelical Academics

Observers of the vigor of evangelical missions noticed not only the missions activities mentioned, they also saw growth in academic institutions and publications supporting the entire enterprise. By 2000, the perspective that American evangelical missionaries were not well-trained or educated, though still widely held in some non-evangelical circles, was no longer valid.

In the broader scheme of American evangelicalism, it was people like Carl Henry, Kenneth Kantzer, and Francis Schaeffer who propelled nascent evangelical intellectualism during much of the 1960s and 1970s. In missiological circles, it was faculty at institutions such as Fuller Theological Seminary, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, Asbury Theological Seminary, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School who were active contributors in evangelical and ecumenical journals and academic societies. To reach a popular audience, the Ralph Winter-founded US Center for World Mission in Pasadena, California, developed the course, "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement," through which thousands of lay evangelicals across the United States were trained in evangelical missional thinking. Perhaps more than any institution, Perspectives mobilized new energy and generated significant enthusiasm among missions-interested evangelical laity.

Evangelical mission journals that started between 1975 and 2000 include *Gospel in Context* (1978, ended 1979), *Mission Frontiers* (1979), *Urban Mission* (1983, ended 1998), *International Journal for Frontier Missions* (*IJFM*, 1984), *Transformation* (1984), *Journal of Applied Missiology* (1990, ended 1996), *Taiwan Mission Quarterly* (1991, ended 2000), *Missio Apostolica* (1999) and *Journal of Asian Missions* (1999).

Academic associations initiated during the same period include The US Society for Frontier Missions (1986, later changed to the International Society of Frontier Missiology) and the Association of Evangelical Professors of Missions (1968, reorganized as the Evangelical Missiological Society—EMS—in 1990). Both produced regular publications such as the *EMS Bulletin*, the *Evangelical Missiological Society Series*, and the *International Journal for Frontier Missiology*), and held annual regional and national conferences. Additionally, many evangelical missionaries and missiologists continued to be active members in the American Missiological Society, the International Associations of Missiological Studies, and published articles in *Missiology*, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research (IBMR),* and *International Review of Mission (IRM).*

In addition to numerous journal articles, evangelical missiologists, missionaries, and mission leaders produced significant research books for understanding mission as a whole,[51] and missional statistics for prayerful consideration.[52] It is therefore not

51. Moreau, gen. ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*.

52. Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993).

surprising that American evangelicals produced solid biblical studies on mission[53] and theological texts on the missionary nature of the biblical narrative.[54] However, it would not have been anticipated in the early 1900s that they would also write significant books on anthropology,[55] communication,[56] cross-cultural ethics,[57] culture,[58] intercultural communication,[59] history,[60] and sociology.[61] They also produced resources on the globalizing of theology,[62] newer ways of theologizing,[63] contextualization,[64] and the challenges of the world's religions,[65] and wrestled over church growth,[66] justice,[67] money,[68] and transformational development.[69]

In the applied frame, they produced grounded books for practitioners on a wide range of topics including church growth,[70] church planting movements,[71] cross-

53. Among many others, see Peter T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995).

54. For example, Walter C. Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000).

55. Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflection on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994).

56. Charles Kraft, *Communication Theory for Christian Witness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983).

57. Bernard Adeney, *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multi-Cultural World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995).

58. John R. W. Stott, and Robert T. Coote, *Gospel & Culture: the Papers of a Consultation on the Gospel and Culture* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979).

59. David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978).

60. Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996).

61. Stephen A. Grunlan and Milton. Reimer, *Christian Perspectives on Sociology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982).

62. See, for example, William A. Dyrness, *Learning about Theology from the Third World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990); Dyrness, *Invitation to Cross-Cultural Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992); and Dyrness, ed., *Emerging Voices in Global Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994).

63. Charles Van Engen, Nancy Thomas and Robert Gallagher, eds., *Footprints of God: A Narrative Theology of Mission* (Monrovia, CA: MARC Publications, 1999).

64. Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979).

65. Phil Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism: Evangelical Approaches to Contextualization* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980).

66. Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., *Exploring Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983).

67. Samuel Escobar and John Driver, *Christian Mission and Social Justice* (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1978).

68. Jonathan J. Bonk, *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991).

69. Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999).

70. C. Peter Wagner, *Church Growth and The Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981).

71. David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements* (Richmond, VA: International Mission Board of

cultural church planting,[72] cross-cultural conflict,[73] cross-cultural evangelism,[74] cross-cultural ministry,[75] folk religions,[76] planning and strategy,[77] trends,[78] urbanization,[79] and women in mission.[80] And this cursory listing does not even begin to account for the numerous and very popular mission-focused books published, such as *Peace Child* and *For This Cross I'll Kill You* (later re-titled *Bruchko*).[81]

One of the more fascinating developments of this period was the gradual introduction into evangelical missiological thinking of the use of terms and ideas first seen in ecumenical circles (such as *missio Dei*, justice, and mission "from everywhere to everywhere"). Typically, twenty years or more after such terms or ideas first caught on in ecumenical circles, evangelical missiologists adopted the same terms, though often reshaped them to fit evangelical convictions.

Trends and Contentious Issues

Across the American evangelical spectrum, it is easy to recognize six significant areas where evangelicals were challenged. Space permits only a brief synopsis of each.

First, the Church Growth Movement (pioneered by Donald McGavran and his colleagues at Fuller Theological Seminary in the prior phase) helped missionaries understand the dynamics of church growth.[82] While the movement peaked and then began to decline during this time, it generated huge energy over two core issues,[83] namely, to what extent was "growth" definable in terms of quantity rather than quality, and was "people group" thinking (which dominated evangelical agencies) as biblical as proponents believed?

Southern Baptist Convention, 1999).

72. David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980).

73. Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

74. Marvin K. Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Cross-Cultural* Evangelism (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974).

75. Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986).

76. Paul G. Hiebert, Daniel Shaw and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000).

77. Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization Rev. ed*. (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1990).

78. Stan Guthrie, *Missions in the Third Millennium: 21 Key Trends for the 21st Century* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2000).

79. Roger S. Greenway, and Timothy M. Monsma, *Cities: Mission's New Frontier* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989).

80. Ruth A. Tucker, *Guardians of the Great Commission: The Story of Women in Modern Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988).

81. Don Richardson, *Peace Child* (Glendale, CA: G/L Regal Books, 1974); Bruce Olson, *Bruchko* (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1978).

82. Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).

83. See, for example, Shenk, *Exploring.*

Second, evangelical missiologists also wrestled with issues related to holistic (or integral) mission. Significant impetus came from Majority World evangelicals who critiqued the position of many American evangelicals.[84] Though evangelical mission consultations produced statements on the need for evangelism and social concerns in mission, the fact that discussions and publications over this issue continue today is clear evidence that evangelicals have not yet come to a settled conclusion. It also is a reminder of the long-standing concern among US evangelical missionaries and scholars to avoid an uncritical acceptance of the social gospel. However, the generation that personally experienced that conflict is no longer with us, and the next generation of US evangelical missionaries and missiologists do not share the same concerns as their predecessors.

Third, by the 1990s, international short-term missions trips (typically one to three weeks long) organized within evangelical churches of all sizes began to explode, all without significant input from the agencies and well before evangelical scholars began any serious study of the phenomenon. Evangelical entrepreneurs, on the other hand, founded a host of new agencies with an exclusive focus on short-term missions trips.[85]

Fourth, at the very end of this period questions were being raised about evangelical contextualization practices with the concern that some were going so far that they were in danger of syncretism.[86] There were also evangelical reflections on how to respond to the religions of the world, noting that some evangelicals were shifting in a direction of inclusivism or universalism.[87]

Fifth, evangelical concerns over charismatic *emphases* reached a peak among missions in the 1970s. By the 1990s, however, many (though not all) of the same organizations were far less concerned with this as a doctrinal issue. Those evangelicals who did not become charismatic or Pentecostal during this period but who still recognized the continuation of the miraculous gifts in operation today were labeled "Third Wave,"[88] and many simply continued within their institutions and agencies. They took analytic approaches to their concerns (e.g., the "flaw of the

84. See, for example, Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999) and C. René Padilla, *Mission Between the Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985).

85. Roger P. Peterson and Timothy D. Peterson, *Is Short-term Mission Really Worth the Time and Money? Advancing God's Kingdom through Short-term Mission* (Minneapolis: STEM, 1991).

86. See Phil Parshall, "Danger! New Directions in Muslim Contextualization," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (October 1998): 404-410.

87. Harold Netland, *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991).

88. C. Peter Wagner, ed., *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit: Encountering the Power of Signs and Wonders Today* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1988).

excluded middle") as justification for what they had experienced.[89] Some engaged in energetic spiritual warfare, though not without controversy.[90]

The sixth and final trend to note is the incredible advent of the Internet and the way it enabled completely new forms of instant communication that evangelical missionaries and organizations were quick to grasp. From e-mail to Web sites such as *Brigada* (1995), Mission Network News (1999), MisLinks (1997), evangelicals explored ways to utilize this tool for missional purposes. At the same time, challenges including pornography and social media loomed over the horizon.[91]

Pentecostal Missions

Pentecostalism expanded at an almost exponential rate, and initially evangelicals maintained the antagonism of the prior period. However, they slowly thawed as they realized that the Pentecostals were not going to go away and were not interested in larger societal power games.

By the end of the century, Barrett et al. estimated that there were some 523 million Pentecostals/charismatics/neo-charismatics in the world,[92] and Pentecostal scholars began to publish important works.[93] Even so, by the turn of the century a Pentecostal assessment of their own mission reflection was that they had little focused mission theology.[94] They also recognized that they shared the following implicit values in their missional focus:

> (1) a high value placed on experience and participation; (2) a preference for oral communication; (3) spontaneity; (4) otherworldliness with the sense of

89. Initially proposed in print by Paul G. Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," *Missiology* 10:1 (January 1982): 35-47, and which continues to be used by missiologists today in multiple ways today.

90. Concerning proponents of "spiritual warfare" theory, there are none better known than Charles Kraft and Peter Wagner. See, for example, Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural* (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1989) and C. Peter Wagner, *Engaging the Enemy: How to Fight and Defeat Territorial Spirits* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1991); concerning the controversy, see Edward Rommen, ed., *Spiritual Power and Missions: Raising the Issues* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1995) and A. Scott Moreau et al., eds., *Deliver Us from Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission* (Monrovia, CA: World Vision, 2002).

91. Mike Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 299-320.

92. David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian and Todd M. Johnson, eds., *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Table 1-6a.

93. Amos Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

94. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "One Hundred Years of Pentecostal Missions: A Report on the European Pentecostal/Charismatic Research Association's 1999 Meeting," *Mission Studies* 17 (2000): 210-11.

eschatological urgency; (5) biblical authority; (6) openness to the Spirit; and (7) lay participation.[95]

An increasing number of American evangelicals recognized that Pentecostals and charismatics were very evangelical in their convictions on Scripture, the need for evangelism, their eschatology, and their energy for mission. Some evangelical missiologists promoted spiritual warfare and power ministries,[96] which had been largely overlooked by American evangelical missionaries,[97] but were deeply integrated into Pentecostalism. It is therefore not altogether surprising, then, that some evangelical mission organizations took a more pragmatic stance of cooperation rather than competition or avoidance.[98] Even so, by the end of the century some of the evangelical missions associations (e.g., the IFMA) still did not offer membership to mission agencies that did not repudiate Pentecostal doctrines, let alone those that promoted them.[99]

American Evangelical Missions, 2001–2020: From Prominent to Challenged

Agency Growth and Challenges

In the 2007 edition of the *Mission Handbook* Scott Moreau analyzed the data from 700 US Protestant mission agencies (2007). More than 82 percent were not denominationally oriented, and even among the denominational agencies many were evangelical. Thus, it is fair to say that the results identified among the seven hundred agencies will largely reflect the changes that took place among the US evangelical agencies. Moreau distinguished the findings by identifying as *trends* changes that were consistent over ten years or more and *shifts* as changes that happened for less than ten years (in this case, between 2001 and 2005).

The most significant trends (ten years or more) for the US Protestant agencies (2007) were increases in (1) US citizens working for US agencies, (2) non-US citizens working for US agencies, and (3) people working as tentmakers rather than as traditional missionaries. Additionally, there was an inflation-adjusted increase in the budgets used for overseas ministries, though this was concentrated in the largest agencies whose primary activities focused on relief and development. That latter shift

95. Kärkkäinen, "One Hundred Years of Pentecostal Missions," 212.

96. Kraft, *Christianity with Power*; Wagner, *Engaging the Enemy*; Rommen, ed., *Spiritual Power and Missions*; Moreau et al., eds., *Deliver Us from Evil*.

97. Hiebert, "Flaw of the Excluded Middle."

98. Gary B. McGee, "Pentecostal Movement," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), S.V.

99. Frizen, *75 Years of the IFMA*, 276.

carries its own significance, as financial resources overall swung from evangelism and church planting towards relief and development.

The most significant *shifts* (between five and nine years) were decreases in the number of (1) long term US missionaries, (2) short-term missionaries, and (3) agencies reporting primary activities in mass evangelism and national church nurture/support. These were offset by increases in the number of agencies reporting activities in the areas of (1) discipleship, (2) community development, (3) short-term missions coordination, (4) personal and small group evangelism, (5) partnership, (6) childcare/orphanages, (7) member care, and an increase in the extent of (8) financial and human resources shifted away from agencies reporting primary activities in the evangelism/discipleship category and towards agencies reporting primary activities in the relief and development category.

In sum, long term changes were more US citizens working for mission agencies as expenditures for overseas ministries increased. Shorter term changes included fewer US missionaries on the field and shift in resources and activities away from evangelism towards relief and development.

After the turn of the century, the survey revealed that challenges for US evangelical mission agencies include (1) mobilizing more US citizens to serve as full-time residential missionaries, (2) the appropriate care and support of the burgeoning non-US citizens serving under US agencies, and (3) ensuring that agencies whose primary activities are in evangelism and discipleship are adequately staffed and financed. From the author's perspective, the shift away from evangelism and church planting towards relief and development is perhaps the most significant change in evangelical mission agencies over the past century.

It is still too recent to determine the number of agencies founded since the turn of the millennium. Many are small and specialty focused (on short-term work, focused projects, or specialized emphases). They frame themselves around highly focused ministries or ways of living such as new monasticism.[100] It is possible that, given the American ideals of entrepreneurial individualism seen among evangelicals over the course of the century, a host of virtual agencies and missionally-framed social media groups will also spring up, having an Internet presence but no offices or even actual on location physical presence ministries.

A further change is that over the past two decades numerous US megachurches developed their own approaches to mission that are tailored to their philosophy of ministry so that the money given by their members is used in ways that gives them a greater sense of ownership. Evangelical mission agencies founded thirty or more years prior to this period are scrambling to develop viable and healthy partnerships

100. For example, Scott Bessenecker, *The New Friars: The Emerging Movement Serving the World's Poor* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006); Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *New Monasticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008).

with churches that do not focus on the mission agency of people they support, but of the people themselves.

One of the more significant changes today is the global financial uncertainty and its impact on Western evangelical missions. From the tech bubble's burst in 2000 to the real estate bubble's meltdown in 2008 to the post-COVID recession in 2022, evangelical agencies have seen wild swings in funding since the turn of the century which have challenged the traditional "faith missions" model of financing used by American missionaries and agencies.[101]

Finally, US mission agencies are also facing the retirement (and expiration) of a generation of donors who were more financially committed to missions than the generation replacing them. Additionally, an entire generation of post-World War Two missionaries are now retiring, and meeting their needs is becoming a significant issue for American evangelical agencies.[102]

Evangelical Mission Academics

Evangelical mission programs proliferated with degrees offered through the PhD. While these were in place in the 1990s, they have expanded in significance and scope since the turn of the millennium, most notably at the PhD level. A generation of evangelical missiological scholars has arisen, and their impact will be felt for generations to come. At the same time, however, the author has heard at missiological gatherings concerns that the job market for missionary academics is shrinking rather than growing, raising challenges for both those who complete their PhDs and for the institutions offering them.

Missiological topics being subjected to rigorous academic study are short term missions,[103] diaspora missiology,[104] orality,[105] environmental stewardship,[106] transformational development,[107] and ethnodoxology,[108] to name a few.

101. See Jonathan Bonk et al., eds., *The Realities of Money and Missions: Global Challenges and Case Studies* (Littleton, CO: William Carey, 2022).

102. Gary Corwin, "A Second Look: Retiring and Shy," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (2007): 8-9.

103. Robert J. Priest, ed., *Effective Engagement in Short Term Missions,* EMS Series Volume 16 (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008).

104. Sam George and Miriam Adeney, *Refugee Diaspora* (Littleton, Colorado: William Carey Publishing, 2018); see also Sadiri Joy Tira and Juliet Lee Uytanlet, eds., *A Hybrid World* (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2020).

105. Samuel E. Chang and Grant Lovejoy, eds., *Beyond Literate Western Contexts: Honor & Shame and Assessment of Orality Preference* (Hong Kong: International Orality Network, 2015).

106. Kathy Ide, ed., *Tending to Eden: Environmental Stewardship for God's People* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2010).

107. Bryant Myers, *Engaging Globalization: The Poor, Christian Mission and Our Hyperconnected World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017); see also Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009).

108. James R. Krabill et al., eds., *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology*

Contextualization theory and practice continued stretching traditional boundaries.[109] Debates over translation of divine familial language,[110] ecclesiology in practice (e.g., "churchless" Christianity[111]), church planting movements,[112] and insider movements[113] have characterized selected segments of Western evangelical missions.

Pentecostal Missions

With the core of Pentecostal-Charismatic pneumatology focused on empowerment for witness[114] it is natural that Pentecostal energy flows into mission. This is buttressed by academic inquiry, such as the online database of Pentecostal scholarship, Pentecostal-Charismatic Theological Inquiry International, (www.pctii.org) which has a membership of several hundred scholars.

Contentious Issues

It should be noted that each of the contentious issues from the previous period continue to be issues for evangelical missions. For example, the massive growth seen prior to 2000 in short-term missions accelerated, with an estimated 1.6 million Americans Christians of all theological persuasions going on international short term missions trips through American churches.[115] Clearly, however, COVID shut down international trips and the world has yet to see what the recovery for them will be.

In addition, however, a significant challenge for evangelical missions in the future will be the increasing splintering and broadening of what the term "evangelical" means.[116] Bebbington's four-fold depiction has stood well for thirty

Handbook (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2013), or see https://www.worldofworship.org.

109. See Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions*, as well as Moreau, *Contextualizing the Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018).

110. Roger Dixon, "Identity Theft: Retheologizing the Son of God," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 43 (April 2007): 220-26; and Rick Brown, "Why Muslims Are Repelled by the Term 'Son of God,'" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 43 (October 2007): 422-29.

111. Herbert Hoefer, *Churchless Christianity* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001); see also Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan: 2007).

112. David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World,* Midlothian VA (WIGTake Resources, 2004). For a critical review, see https://rtim.org/book-review-church-planting-movements-by-david-garrison/.

113. See, for example, Jan Hendrik Prenger, *Muslim Insider Christ Followers* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2017).

114. Wonsuk Ma, "'When the Poor Are Fired Up': The Role of Pneumatology in Pentecostal-Charismatic Mission," *Transformation* 24, no. 1 (January 2007): 28-34.

115. A. Scott Moreau, "Short Term Missions in the Context of Missions Inc.," in *Effective Engagement in Short Term Missions,* EMS Series Volume 16, ed. Robert J. Priest (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008), 1-34.

116. Moreau, interview by Send Institute, "Episode—Dr. Scott Moreau: A Missiology for North America and 1,000 Splinters," accessed August 22, 2022, https://www.sendinstitute.org/podcast-episode/episode-7-dr-scott-moreau-missiology-north-america-1000-splinters/.

years, but a parallel study done today may come to very different conclusions. Brian McLaren and more recent voices have challenged evangelical orthodoxy's rootedness in modernist epistemology.[117] In addition, biblical inerrancy is decreasingly the theological centerpiece for many evangelicals, and numerous social, political, and cultural "volcanoes" loom over the evangelical church on multiple fronts.[118]

Web-based advancements continue to revolutionize communication options. Positively, live online Webcasts from everywhere to everywhere are now common. Many (including the author) have spoken, taught, and trained people from around the globe via Zoom and similar platforms. Missionaries also utilize podcasts and social media to enhance mission networking effectiveness. On the other hand, they also have discovered that social media can become massive time-wasters. Missionary updates and prayer letters are available online or via e-mail, but security concerns have increased for those who work in countries opposed to Christian witness.

Rise of the Nones

Together with evangelicals splintering into multiple tribes, a huge challenge is the rise of a generation that is increasingly leaving faith behind.[119] Generation Z in the United States is being called the first post-modern, post-mission generation of American evangelicals[120]—and evangelical mobilizers are being challenged to energize a generation with a largely negative view of mission. While it is too early to develop conclusions, this is likely the most significant negative challenge for Western evangelical missions today.

Conclusion

For the first fifty years after the Edinburgh 1910 meetings, evangelical missions can best be understood in light of the antithetical relationship with ecumenical missions. The strong ecumenical movement tended to not see or understand evangelicals as part of the missional efforts coming from the West. American intellectuals almost completely overlooked them, and when they bothered to portray evangelical missionaries, they presented them as schismatic legalists who refused to keep up with the times. As a result, evangelicals defined themselves as an opposition set to the ecumenists, whom they characterized as despised compromisers of God's

117. David M. Hesselgrave, "Brian McLaren's Contextualization of the Gospel," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (January 2007), 92-100.

118. Leonard Sweet, *Rings of Fire: Walking in Faith through a Volcanic Future* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019).

119. Pew Research Center, "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace," accessed September 2, 2022, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/.

120. Jolene Erlacher and Katy White, *Mobilizing Gen Z* (Colorado Springs, CO: William Carey Library, 2022).

word and uncaring about the unsaved peoples of the world. Thus, for some six to seven decades, evangelical missionaries and their agencies perceived themselves with such words as faithfulness, fidelity, obedience, evangelistic, and uncompromising.

Even though by 1960 the demographics had reversed, most American evangelicals and ecumenicists were not aware of this for another thirty years. Evangelical missiologists (just coming into existence) continued to see ecumenical scholars as powerbrokers who compromised the Word of God. They did not trust overtures to participate meaningfully in ecumenical events (with some exceptions, such as the ASM) and felt that the ecumenical movement was so taken with Modernism (and then Postmodernism) that they would never return to their biblical roots.

By the year 2000, however, American evangelical missionaries and missiologists (especially including Pentecostals) were recognized as far more significant in missionary energy, missionary work, and missionary personnel than any other Protestant group.

Even then, however, there were significant signs on the horizon of new challenges to come in the twenty-first century for which US evangelical missionaries and missiologists have not been nearly as well prepared as they were to face the challenges that confronted them across in the twentieth century. These have been largely challenges from within rather than from without as US evangelicalism has fractured across theological, missional, generational, and political (among others) fault lines and the emerging generation is increasingly turning away from organized Christianity. While the final story of these concerning trends has yet to be written, they will certainly remain challenges for Western evangelical mission for the foreseeable future.

JBTS 8.1 (2023): 43 – 58

Forgotten Voices in Early Twentieth-Century Evangelical Theology

Kenneth J. Stewart

Kenneth is Professor of Theological Studies Emeritus, Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, GA

Abstract: Standard accounts of fundamentalism and evangelicalism in the inter-war period of the twentieth century uniformly emphasize the paucity of energetic scholarship in Scripture and Theology. It is suggested that energies were largely directed towards theological combat. We are told that those who did research and write did so for those who shared their commitments. This standard approach passes over the fact that on both sides of the Atlantic, there were evangelical scholars already in their careers in the 1920s and 30s who worked away doing solid scholarship, scholarship which laid the foundations for the better-recognized blossoming of evangelical learning in the post-World War Two era.

Keywords: Fundamentalism, Evangelicalism, Inter-Varsity, Tyndale House, Fuller Theological Seminary

Introduction

The dominant historiography regarding fundamentalism and evangelicalism prior to 1950 suggests that orthodox evangelical Protestants had been struggling to contain the advance of liberal and modernist viewpoints in the period extending to the end of World War I. Then, with the subsiding of the distraction of that armed conflict, conservative Protestants—observing the fresh advance of modernist views—became alarmist and bellicose. As the story has been told, fundamentalism (in its various hues) predominated in the 1920-1950 period. Serious Christian learning and scholarship declined in this period with evangelicalism only gradually extricating itself from this cul-de-sac through the North American founding of the National Association of Evangelicals (1942), the establishing of Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, CA (1947) and the formation of the Evangelical Theological Society (1949). Such developments were accompanied by the emergence of Billy Graham as a national figure after 1949, and the launch and reach of *Christianity Today* magazine (1956).

Respected historians of Christianity have elaborated this storyline of evangelical retreat and retrenchment within the USA for almost half a century. So, for example, George Marsden in "From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism" (1975),

Fundamentalism and American Culture (1980), and *Reforming Fundamentalism* (1987) charted the stages of disengagement and reengagement.[1] John Fea, in his 1994 essay, "Understanding the Changing Façade of American Protestant Fundamentalism," further developed the idea of phases in this movement, finding four. Two of these, the "militant" and the "divisive," describe the 1930-1960 period.[2] Joel Carpenter, in *Revive Us Again* (1997), noted the paucity of learned evangelical leaders after 1920, leaving the movement beholden to "evangelists, pastors, and Bible teachers" for direction.[3] Douglas Sweeney, in *The American Evangelical Story*, traced evangelical reengagement with the "larger theological world" to the late 1940s.[4] Garth Rosell, in his *The Surprising Work of God* (2008), depicted the reaction against the fundamentalist disdain of learning as falling in the post-1945 era and in the wake of sustained prayer for revival.[5] Owen Strachan, following in Rosell's footsteps in his *Awakening the Evangelical Mind,* depicted the resurgence of evangelical learning as postwar and very much centered around Harold John Ockenga and a coterie of young scholars he befriended as they were pursuing doctoral studies in greater Boston.[6] Concurrently, there has been some readiness to portray the situation of evangelical scholarship in the United Kingdom as less dire, with a recovery underway earlier.[7]

This historiography, while it has helpfully drawn attention to the enterprises which followed the 1942 creation of the NAE, has at the same time not been fully

1. George M. Marsden, "From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism," in *The Evangelicals: Who They Are and What They Believe*, eds. David F. Wells and John Woodbridge (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 125-27, describes a militant post-World War Two phase (1919-1926) followed by a period of withdrawal and sectarianism that lasted from around 1926 to about the 1940s. This sectarian phase was followed by another in which evangelicalism aimed at re-integration into modern society, while fundamentalism remained belligerent. This interpretative framework was pursued further in his writings during the 1980s. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987).

2. John Fea, "Understanding the Changing Façade of American Protestant Fundamentalism," *Trinity Journal* 15, no. 2 (1994): 181-99. Notably, Fea dated what Marsden called the sectarian phase of fundamentalism as "militant" and saw it as embracing the whole period from 1920-1936. This was followed by a "divisive" phase extending from 1941-1960, in which a movement held together by controversy gradually differentiated.

3. Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 71.

4. Douglas Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 172.

5. Garth Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 195.

6. Owen Strachan, *Awakening the Evangelical Mind: An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), chapters 3-4.

7. See this particularly in Mark Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), chapter 4. This situation in the United Kingdom compared to that of the USA had been interpreted more guardedly by F. F. Bruce, "The Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research," *Evangelical Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (January 1947): 52-61. See also Derek Tidball, "Post-War Evangelical Theology: A Generational Perspective," *Evangelical Quarterly* 81, no. 2 (2009): 145-60.

convincing because there remain several strands of evidence that point to earlier demonstrations of scholarly evangelical strength. This paper will argue that serious evangelical scholarship never entirely receded, though it initially worked under difficult constraints. Among these strands of contrary evidence are these:

Considerable Theological Diversity Observable in *The Fundamentals* Project (1909 ff)

There is, first, the diversity of outlook and conviction reflected in *The Fundamentals*, which were first published as pamphlets before being bound together in hardback volumes in 1917. This was a collaborative effort of Christian leaders who, while agreeing on essentials, varied widely in their levels of theological education and sophistication. The *Fundamentals*, in fact, mixed the efforts of those who were learned stalwarts, some even heads of theological colleges, and those whose accomplishments had more to do with notable pastoral success. The first group showed themselves to be still at home in the wider world of biblical and theological scholarship, which manifested the troubling trends seeming to warrant *The Fundamentals* project. We can grant fully that, as Marsden, Noll, and others have asserted, fundamentalism did become more belligerent and bellicose in the post-World War One era, without also granting that all of thoughtful conservative Protestantism was swept along by this tendency to shallowness and acrimony.[8] What is more, Marsden's earlier suggestion that Protestant fundamentalism was primarily a North American phenomenon has more recently been displaced by an acceptance that it existed internationally.[9] This being said, the belligerence for which fundamentalism became known was most concentrated in the western hemisphere.

While some of these thoughtful stalwarts had passed away by 1930, they used the balance of their careers to uphold orthodox Christian belief as winsomely as they could. These I will call the continuing evangelical "intelligentsia." Examples are as follows: Presbyterian contributors to *The Fundamentals* included James Orr (1844-1913), who we also remember for his volumes *The Christian View of God and the World* (1893), *The Progress of Dogma* (1902), *The Problem of the Old*

8. Mark Noll is careful to show the distinctions which can be drawn among the many contributors to *The Fundamentals.* See Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 38-47. Noll poignantly shows how *The Fundamentals* illustrate the growing tendency of conservative Protestants to forgo dialogue with those more moderate and liberal than themselves and to address the already convinced. Individual British contributors to *The Fundamentals* project are examined in an illuminating chapter by Geoffrey Treloar, "The British Contributors to *The Fundamentals*," in *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom During the Twentieth Century*, eds. David W. Bebbington and David Ceri Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), chapter 1.

9. Marsden's claim was originally set out in Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon: A Comparison with English Evangelicalism," *Church History* 46, no.2 (1977): 215-32. See Bebbington and Jones, *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom,* for a wider perspective.

Testament (1906) and the editing of the first edition of the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1915). Thomas Whitelaw (1840-1917), like Orr, a contributor to *The Fundamentals,* showed his familiarity with German criticism in *The Patriarchal Times* (1903). American Presbyterians were well-represented. B. B. Warfield (1851-1921) supplied to *The Fundamentals* project an essay on "The Deity of Christ," his faculty colleague at Princeton, Charles R. Erdman, supplied an essay on "The Holy Spirit and the Sons of God." Melvin Grove Kyle (1858-1933), then known as the most prominent evangelical advocate of biblical archaeology, supplied material on "The Recent Testimony of Archaeology to the Scriptures." Future president of Xenia Theological Seminary, he would take responsibility for the preparation of a second edition of the Bible encyclopedia edited by James Orr.[10] Baptists were represented such as E. Y. Mullins (1860-1928), president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and author of *The Christian Faith in its Doctrinal Expression*. From the sister seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, James J. Reeve (1866-1946) contributed as well. Anglicans such as W. H. Griffith Thomas (1861-1924), author of many commentaries and the posthumously published *Principles of Theology* (1930), as well as Dyson Hague (1857–1935), like Thomas connected with Wycliffe College, Toronto. Also participating in the writing of *The Fundamentals* was George F. Wright (1838-1921), the Congregationalist scholar of Oberlin College, Ohio; there, he combined scientific interests in geology with the teaching of the New Testament. He produced such intriguing titles as *The Ice Age in North America and its Bearing on the Antiquity of Man* (fifth edition, 1911). We should take it as settled that a significant proportion of the contributors to *The Fundamentals* were what might be called "gentleman theologians." They held positions of influence in well-regarded schools; they were known for their thoughtful writings.[11]

This Generation of Scholarly Evangelicals Was Succeeded by Another

The generation that learned from the aforementioned scholars entered their academic careers during the period when fundamentalism is characterized as growing less gentlemanly and more belligerent. One prominent member of this generation was J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937), who in spite of his personal involvement in controversy, wrote substantial volumes such as *The Virgin Birth of Christ* and *The Origin of Paul's Religion* that showed him to be capable of work of the highest standard.[12] J. Oliver Buswell (1895-1977) was installed as president of Wheaton

10. Jeffrey McDonald has recently drawn attention to the activity of Kyle in an essay, "Advancing the Evangelical Mind: Melvin Grove Kyle, J. Gresham Machen and the League of Evangelical Students," *Religions* 12, no. 7 (2021), viewable online at: https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/12/7/498.

11. In drawing these observations, I have utilized the four-volumes-in-two edition published by Baker Grand Rapids, in 2003.

12. Noll*, Between Faith and Criticism,* 36 suggests that, despite his scholarly books, Machen

College in 1926. He had already gained the BD and MA.[13] As president, Buswell secured the services of philosopher Gordon Clark (1902-1985) for Wheaton College in 1936, Clark having gained the PhD at the University of Pennsylvania in 1929. Harold Ockenga (1905-1985), who followed Machen from Princeton Theological Seminary to Philadelphia, graduating in 1930, acquired a Pittsburgh PhD by 1939 while in a busy urban pastorate.[14] Julius R. Mantey (1890-1965), a protege of the late A. T. Robertson (1863-1934), the Greek scholar of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, gained that seminary's doctorate and spent his entire career teaching that same discipline at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago.[15]

Ned B. Stonehouse (1902-1962), just joining the faculty of Westminster Seminary as Harold Ockenga passed through it in his senior year, had completed a New Testament doctorate at the Free University of Amsterdam in 1929. His colleague in Philadelphia from the beginning was Allan A. MacRae (1902-1997). Macrae had studied at BIOLA and graduated from Princeton Seminary then did doctoral research in Berlin before completing a PhD at the University of Pennsylvania in 1936.[16] Edward J. Young (1907-1968), who would join that same faculty in 1936 after graduate study in Semitics at Leipzig, went on to complete an Old Testament doctorate at Dropsie College, Philadelphia in 1943.[17] Merrill C. Tenney (1904-1985), for so long associated with Wheaton College, had been on the faculty of Gordon College from 1929 while a graduate student at Boston University. These were the teachers of the next generation which is today credited with helping evangelicalism to clear out the cobwebs. While we can acknowledge that some of those mentioned here had associations with the strident fundamentalist controversy, the principle remains that all of these had commenced or completed doctoral study in the pre-1940 period. A good number had a decade or more of teaching experience before the 1940s dawned. Many of these were already drawing recognition for their publications. In a good number of cases, the generalization drawn by Mark Noll that this generation of scholars wrote books primarily for other theological conservatives is inadequate.[18]

invested no time in writing for scholarly journals such as the *Journal of Biblical Literature.* However, as late as 1928, Machen was writing "Forty Years of New Testament Research," *Union Seminary Review* 40 (1928): 1-12.

13. David Michael Maas, "Buswell, James Oliver, Jr.," in *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the United States,* Vol. 1, eds. George Thomas Kurian and Mark A. Lamport (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 360-61.

14. Rosell, *Surprising Work of God,* 63.

15. Warren Cameron Young, *Commit What You Have Heard: A History of Northern Baptist Seminary*, *1913-1988* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1988), 63. Mantey is best remembered for the Dana and Mantey, *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (1927).

16. Robert Dunzweiler, "Tribute to Allan A. Macrae" in *Interpretation and History: Essays in Honor of Allan A. MacRae,* eds. R. Laird Harris et al. (Singapore: Christian Life, 1986), 37.

17. Davis A. Young, *For to Me to Live is Christ: The Life of Edward J. Young* (Willow Grove, PA: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2017).

18. Noll's interesting observation, given in *Between Faith and Criticism,* 44-45, would apply in very many cases, but the exceptions are noteworthy. E. J. Young's biographer details that scholar's

The same intellectual vitality was being shown in the Dutch American Protestant world. It is significant that the *Systematic Theology* of Louis Berkhof (1873-1957), first published in 1934, was in use in many Presbyterian seminaries (including Princeton) in the 1930s as well as in the new Fuller Seminary soon after its 1947 founding.[19] Berkhof had as his colleagues in Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, Clarence Bouma (1891-1962), a Princeton Seminary graduate who had gained a ThD from Harvard (1924) and Martin Wyngaarden (1910-1966), who furthered his Princeton Seminary studies with a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, gained in 1922.[20] Their affiliates in the Netherlands became well-known in North America after World War Two, but had already been active in scholarship before the wartime hostilities began. There was the father and son team, Jan Ridderbos (1879-1960) and Herman Ridderbos (1909-2007), both associated with the Theological School at Kampen.[21] Their contemporaries at the theological faculty of Amsterdam's Free University included theologians Valentine Hepp (1879-1950), his junior colleague G. C. Berkouwer (1903-1996), the Old Testament scholar, G. Ch. Aalders (1880-1961) and New Testament scholar, F. W. Grosheide (1881-1972).[22] When the British Inter-Varsity Fellowship's press began to publish monographs in this period, titles originally published in Dutch began to appear. Aalders' *Short Introduction to the Pentateuch* was one such. The launch of the *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (commencing 1951) under the editorship of Ned B. Stonehouse (Eerdmans/Marshall Morgan & Scott) emerged from this matrix.[23] Stonehouse recruited his Amsterdam doctoral supervisor, Grosheide, the younger Ridderbos of Kampen, a fellow Free University doctoral graduate from South Africa, Jac Muller, and an additional South African, Norval Geldenhuysm, to the team who wrote the individual New Testament volumes. It was Stonehouse's late 1920s collaboration that came to expression in this series.

Meanwhile, the pre-World War Two era was also a period of promise within conservative French Protestantism. Three authors in particular came to the attention of the English-speaking world, the Paris theologian, August Lecerf (1872-1943), the Montpellier theologian, Jean Cadiér (1898-1981), and Pierre-Charles Marcel

extended interactions with British OT scholar, H. H. Rowley. See Allan A. Harman, "E. J. Young," in *Bible Interpreters of the Twentieth Century*, eds. Walter Elwell and J. D. Weaver (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 191.

19. Henry Zwaanstra, "Louis Berkhof," in *Reformed Theology in America,* ed. David A. Wells (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 171n57.

20. On Bouma, see Kenneth J. Stewart, "Rehabilitating Clarence Bouma, First President of ETS," *Presbyterian* 49, no. 1 (2023): 144-55.

21. We find articles by each in the *New Bible Commentary* (1953) and *Dictionary* (1960).

22. The theological faculty of the Free University in this period is described in Arie Theodorus van Deursen, *The Distinctive Character of the Free University in Amsterdam: 1880-2005* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), chapters 2-3.

23. The British edition of this commentary series went by the name, *New London Commentary.*

(1910-1992).[24] All became known outside their homeland as their works were translated.[25] Lecerf and his pupil, Marcel, had formed strong links with the theological developments at Kampen and the Free University of Amsterdam.

A very similar process can be observed in the UK and in what Australian historian, Geoffrey Treloar, has called "Greater Britain."[26] In 1936 the Anglican evangelical, T. C. Hammond of Dublin (1877-1961), already active as an apologist within Ireland, was invited to Sydney, Australia to become the principal of Moore Theological College. Just before he embarked, he dictated what would prove to be one of the most influential handbooks of evangelical theology in the first half of the twentieth century, *In Understanding Be Men*. This, he followed up with an apologetics text, *Reasoning Faith: An Introduction to Christian Apologetics.*[27] In New Zealand, the classicist E. M. Blaiklock (1903-1983) was university lecturer in Greek and Latin from 1927 and professor of Classics from 1946. Like many of his generation, he turned his knowledge of the Classical world to the study of the New Testament; a host of publications such as *The Christian in Pagan Society* (1951) followed.[28] Meanwhile, Alan Stibbs (1901-1971), who had been a missionary to China with the China Inland Mission, returned to England in 1935 because of persistent poor health complicated by military hostilities. He joined the teaching staff of Oak Hill College and was soon advising the young Inter-Varsity Press in publications.[29] Ernest Kevan (1903-1965), later to be first principal of London Bible College (today's London School of Theology), was at this time advancing his education at the University of London while serving London pastorates.[30] Christ College Cambridge fellow, G. T. Manley (1872-

24. On Lecerf, see the dissertation of Thomas Reid, "Auguste Lecerf: an Historical Study of the First of the Modern French Calvinists" (PhD diss., Reformed Theological Seminary, 1979).

25. August Lecerf's major work of 1931 was *Introduction to Reformed Dogmatics* (E.T. London: Lutterworth, 1949). Jean Cadiér is best remembered for *The Man God Mastered* (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship: 1960), a short life of John Calvin. Marcel became known for his 1950 work on infant baptism, Pierre-Charles Marcel, *Baptism: The Sacrament of the Covenant of Grace* (London: James Clarke, 1953), and on preaching, *The Relevance of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963).

26. The interesting phrase is that of Geoffrey Treloar, *The Disruption of Evangelicalism: The Age of Torrey, Mott, McPherson and Hammond* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 2017), 10.

27. T. C. Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men*, originally published in 1936 by Inter-Varsity (UK), was reissued in a 1983 revised edition prepared by the late David F. Wright. The story of the hasty production of Hammond's 1936 work (just prior to his embarking for Australia) is told by Oliver Barclay in *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935-1995: A Personal Sketch* (Leicester: IVP, 1997), 31.

28. On Blaiklock, see https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5b28/blaiklock-edward-musgrave.

29. See the biographical sketch of Stibbs in Andrew Atherstone, ed., *Such a Great Salvation: The Collected Essays of Alan Stibbs* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2008), 15. Stibbs had a hand in the editing and abbreviating of the writings of the late American theologian, B. B. Warfield, on biblical inspiration, released in a 1941 pamphlet as *Revelation and Inspiration*. For details, see Kenneth J. Stewart, "J. I. Packer as a New Warfield? A Chapter in the Post-1930 Resurgence of Reformed Theology," *Themelios* 47, no. 3 (2022): 518.

30. Ernest Kevan, while serving churches and the London Bible College, was able to complete the University of London BD, MTh, and PhD. See Paul E. Brown, *Ernest F. Kevan* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2012).

1961), had been to India with the Church Missionary Society, and then returned home for reasons of health. Selected to be the secretary of the Church Missionary Society, he simultaneously functioned as the chairman of British Inter-Varsity's Literature Committee.[31] Manley both compiled the multi-authored *New Bible Handbook* (Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1947) and later wrote on the Second Advent and the book of Deuteronomy.[32] J. Stafford Wright (1905-1985) and Phillip Edgcumbe Hughes (1915-1990) were both associated with The Bible Churchman's Training College, Bristol in the 1930s.[33] John W. Wenham (1913-1996), who would later be associated with that same college, was, in the prewar years, lecturing in Greek in St. John's College, Highbury (London). At this stage, he was already known for his love of the writings of J. Gresham Machen and B. B. Warfield.[34] On the eve of World War, the Brethren classicist, W. E. Vine (1873-1949) was completing his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words,* a work which has remained continuously in print since that time.[35]

North of the border, there were also evidences of a resurgent evangelical scholarship. In 1935, F. F. Bruce (1910-1990) interrupted his Vienna postgraduate study to take a lectureship in Greek in Edinburgh University. Subsequently, he would teach in three English universities, completing his career as Rylands professor of Biblical Criticism at Manchester. He would later collaborate with the American Ned B. Stonehouse by contributing three volumes to the *New International Commentary* and (at the latter's death) succeeding him as the editor of the commentary series. At Glasgow, the future editor of the *New Bible Commentary* (1953), Francis Davidson (1882-1953), became principal of the Bible Training Institute (a Bible college begun in the era of D. L. Moody) in 1938, having taught there since 1934. Davidson's prowess in biblical theology was recognized by his giving the annual Tyndale House biblical lecture in 1946. [36]

31. Douglas Johnson, *Contending for the Faith: A History of the Evangelical Movement in the Universities and Colleges* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1979), 318.

32. G. T. Manley, *The Book of the* Law: *Studies in the Date of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); *The Return of Christ* (London: Inter-Varsity, 1960). Biographical details regarding Manley (1872-1961) are hard to locate. Basic details are available in *Crockford's Clerical Directory.*

33. Wright (1905-1985) both studied at and then was vice-principal of the Bristol College from 1930. He was instrumental in bringing onto the staff rising scholars Philip Edgecumbe Hughes (1915-1990) and John Wenham (1913-1996). The college took the new name, Tyndale Hall, in 1952.

34. Roger Beckwith, "John W. Wenham," in *Bible Interpreters of the Twentieth Century,* eds. Walter A. Elwell and J.D. Weaver (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 253-59. Oliver Barclay, *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935-1995* (Leicester, IVP: 1997), 31.

35. Vine is best remembered for his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, initially published in multiple volumes by Pickering and Inglis in 1939. An accomplished classicist, Vine's work made word-study, then being championed in Germany by Gerhard Kittel, accessible to those working from English translations. On the quality of Vine's work, see F. F. Bruce, "W. E. Vine the Theologian," in *W. E. Vine: His Life and Ministry,* ed. Percy Ruoff (London: Oliphants, 1951), 70-72. Bruce wrote forewords for the individual volumes, which when complete were consolidated in one. Bruce also gave high praise to Vine's NT commentaries on Galatians and Thessalonians.

36. G. W. Grogan, "Davidson, Francis," in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. Nigel M. Cameron (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 235. In addition to his editorial labors,

Another contributor to that *Commentary* was Daniel Lamont (1870-1950), professor of Practical Theology in New College, Edinburgh (1927-1945). His colleague at Edinburgh, the dogmatician G. T. Thomson, (1887-1958), cowrote the commentary on Romans in the same volume. Another Scot, George Hendry (1904-1993), by then professor of theology in Princeton Theological Seminary, contributed the exposition on Ecclesiastes to the same volume. Edinburgh Church historian, J. H. S. Burleigh (1894-1985), an authority on Augustine, edited the *Evangelical Quarterly* (1943-1950). At Aberdeen University, the sympathetic church historian G. D. Henderson (1888-1957) was writing prolifically on subjects ranging from Jonathan Edwards to Scottish links with the Dutch churches.[37] And in Edinburgh's Free Church College (today's Edinburgh Theological Seminary), professors John Macleod (1872-1948), Donald Maclean (1869-1943), and John R. MacKay (1865-1939) were exercising a biblical and theological influence out of all proportion to the size of their small college. What was especially notable was the continued presence of evangelical theologians within the Scottish university faculties of divinity—a phenomenon not evident at that time in England.

This state of things being so, by 1938, the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, drawing on sympathetic academics in both countries, began discussions regarding raising the level of evangelical biblical and theological scholarship. These talks began informally in September of that year with a small group (the Biblical Research Committee) including G. T. Manley, Alan Stibbs, H. E. Guillebaud (1888-1941), John Wenham, and Douglas Johnson (1904-1991).[38] By July 1941, these discussions would lead to a conference on "The Revival of Biblical Theology" which now drew the persons above-named as well as D. M. Lloyd Jones (1899-1981) and the Brethren scholars F. F. Bruce and W. J. Martin.[39] These 1941 deliberations would lead eventually to the conceptualizing of the *New Bible Commentary* (1953), the companion *Dictionary* (1962), and the series of Tyndale Biblical Commentaries. This was also the context in which the small but highly influential book of F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (1943), came to be published.[40] The idea of a residential center for intensive biblical studies was put forward; this idea was the

Davidson delivered a notable Tyndale House (Cambridge) Biblical Lecture published as *Pauline Predestination* (London: Tyndale Press, 1946).

37. We will find that he was a regular contributor to the *Evangelical Quarterly* (f. 1929), discussed below.

38. The 1938 conference is quite fully described in T. A. Noble, *Tyndale House and Fellowship: The First Sixty Years* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006), 30.

39. Tim Grass, *F. F. Bruce: A Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 42-3. It emerges that W. J. Martin had become a lasting friend with Edward J. Young during their years of study at Leipzig. See Davis A. Young, *For Me to Live is Christ: The Life of Edward J. Young* (Willow Grove: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2017), 82.

40. F. F. Bruce, *In Retrospect: Remembrance of Things Past* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 123-29, provides valuable recollections of how these evangelical efforts at serious biblical studies were reviewed in the major periodicals of that time.

germ from which grew the establishment of Tyndale House, Cambridge in 1944.[41] It was in this same conference that the ownership and management of the periodical, *The Evangelical Quarterly,* passed from the hands of its founders to the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. The dynamism of the now-aged founders of that periodical was ebbing, and being in full support of these Inter-Varsity developments it was natural for them to join forces.[42] But this consideration leads us, naturally, to consider this in a larger framework.

The Launch of New Periodicals

The way had been opened to a new era of theological scholarship with the 1929 commencement of the *Evangelical Quarterly* at Edinburgh. The *EQ* commenced publication in the January of the same year, which saw the demise of the *Princeton Theological Review* (1903-1929). There was more to this transition than at first met the eye. The decision to end publication of the PTR had been long in coming and the faculty of another theological college with which Princeton had cordial relations, Edinburgh's Free Church of Scotland College, was well aware of this.[43] The new journal, commencing in January 1929, featured many of the same writers as had filled the pages of the expiring American publication. Princeton professor Caspar Wistar Hodge (1870-1937) wrote the lead article for the first issue of EQ. By 1930, the former editor of the PTR, Oswald T. Allis (1880-1973), was announced as associate editor of the new periodical; he remained in this role until his passing. The EQ became a kind of meeting place for scholarly senior evangelical Protestants drawn from the Continent, Great Britain, the USA, and Canada. There, one also found essays by the Amsterdam theologian, Valentine Hepp (1879-1950), the aged French Calvin scholar, Emil Doumergue (1844-1937), and the German historical theologian, August Lang (1867-1945). Many younger scholars such as future Archbishop of Canterbury, Donald Coggan, the historical theologian, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, New Testament scholar, P. E. Hughes, and theologian T. F. Torrance made their literary debuts in its pages.[44] From the American side, we find early contributions from Gordon H. Clark, Edward J. Young, and Cornelius Van Til. The *EQ* in its first decade was clearly demonstrating an energetic effort to foster international evangelical scholarship. While we certainly

41. Noble, *Tyndale House and Fellowship*, 49.

42. Grass, *F. F. Bruce,* 43. Bruce, "Tyndale Fellowship," 53, directly credits John R. MacKay and Donald Maclean of the Free Church college with the 1929 launch of the *Evangelical Quarterly.*

43. The Free Church of Scotland College's principal, John Macleod, had visited Princeton in September1928 and would have been aware both of the uncertain future of the *PTR* and of the polarization within Princeton Seminary that would lead to its division. See G. N. M. Collins, *John Macleod, D. D.* (Edinburgh: Free Church of Scotland, 1951), 141.

44. F. F. Bruce, "Evangelical Quarterly," in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. Nigel M. Cameron (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 305; John H. Skilton, "Oswald T. Allis" in *Bible Interpreters*, eds. Elwell and Weaver, 129.

observe some scholars writing in the twilight of their careers, what is especially striking in that pre-World War Two era is the emergence of a younger generation drawn from the USA and the UK. Many were already in teaching posts; major works of scholarship were already on the drawing-board.

In the same inter-war period arose the original *Christianity Today* magazine (not the contemporary publication of the same name), founded in 1930 by the New Jersey mainline Presbyterian, Samuel G. Craig (1874-1960). It stood for a robust doctrinal evangelicalism. Craig, a Princeton Seminary graduate, had functioned until 1930 as the editor of a denominational newspaper, *The Presbyterian,* published at Philadelphia. But as Craig's opposition to the reorganization of Princeton Seminary and support for the new seminary at Philadelphia (Westminster) made him an ecclesiastical square peg, he threw his energies into organizing a more robust alternative publication. Craig eventually parted ways with J. Gresham Machen when it became clear that Machen was resolved to incur discipline from their denomination over his promotion of a nondenominational mission agency. Craig, who did not support that agency's existence, or the near-certain prospect of denominational division, maintained his magazine, which was aimed at conservative mainline Presbyterians in the American north and south. *Christianity Today* also had readers and contributors well beyond the USA well into the 1940s. In 1934, the then-Evangelical Theological College of Dallas, TX (now Dallas Theological Seminary) assumed ownership of *Bibliotheca Sacra,* a theological journal earlier managed by Xenia Seminary of St. Louis and Oberlin College, Ohio.[45] By 1938, young Westminster Seminary (f. 1929) commenced publication of the *Westminster Theological Journal.* And it was not only transatlantic evangelicals who were busy with such theological journalism. Australians who were personally conversant with the resurgence of evangelical scholarship in the United Kingdom determined to do their part and in 1942 launched the *Reformed Theological Review.* This journal, Australia's longest-running theological publication, commenced under the leadership of three men, two of whom had conducted theological studies in Edinburgh, itself a center of the new evangelical scholarship.[46]

45. John D. Hannah, *Uncommon Union: Dallas Theological Seminary and American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 107. Xenia Seminary, St. Louis, was in a period of instability, having recently relocated from Ohio. Earlier still, *Bibliotheca Sacra* had been managed at Oberlin College, Ohio and before that at Andover Seminary.

46. Rowland Ward, *Presbyterians in Australia: Origins, Conflicts and Progress: 1803-2018* (Melbourne: New Melbourne Press, 2021), 303; Reformed Theological Review, "History," accessed 3 October 2023, https://rtrjournal.org/index.php/RTR/History. John Gillies (1807-1952) was a retired professor of New Testament at Ormond College, Melbourne. He was associated with Arthur Allen (1905-1958), a Presbyterian minister (a 1937 graduate of the Free Church College, Edinburgh) and Robert Swanton (1910-1992, a Presbyterian minister ordained in South Australia and recently returned from graduate studies at New College, Edinburgh). In time, their effort would be supported by T. C. Hammond and Moore Theological College, Sydney.

Developments in Bible Translation

Meanwhile, on a completely different front, we can note the completion and publication of an idiomatic bible translation project which predated the better-known efforts resulting three decades later in the *New International Version*. I refer here to the publication in 1945 of the Berkeley Version of the New Testament, an idiomatic contemporary version. The NT was the work of Gerrit Verkuyl (1872-1967), a 1904 graduate of Princeton Seminary. With the encouragement of the Princeton faculty, Verkuyl went on to complete a PhD in New Testament at the University of Leipzig. After working for many years in the Christian Education division of his denomination, he took what was, by the standards of the time, early retirement in order to devote himself to the task of a producing a contemporary language New Testament. On account of its wide acceptance, Zondervan purchased the rights to the version in 1950. Verkuyl, working with a team of twenty Old Testament scholars, then added the OT.[47] After Zondervan released the entire Bible in 1959, F. F. Bruce declared that "among the recent English translations of the whole Bible which have been sponsored by private groups none is more worthy of special mention." Since its 1936 origination closely coincided with the 1937 determination to produce the Revised Standard Version, and its completion (in 1959) took place with the completed RSV already in circulation, Bruce suggested that the Berkeley, or Modern Language Bible (as Zondervan styled it) was "a more conservative counterpart" to that version.[48] For our purposes here, it is enough to note that this represents a very notable example of scholarly conservative Protestant initiative by an established scholar in the decade before any renaissance of evangelical learning is conventionally reckoned to have been underway.

New Theological Societies

That theological societies supportive of evangelical theology were begun in the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. in the post-World War Two era is quite well-known.[49] But it would be a mistake to suppose—in keeping with the now-conventional historiography—that Tyndale House and Fellowship in Cambridge and the Evangelical Theological Society were the creation of a new generation of biblical and theological scholars only beginning to exert its influence in the postwar period. In

47. https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1962/03/he-began-his-life-work-at-65, accessed 21 March 2023.

48. F. F. Bruce, *The English Bible: A History of Translations from the Earliest English Versions to the New English Bible* (London: Lutterworth, 1961), 220. It is noteworthy that Verkuyl's New Testament translation was available for sale a year before the New Testament portion of the Revised Standard Version was available in 1946.

49. The closely parallel beginnings of the two societies are helpfully sketched by Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013), 93-96.

fact, as one reads the accounts of how these distinct societies emerged, one is struck by the importance of the sponsorship and leadership of well-established scholars in these new initiatives. The promoters of these enterprises were individuals whose academic careers and publications were well on their way in the mid-1930s.

As regards the early discussions leading to the creation of Tyndale House, we have referred (above) to a circle of scholars already in their careers: G. T. Manley, Alan Stibbs, and F. F. Bruce, to which were soon added W. J. Martin, lecturer in Semitics at the University of Liverpool and David Broughton Knox, an Australian Anglican posted to the UK as a military chaplain. Geoffrey Bromiley, then of the Bible Churchman's Training College, Bristol soon appeared in this company and in 1942 was tasked with the creation of "study circles" which would bring into communication established and younger scholars in the various theological disciplines. One is struck by the transnational scope of what Bromiley was attempting. In Old Testament, Bromiley sought to link Americans Oswald T. Allis and Edward J. Young with Netherlanders G. C. Aalders and Jan Ridderbos and an English contingent comprised of Donald Coggan, Stafford Wright, Derek Kidner, and Donald Wiseman. His list of New Testament scholars to be approached was larger still. It included the Australian (named above) David Broughton Knox (later of Moore Theological College, Sydney), Leo Stephens-Hodge, J. Connell (later of London Bible College), George Beasley-Murray (future principal of Spurgeon's College), and Marcus Loane (future archbishop of Sydney). Dogmatic theologians were to be brought into discussion with one another also. Here Scottish names were in abundance: G. T. Thomson, Daniel Lamont (both of New College, Edinburgh), Francis Davidson of Glasgow's Bible Training Institute, and the rising T. F. Torrance. D. M. Lloyd Jones, recently resident in London's Westminster Chapel, and Alan M. Stibbs of Oak Hill College were joined by the Norwegian O. Hallesby and the French theologian, Auguste Lecerf.[50] The wartime conditions that made such consultation highly difficult eventually gave way to freer international travel and with it, theological conferences.

On the American side, momentum built from August 1944 onward in gatherings of evangelical scholars invited together by Harold J. Ockenga, pastor of Boston's Park Street Church. Conferences that met at Plymouth, Massachusetts featured academic papers across the theological disciplines. Each such gathering (they were reconvened in 1945 and 1947) was larger than the preceding; each featured a wider range of American evangelical colleges and seminaries representing Presbyterian, Baptist, Christian Reformed, and Bible Church constituencies. Carl F. H. Henry, Cornelius Van Til, Clarence Bouma, H. C. Thiessen, Merrill Tenney, Everett Harrison, and Alan MacRae were among the presenters featured.[51] The momentum demonstrated

50. Noble, *Tyndale House and Fellowship,* 45. One is struck by how many of those named had already been active contributors to the *Evangelical Quarterly* in the 1930's.

51. The only account of these gatherings known to the present writer is that provided in Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God,* 197-201.

by these now-mature scholars in these summer gatherings alerted thoughtful faculty members at the region's Gordon College to the plausibility of attempting a nation-wide society which would draw together evangelical scholars working in the theological disciplines. And so, from Gordon College went out letters of invitation to attend a December 1949 inaugural gathering at Cincinnati, Ohio of a planned Evangelical Theological Society.

The accounts we have of that inaugural meeting offer strong corroboration of the thesis being advanced in this essay: there were on hand proficient evangelical practitioners of the theological disciplines who had been at their posts from the 1930s onwards ready to forge a professional society aimed at mutual encouragement. The initial president chosen by the society was Clarence Bouma (1891-1962), who held a ThD from Harvard Divinity School. Since 1924, he had been teaching theology, ethics, and apologetics at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids. He was one of five faculty members of his institution to be present. Gordon Divinity School, Fuller Seminary, Faith, Westminster, Asbury, and Northern Baptist seminaries were well represented. Christian philosopher Gordon Clark (1902-1985) was present; by 1949 he was professor of Philosophy at Butler University, Indianapolis—having earlier taught at the University of Pennsylvania and Wheaton College.[52] Quaker philosopher Harold B. Kuhn was present; the Asbury professor had gained the Harvard doctorate. Oswald T. Allis, the Berlin-trained Old Testament scholar was on hand, as was his former colleague, Allan MacRae (1902-1997), who had gained the doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania. Several doctoral graduates of the Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning (Philadelphia)—already well on in their teaching careers—were there: Edward J. Young (1907-1968), G. Douglas Young, and R. Laird Harris (1911-2008). Various theologians were in the Cincinnati gathering: Carl F. H. Henry (1913-2003) of Fuller, J. Oliver Buswell (1895-1977) of Faith Seminary, John Murray (1898-1975) of Westminster Seminary (Philadelphia), and Warren C. Young of Northern Baptist Seminary.[53] Sixty scholars in all attended the inaugural meeting.

Further Confirmations of the Attainments of this Pre-World War Two Generation

Corroboration of the level of accomplishment recognized to exist in this generation is available to us in more than one way. We see it first in the publication of theological literature across national and linguistic divides. Several examples will illustrate this.

52. Clark, an under-studied figure through this whole era, has been carefully described by Douglas Douma, *The Presbyterian Philosopher: The Authorized Biography of Gordon H. Clark* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016).

53. Here I rely on the tabulation of persons present provided by John Wiseman, "The Evangelical Theological Society: Yesterday and Today," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28, no. 5 (1985) 6-7. There is also a report on the founding convention and a detailed accounting of the persons and institutions represented in *Calvin Forum* 15, no.7 (1950): 131, 149-60.

Beginning in 1939, Inter-Varsity (UK) issued English versions of three publications by Free University of Amsterdam professor, G. C. Aalders (1880-1961): *Recent Trends in Old Testament Criticism* (1939), *The Problem of the Book of Jonah* (1948), and *Short Introduction to the Pentateuch* (1949). In 1946, Douglas Johnson of British Inter-Varsity endorsed the press's copublication of the volume of essays produced by the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia: *The Infallible Word.* It was recognized at the time as being a forceful articulation of biblical authority. The same British publisher issued its own edition of E. J. Young's *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1949). Inter-Varsity (UK) secured the same author as the original commissioning editor of the *Tyndale* series of Old Testament Commentaries.[54] Conversely, Inter-Varsity's 1943 title by F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* was available in the USA even in wartime 1943. What we have here is straightforward evidence that the biblical and theological writing of scholars who had been plying their trade since at least the 1930s was raising the level of discussion among thoughtful evangelicals internationally.[55]

We see the same phenomenon from a slightly different perspective when we consider the mobility of faculty whether for new employment or for guest lectures. Harold Ockenga, intending that Fuller Seminary attain a desired level of academic rigor made serious (but not always successful), attempted to recruit individuals for the faculty of Fuller Seminary, which opened in 1947. For reasons which are not entirely clear, Old Testament scholar Allan MacRae of Faith Seminary could not be enticed. Neither could church historian Paul Wooley of Westminster or philosopher Gordon Clark of Butler University.[56] But experienced academics Everett F. Harrison of Dallas Theological Seminary and George Eldon Ladd of Gordon Divinity School were agreeable to such invitations.[57] Fuller, aiming high, was determined to secure those who had track-records of teaching and writing extending back into the 1930s. Fuller did the same when in 1958 it secured the services of the British historical theologian, Geoffrey Bromiley, who (as we have seen) had been seeking to advance scholarship since the early 1940s.[58]

54. First published in the USA by Eerdmans, 1949. The U.K. edition followed in 1954. See also Davis A. Young, *For Me to Live is Christ: The Life of Edward Young* (Willow Grove: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2017), 192.

55. An interesting testimonial to the value of such material was provided by I. Howard Marshall (1934-2015), who testified that reading Aalders on the Pentateuch had sustained him in his own early theological studies. See *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 17.

56. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 27-28. Douma, *The Presbyterian Philosopher*, 203.

57. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 120. On Ladd's career, see John A. D'Elia, *A Place at the Table: George Eldon Ladd and the Rehabilitation of Evangelical Scholarship in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

58. See the biographical details provided by David A. Hubbard, "Geoffrey Bromiley: An Appreciation," in *Church, Word and Spirit: Historical and Theological Essays in Honor of Geoffrey W. Bromiley*, eds. James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), xi-xiii.

Fuller Seminary's notable Payton Lectures illustrate a similar point in the period through 1960. Honored academic lecturers invited for this purpose included Oswald T. Allis and John Murray, both representatives of the Princeton theological tradition as mediated through Westminster Seminary and Gordon Clark, the Butler University philosopher-theologian.[59] Conversely, London Bible College marked the occupying of new premises in 1958 by inviting as its inaugural international lecturer, E. J. Young.[60] All this is to say that both through faculty publication and by the travels and transitions of experienced evangelical academics, we have considerable evidence that evangelical theological work begun in the pre-World War Two period was held in high regard by 1950. It had never disappeared—though admittedly—it had known lean times.

Importance

Evangelical historiography has not utterly denied that scholarly work took place in the evangelical world in the decades between the two world wars; it has instead tended to emphasize its meagerness. This tendency involves more than humility. The emphasis is regularly placed on the new directions and new initiatives observable in the post-war era.[61] This paper has aimed to demonstrate the inadequacy of such an approach. The history of publication in Scripture and theology (though perhaps modest), the launching of several new theological journals (some international in scope), the founding of new theological institutions as well as two new associations of conservative scholars, goes far to suggest that it was the between-the-wars generation which both laid the foundation for and provided leadership to the many fresh expressions of theological vitality emerging in the middle of the twentieth century. This is the generation that blazed the trail for the newer evangelicalism. Once the contribution of this inter-war generation is properly acknowledged, we may expect an overdue re-assessment of how and when transatlantic evangelicalism overcame its admitted shortcomings which followed on from the earlier period of theological conflict.

59. Allis's lectures of 1950 are described in John Skilton, "Oswald T. Allis," in *Bible Interpreters*, eds. Elwell and Weaver, 128. John Murray's 1953 Payton Lectures were jointly published by Eerdmans and Inter-Varsity (UK) in 1957 as *Principles of Conduct.* Clark's 1951 Payton lectures were published by Eerdmans as *The Christian View of Men and Things* (1952).

60. Young lectured on the theme, "The Study of Old Testament Theology Today." See Harmon, "E. J. Young," 199.

61. See this perspective winsomely set out in Derek Tidball, "Post-War Evangelical Theology: A Generational Perspective," *Evangelical Quarterly* 81, no. 2 (2009): 145-60. See also Stanley, *Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism,* chapter 4.

JBTS 8.1 (2023): 59 – 80

Bill Bright's Four Spiritual Laws and Their Place in the History and Trajectory of Evangelical Soteriology

Sean McGever

Sean (PhD, Aberdeen) is adjunct faculty in the College of Theology at Grand Canyon University and Area Director for Young Life

Abstract: This article analyzes the trajectory and norms of evangelical soteriology and evangelistic ministry established by early evangelicals Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley and later pattern set by Bill Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws*. It examines how terms such as conversion, regeneration, the new birth, and being born again were used in evangelical literature and how they were understood. It further looks at the practices of Campus Crusade for Christ and its focus on decisions, looking at the results of the Berkeley Blitz, Explo '74 in South Korea, and the Here's Life campaigns around the world. It concludes by identifying five key areas in which the approach and practices of Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ differs from that of early evangelicals.

Keywords: Evangelicalism, soteriology, conversion, sinner's prayer, decisionism, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ.

Introduction

Evangelicals believe that God regenerates sinners to be born again through the experience of conversion. Conversion has generally been understood by evangelicals as an instantaneous work of God. Evangelical conversion theology began in the evangelical revivals in America and Britain in the 1730s.[1] Evangelical ministries such as Cru, formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ, have continued to prioritize conversion as the focal point of their ministries. This article argues that the trajectory and norms of evangelical soteriology and evangelistic ministry established by the early evangelicals Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley varies from the later pattern set by Bill Bright's Four Spiritual Laws in at least five ways.[2]

1. For an introduction to the history, theology, and practices related to conversion, see the work of Gordon T. Smith: Gordon T. Smith, *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion and Authentic Transformation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001); Gordon T. Smith, "Conversion and Redemption," in *Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology*, ed. Gerald R. McDermott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Gordon T. Smith, *Transforming Conversion: Rethinking the Language and Contours of Christian Initiation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

2. Evangelicalism, and American evangelicalism, has never been a homogeneous unit; various

A Primer on Evangelical Conversion and Soteriology

Two theological concepts among evangelicals are critical to the understanding of evangelical conversion: conversion and regeneration. Evangelicals generally believe that they can experience—and usually should be cognizant of—the exact moment of their conversion; this is often described theologically as instantaneous conversion. Regeneration, conversely, is not something that a person can perceive or experience directly. Many early evangelical conversion narratives abound with lengthy passionate retellings of stories which climax with the moment of instantaneous conversion.[3] What we do not find in these narratives is the primary claim that a person knew of their regeneration directly. Awareness of regeneration was a secondary claim based upon the experience of instantaneous conversion.[4] Evangelical soteriology separates the active experience of conversion from the passive experience of regeneration. This distinction is critical for evangelical soteriology due to the evangelical insistence on the supernatural characteristic of regeneration.

Conversion and regeneration emerge in evangelical literature alongside two other related terms: the "new birth," and being "born again." The grammar of the terms associates them with conversion and regeneration. To be "born again" implies a passivity since it is difficult to understand logically how one could "birth oneself." The "new birth" fits easier in an experiential sense; hence, one could say: "I experienced the new birth." These terms do not map as easily to the active and passive sense that conversion and regeneration often do.

Evangelicals employ each of these terms (conversion, regeneration, the new birth, and being born again) in a variety of overlapping ways. Each of the terms has a semantic domain meaning a change or beginning. However, care must be taken to understand how any given author, group, and era utilize these terms, especially the source and telos of each.

Evangelicals believe that each person needs to be converted in order to secure a place in heaven. It is not surprising, then, that an essential commitment of evangelicals is for persistent evangelism and hopes for continuous revival. The

eras, sub-groups, and key figures require individual attention. See: Thomas S. Kidd, *Who Is an Evangelical? The History of a Movement in Crisis* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2019); David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 2004); Timothy Larsen, "Defining and Locating Evangelicalism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, eds. Daniel J. Treier and Timothy Larsen. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1–16; Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart, eds., *The Emergence of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities* (Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2008).

3. For examples among early evangelicals, see D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

4. David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 32–33.

ministries of Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, examined below, are a testament to the impulse of evangelicals for conversion.[5]

They believed eternal destinies depended upon a conversion experience. Later in the eighteenth century, it became more common for evangelicals to accept variations in the awareness of the "suddenness" of conversion. The experience of conversion in its well-known form could be pinpointed to a day or hour; yet other conversion accounts were more drawn out. Others attested to all the marks of genuine Christianity without any recollection of a conversion moment at all. Evangelicals varied in their acceptance of these differences, but their acceptance can be understood as a variation in *experience* and not variation in the way that the Spirit of God worked graciously and instantaneously through regeneration—which is what altered the objective salvific status of an individual. For evangelicals, a person was either regenerated by the supernatural grace of God or they were not regenerated, there was no variation on this binary objective status.[6]

Early evangelicals inherited a Puritan morphology of conversion that encompassed a series of events that often occurred over weeks, months, or years.[7] Early evangelicals began to emphasize the key moment in conversion as the moment of instantaneous conversion—most infamously known in John Wesley's Aldersgate moment when his heart was "strangely warmed" on May 24, 1738. Over time, and partly due to pastoral experience, evangelicals became less convinced of the synchronization of the instantaneous conversion experience and regeneration, though they retained much of the broader morphology of the conversion experience. Then, in the mid-nineteenth century, evangelicals began to abridge the established understanding of the conversion experience and, instead, focused only on instantaneous conversion—often simply calling this "conversion." Subsequent evangelists focused on the "experience" of instantaneous conversion and linked it directly to regeneration. Many evangelists began focusing on conversion as a "decision" and developed techniques to bring people to a "decision" quickly and efficiently—as we will see below. One primary modern example of this is Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ.

5. George Whitefield is an important figure in the discussion of early evangelicalism alongside Wesley and Edwards but, due to space, could not be included in this study. For more information about Whitefield's view of conversion and soteriology more broadly, see: Sean McGever, *Born Again: The Evangelical Theology of Conversion in John Wesley and George Whitefield* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020); Sean McGever, "The Theology of Conversion in John Wesley and George Whitefield," in *Wesley and Whitefield*, ed. Ian J Maddock (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017).

6. For conversion among Christian fundamentalists, see Sean McGever, "Conversion," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christian Fundamentalism*, eds. David Ceri Jones and Andrew Atherstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Forthcoming).

7. Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2013), 66–71, 91.

Part 1: Campus Crusade's "Decisions"

Bill Bright founded Campus Crusade for Christ in 1951 at the University of California, Los Angeles.[8] Bright was a businessman who, in 1945, became a Christian through the ministry of Henrietta Mears and devoted himself to evangelism. Bright went off to Princeton Seminary for a short time to prepare for vocational ministry. There he recruited people to "gospel bomb" Princeton University, placing cellophane-wrapped texts on every table and desk they could find; he repeated these tactics upon his return to Los Angeles.[9] In the spring of 1951, Bright wrote, "I suddenly had the overwhelming impression that the Lord had unfolded a scroll of instructions of what I was to do with my life."[10] He began recruiting leaders to form a nationwide ministry to college students. He withdrew from his new school, Fuller Seminary, and called the ministry "Campus Crusade for Christ."

Within the first few months of the ministry, Bright reported two hundred fifty conversions among college students.[11] Bright's incredible passion and drive also propelled the ministry to grow while his sales and business background shaped his tactics. Bright told staff to read Frank Bettger's *How I Raised Myself from Failure to Success in Selling* in order to mine it for insights for evangelistic tactics.[12]

Campus Crusade's Primary Tool for Decisions: The Four Spiritual Laws

Bright hired a sales consultant named Bob Ringer to speak to Campus Crusade staff in 1957 who taught them the importance of a repeatable sales pitch. Ringer highlighted a famous minister who "always said basically the same thing; no matter the problem."[13] At first, Bright thought this tactic was "repugnant and offensive" before he finally concluded, "My friend was right. I had been sharing basically the same thing with everyone, without realizing it."[14] That afternoon Bright wrote "God's Plan for Your Life," a twenty-minute presentation of the claims of Christ and how to know him personally. Bright told every staff member to memorize it. Bright later recalled, "Because of this one presentation alone, our ministry was multiplied a hundredfold during the next year."[15] Not long after introducing "God's Plan for Your Life," Bright came to believe that "a much shorter version of the gospel" was needed

8. Campus Crusade for Christ changed their organization's name to Cru in 2011.

9. John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 24, 34.

10. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 38.

11. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 49.

12. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 49.

13. Bill Bright, *Come Help Change the World* (Old Tappen, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1970), 43.

14. Bright, *Come Help Change the World*, 44.

15. Bright, *Come Help Change the World*, 44.

and thus condensed the talk to four points by 1959.[16] Staff shared this condensed four-point appeal via written notes on paper and napkins for several years. In 1965, a businessman named Gus Yeager compiled the information into a booklet and added a sinner's prayer at the end. Yeager showed it to Bright—he loved it.[17] This publication became the tract *Have Your Heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?* Cru states that this booklet has been translated into more than 200 languages with more than 2.5 billion copies distributed worldwide.[18]

Bill Bright's Focus on Decisions

Bill Bright believed that the collection of reliable reports and statistics was a matter of financial stewardship to their donors.[19] Staff members, thus, were required to file regular reports "on the fruitfulness of their ministries."[20] Staff members had to document "fifteen follow-up appointments and fifteen evangelistic appointments each week, with a hundred decisions a year, or else you were put on probation."[21] Bill Bright's authorized biographer wrote, "Bill aimed high … and kept score."[22]

Campus Crusade determined that an "indicated decision" was when an individual signed their name to a form.[23] For Bright, "this was no marketing contest; this was eternal business."[24] For Campus Crusade, signing a form indicated a "decision for Christ" and was understood as being synonymous in their literature and communication for converting to Christianity and becoming a Christian. One biographer of Bright wrote, "Many people regard the Four Spiritual Laws (or principles if laws seem offensive) as a vehicle for 'instant salvation,' almost as easy as buying a hamburger at McDonald's. Bill is convinced that salvation is to be found easily, because it is rooted entirely in God's grace not in human effort, in works."[25] For Bright, since God's invisible grace comes easily and provides "instant salvation," this, he believed, could be indicated simply by signing a form—and forms were easily counted.

Shortly after Crusade published *The Four Spiritual Laws*, staff undertook a focused week-long campaign on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley

16. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 59.

17. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 100.

18. See https://www.cru.org/us/en/about.html.

19. Michael Richardson, *Amazing Faith: The Authorized Biography of Bill Bright, Founder of Campus Crusade for Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2001), 219.

20. Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 220.

21. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 133.

22. Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 219.

23. Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 221.

24. Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 221.

25. Richard Quebedeaux, *I Found It! The Story of Bill Bright and Campus Crusade* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), 179.

called the "Berkeley Blitz." The progressive student-base, including campus Christians, were highly critical of the campaign. A Christian leader at Berkley said, "I don't like Christ to be 'sold' the way you would sell encyclopedias…. [Crusade] approached people as customers not as people."[26] Crusade had Billy Graham conclude the week with a rally at the school. Crusade reported that more than seven hundred students and faculty members received Christ. Peter Gillquist, a Crusade staff person at Berkeley, said, "We know of only two [students] who really followed through."[27] Many of the Crusade staff involved with the Berkeley Blitz were discouraged with the results. Gillquist explained, "We called ourselves an arm of the church … but we were amputated. We had no real connection to it. We said, 'We've got to be church. We can't just go out and be hit men for Christ, with no sense of follow-through or permanence or historicity.'"[28] Several key Crusade leaders who participated in the Berkeley Blitz left the organization to begin working in the local church. The following year, the majority of Crusade's top leaders resigned after being dissatisfied with Bright's leadership.[29] Later that year, Bright removed the requirement for staff to make fifteen appointments a week with non-Christians.[30]

Several years later, effectiveness seemed to be improving statistically for Crusade. They launched a campaign in South Korea in 1974 they called Explo '74. Bright called it a "miracle among the masses" that he claimed "help[ed] in part to spur the growth of the Korean church from 3 million in 1974 to 7 million in 1978."[31] During one afternoon of meetings in this campaign, Crusade recorded "274,000 indicated decisions for Christ."[32] Two years later, Crusade undertook their largest endeavor yet, which they called the "Here's Life campaign." The disappointing results for the American Here's Life campaign will be discussed below, but, following the success of the campaign in South Korea, Crusade's international campaigns reported astonishing results. The 1976 Here's Life campaign in Kerala, India claimed 1.85 million "decisions for Christ" out of a population of 22 million people.[33] This led Bright to announce to donors, "[we] are convinced that, for every dollar we raise, we can expect at least one person to receive Christ."[34] The following year, in November 1977, Bright held a Washington press conference to announce a $1 billion fund-raising drive.[35] Between 1978 and 1979, Crusade reported that a campaign in

26. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 125.

27. William C. Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 94.

28. Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 94.

29. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 132.

30. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 134.

31. Quebedeaux, *I Found It!* 40.

32. Quebedeaux, *I Found It!* 39.

33. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 175.

34. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 175.

35. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 176.

Columbia yielded 2.6 million "decisions to accept Christ as Savior and Lord."[36] For the year of 1980, Crusade communicated that their Asian ministries achieved 11 million decisions for Christ.[37]

By 1999, Crusade reported that they had ministered in 181 countries representing 99.2 percent of the world's population, and in the previous year alone, had 54.5 million "salvation decisions for Christ" where a trained Crusade member was physically present to counsel the person who had experienced Crusade's gospel proclamation.[38] Overall, between Crusade's founding in 1951 and 1999, they reported 4.5 billion "exposures to the gospel."[39] When asked about these numbers in an interview for his authorized biography, Bright said, "We have been so very conservative."[40]

Campus Crusade's Reflection on the Results of Decisions

Bill Bright was very optimistic about his 1976 Here's Life campaign in America. He maintained that the campaign "will very likely determine the destiny of our nation and the future course of history," with the goal being, "to introduce at least 25,000,000 people to Christ before the end [of the event]." If the event failed, Bright said, "we will experience another thousand years of dark ages."[41] As this section will discuss, by the standards of his own goal, the event did fail. The final assessment of the campaign yielded 536,824 "decisions" for Christ.

As a part of the Here's Life campaign in 1976, Crusade retained C. Peter Wagner's Fuller Evangelistic Association Department of Church Growth to determine if their campaign helped churches grow. Crusade reported that the 1976 campaign engaged 6.5 million people personally, and that 536,824 people had "expressed a desire to receive Christ as their Savior."[42] Wagner's examination focused on six test cities where Crusade had felt that their work had been effective. Cities where Crusade felt that their work had been ineffective were not included in his study. In these "successful" six cities, 178 churches were contacted. These campaigns reported "26,535 gospel presentations, 4,106 decisions for Christ, 526 in Bible studies led by church members, and 125 new church members."[43] The year before the campaign the combined church membership of these churches grew by 12%. In the year of the

36. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 180.
37. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 180.
38. Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 220.
39. Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 220.
40. Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 221.
41. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 160.
42. C. Peter Wagner, "Who Found It? Did the Here's Life America Blitz Work?" *Eternity*, September 1977, 16.
43. Wagner, "Who Found It?" 16.

Here's Life campaign their collective church membership grew by 7%; this equates to a 5% drop in church growth from the previous year.[44]

Wagner's article includes an anecdote by James F. Engle, director of the Billy Graham Program in Communication at Wheaton Graduate School. Engle formed a group to study the impact of the Here's Life campaign in Chicago. Crusade provided Engle a list of people who "prayed to receive Christ over the telephone."[45] Engle's group reached out to two hundred of these people. The study found that only fifty-five of the names and contact details were correct. Of these people, seventeen refused to cooperate with the interview. Engle wrote, "One does not expect this response from an excited new convert."[46] Of the remaining thirty-eight people, all but three claimed to be Christian prior to the phone call with Campus Crusade. None of the thirty-eight people who responded participated in follow-up Bible studies Crusade offered. Another anecdote by a Baptist pastor expressed concerns not only about the low response but the negative impact among those who did not respond. He asked, "how many people were turned against Christ and will be closed toward all other milder or more realistic evangelistic efforts in the coming years?" He believed Crusade's presentations "so oversimplifies the meaning of the gospel that the kind of Christians it produces, as far as I can see, are really hardly Christians at all in terms of conviction, relationships, or awareness of the world and God's plan of history. I am very disturbed about things like Here's Life and am petrified that such movements like this may arise again in the coming years."[47]

Wagner concluded his article by noting that "Campus Crusade leaders are not interested in perpetuating ineffective evangelistic methodologies," and that he was optimistic about their potential response to the ineffectiveness of the Here's Life campaign had on church growth.

Bill Bright and Campus Crusade committed to an evangelistic approach that, by their own stated strategies and intentions, simplified the gospel into four simple statements and believed that repeating these to as many people as possible through short presentations fulfilled the task of evangelism. Their extreme focus on this task is evidenced by their record keeping of presentations and decisions. To their credit, for the 1976 Here's Life campaign in America, they hired an outside consultant to study the impact their campaign made in local churches. While Bright later explained, "Only the Lord knows who is making sincere commitments,"[48] Bright did not adjust his focus on presentations and decisions. This focus continues today. Cru's 2020

44. Wagner, "Who Found It?" 20.
45. Wagner, "Who Found It?" 14.
46. Wagner, "Who Found It?" 14.
47. Wagner, "Who Found It?" 18.
48. Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 221.

and 2021 annual reports detailed the number of presentations and decisions—which happen to be dramatically lower than previous decades.[49]

Campus Crusade is not alone in their focus on presentations and decisions. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has a similar aim and has reflected on the disconnect between mass evangelism, church growth, and genuine conversion. The Billy Graham Crusades between 1947 and 1987 reported 65,432,641 attendees and 2,201,460 "inquirers."[50] The inquirers are divided into four categories: first-time decision for Christ, rededication of one's life to Christ, assurance or restoration of one's commitment to Christ, and reaffirmation of commitment. A random sampling of a two-year span showed that 47 percent of inquirers were first-time decisions.[51] Of those who made a first-time decision for Christ, 71 percent were already involved in a local church.[52] Graham told and retold his own decision-story of when he attended a revival meeting when he was fifteen years old and checked a box on a "conversion card"—though he also shared that the box he checked was to indicate his "recommitment" to Christ.[53] Graham adopted the word "decision" as a key focal point of his ministry—evidenced by his mass circulation periodical titled *Decision* (est. 1960) and his radio and television programs both titled *Hour of Decision*.[54] A careful analysis of the Billy Graham crusades is outside the scope of this paper, but their successes and challenges generally align with those experienced by Campus Crusade.

Any examination of evangelism among evangelicals in the twentieth century, especially an examination of American evangelicalism and its far-reaching influence on world evangelicalism, requires attention to Campus Crusade for Christ and the Billy Graham crusades. Modern evangelical evangelism is largely defined by short gospel presentations and a call for an immediate decision as evidence that a person has been born again, converted, and—theologically speaking—regenerated. We will now examine if these norms have always been the case for evangelicals. In short, we will discover that conversion meant something quite different to early evangelicals than it did for modern evangelicals like Bill Bright.

49. See Cru annual reports from 2020 and 2021, accessed September 7, 2023, https://www.cru.org/content/dam/cru/about/2020-cru-annual-report.pdf and https://www.cru.org/content/dam/cru/about/2021-annual-report.pdf.

50. Robert O. Ferm and Caroline M. Whiting, *Billy Graham: Do the Conversions Last?* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1988), 20–21.

51. Ferm and Whiting, *Billy Graham,* 29.

52. Ferm and Whiting, *Billy Graham,* 102.

53. Grant Wacker, *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 6, 42.

54. Wacker, *America's Pastor*, 41–43, 63–67.

Part 2: Early Evangelicals and Decisions

Modern evangelicals inherited their foundational understanding of conversion from the evangelical tradition. Early evangelicals did not invent Christian conversion but formulated their understanding from several sources, especially pietism and Puritanism. The early evangelical tradition began in the early eighteenth century and came to the fore most notably through the ministries of Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Wesley, and John Wesley. Early evangelicals and modern evangelicals shared similar hopes and prayers for revival and conversion of the masses—but, as we will see, how they understood the concept of conversion differed considerably.

Jonathan Edwards's View of "Decisions"

Jonathan Edwards is a key example and leader among early evangelicals.[55] To understand his view of conversion, we must recognize his Congregationalist polity. Congregationalism depends upon self-governance of the local congregation. Because of this, the question concerning who is a formal member of the congregation is a significant issue. Congregational churches in New England established the Cambridge Platform in 1648 to define the details of church government. Chapter 12 of this document discusses "Of Admission of Members into the Church."[56] A person became a formal member of the church when they had heard the gospel, responded with repentance and faith, had undergone baptism, were examined by church leaders, and could provide a "personal and public confession, and declaring of God's manner of working upon the soul."[57] It is this last portion, "declaring of God's manner of working upon the soul," which came to be known among Congregationalists as a conversion experience. Following their Puritan predecessors, the pattern of this testimony included several stages: first, an awakening to personal failure to adhere to God's commands; second, an awareness of person inability to ever adhere to God's commands leading to understand Christ as a person's only hope; third, the infusion of saving grace in which the person generally—but not always—can give account of when and where they experienced God's saving grace; and fourth, a lifelong struggle in this life for assurance because of ongoing sin.[58] As Puritan scholar Edmund Morgan wrote, "If the candidate [for membership] neglected any point, the elders or the members might question him about it."[59]

55. See: Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003).

56. Elders and Messengers of the New England Synod, *The Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline* (Boston: Perkins and Whipple, 1850), 68–71.

57. Elders and Messengers of the New England Synod, *The Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline*, 70.

58. Morgan, *Visible Saints,* 64–74, 91.

59. Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 91.

Jonathan Edwards's *Personal Narrative* aligned with the Puritan morphology of conversion he inherited. Edwards had been baptized, heard the gospel, and had been awakened and convicted by his sin. Finally, he wrote, "On January 12, [1723], I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself, and all that I had to God…. And solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity."[60] This date, or perhaps the months shortly thereafter, are understood as Edwards's profession of conversion. Strangely, we have no record of when Edwards entered full church membership, though shortly later he was licensed to pastor a church.[61]

Church membership was a lively and controversial topic among New England Congregationalists, most notably due to the famous Half-Way Covenant. Fourteen years after New England Congregational leaders produced the Cambridge Platform, they agreed to the Half-Way Covenant. The Half-Way Covenant enabled church-going people in good standing with the church to baptize their children even if the parents could not provide the conversion testimony which the Cambridge Platform required. The Half-Way Covenant was a compromise that upheld the ideal of a professed and examined conversion testimony in the midst of a large swath of baptized churched people who could not provide a conversion testimony.

Edwards observed the beginning of revival in his church in December 1734. Prior to the revival, his church had 620 communicant members—full church members who had provided their conversion testimony and were accepted by the leaders of the church.[62] Edwards reported that "more than 300 souls were savingly brought home to Christ in this town in the space of half a year."[63] These people had "presented themselves … to make an open explicit profession of Christianity … to the congregation."[64] Edwards described these events as conversion and was surprised by "the quickness of [God's] work, and the swift progress his Spirit has made in his operations on the hearts of many."[65] Edwards was happily overwhelmed by the number and speed with which people were testifying to their personal experiences of conversion. Much of Edwards's *Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* published in 1737 documents these events and presents Edwards's careful and somewhat skeptical analysis of what happened—including his own questions about the genuineness of these conversions.

In the ensuing years a set of tragedies beset Edwards's church which seemed to overlap with the decay of the revival. George Whitefield arrived in Northampton in

60. Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, ed. George S. Claghorn, Vol. 16, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1998), 796.

61. See Marden's discussion of this issue in George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 57.

62. Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, ed. C. C. Goen, Vol. 4, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1972), 157.

63. Edwards, *Great Awakening,* 158.

64. Edwards, *Great Awakening,* 157.

65. Edwards, *Great Awakening,* 159.

the fall of 1740, which rekindled the flame of revival in the church and inspired other ministers to begin their own evangelistic outreach. As revivalism spread in the area, questions about the genuineness of the revival and conversions reemerged. Edwards utilized his commencement speech at Yale in 1741 to discuss the *Distinguishing Marks* of the Spirit of God in which he simultaneously rejected the excesses of some revivalism while maintaining that God's Spirit often worked through revival. A repeated distinguishing mark of the Spirit for Edwards was that genuinely converted people should give evidence of their conversion not only through a verbal profession to their church, but also through visible discipleship and growth.

Edwards's Yale sermon did not quiet his critics and those who questioned the genuineness of revival and mass conversion, it only raised them. In late 1742, Edwards published his work *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival*. This work was nearly four times the length of *Distinguishing Marks* and dealt more in depth with the practical and theological issues related to conversion and revival. Edwards warned that Christians should not judge the salvific state of their neighbor, but that the church could judge who could be a member of the "visible church." Edwards wrote, "Christians may openly distinguish such persons, in their speech and ordinary behavior, with a visible separation."[66] Edwards, thus, made an important distinction between the visible and invisible church in which the visible church includes people whom the church judges as meeting the requirements for church membership while the invisible church is only known to God.

Despite these distinctions, controversy continued and led Edwards in 1746 to publish *Religious Affections* provided twelve signs "of truly gracious and holy affections." These signs provided criteria to test the genuineness of the work of God in order to distinguish emotional fanaticism from false enthusiasm. Here, Edwards states that Scripture "do[es] plainly teach us that the state of others' souls toward God, cannot be known by us."[67]

Three years later, in February 1749, Edwards declared that he rejected the Half-Way Covenant and would only admit church members that could give a conversion testimony—reverting back to the standards of the Cambridge Platform. Later that year, he wrote his explanation in a publication of which its full title helps explain its contents: *An Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God, Concerning the Qualifications Requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church*.

This brief review of some of Edwards's history and writing on revival provides several important issues related to conversion and evangelical decisions. First, Edwards, in keeping with other early evangelicals and the historic teaching of the church, believed that people must be regenerated by God in order to be saved.

66. Edwards, *Great Awakening,* 480.

67. Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith, Vol. 2, The Works of Jonathan Edwards (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1959), 189.

Second, Edwards distinguished between the visible church and the invisible church as those people the church deems Christian and those people who are certain to be Christians—which is only known by God. Third, he believed that the human experience of conversion could occur quickly but was typically a longer process that included hearing the gospel, experiencing conviction and awaking of personal sin, undergoing a breakthrough moment of repentance and faith, and providing evidence of a changed life. Fourth, he believed that churches must insist upon examining individual's conversion testimonies in order to be a part of the visible church. Fifth, when Edwards reported the results of revival, he reported how many people formally joined the visible church. Edwards did not speculate on how many people joined the invisible church.

John Wesley's View of Decisions

John Wesley, alongside Edwards and others, is another key early evangelical. Any thorough discussion about early evangelical conversion highlights what John Wesley experienced at about 8:45 PM on May 24, 1738, when his heart was "strangely warmed." While scholars continue to debate Wesley's evolving self-understanding of what this moment meant for himself, all see it as a pivotal turning point which helped define early evangelical conversion theology and practice.[68] Wesley's understanding of conversion had been shaped over time by his upbringing in the Church of England with significant influences from nonconformist thought, the holy living tradition, Puritans, Eastern orthodoxy, and Moravian teaching.

When Wesley arrived at Aldersgate, he anticipated that he might experience a breakthrough moment in which he would experience instantaneous conversion to give him assurance of his regeneration and salvation. Prior to this era, Wesley thought that this moment might be fostered through various spiritual disciplines through the means of grace; the Puritans and others instilled this idea among those who sought a "conversion testimony" through the concept of preparationism. What Wesley and other early evangelicals introduced to the broader concept of conversion was that this moment was not a function of preparationism; instead, evangelicals believed that conversion was a powerful and often instantaneous experience of breakthrough that arrived through the gift of faith. Later evangelicals latched onto and isolated this momentary experience to orphan it from what Wesley and many other early evangelicals understood as one part of a broader process and context of conversion.

John Wesley's experience at Aldersgate is a far cry from being normative for the evangelistic approach of modern evangelicalism. By the time of Aldersgate, Wesley had been baptized, raised as the son of a pastor in a strong Christian household, and ordained and employed by the church. Wesley knew, shared, and taught the gospel;

68. Mark K. Olson, *Wesley and Aldersgate* (London: Routledge, 2020); Randy L. Maddox, *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1990); McGever, *Born Again*, 31–55.

he arguably had expressed his faith and repented more than most people will in their entire lives. Wesley's Aldersgate moment fits into a much larger and complex narrative that differed significantly even from the people whom he sought to evangelize.

Rather than identifying a normative model of conversion from Wesley's personal experience, we can learn more from what Wesley installed and perpetuated as, what would become, the largest early evangelical structure for outreach, conversion, and growth: the Methodist societies. At first, the Methodist societies were a natural extension of Wesley's earlier experiences leading the "Holy Club" at Oxford and what he learned from the Moravians. He began experimenting with structured small groups that occasionally met together in larger groups while he was in Georgia. It is essential to recognize that from the beginning these meetings were in addition to Sunday church services—the meetings and societies Wesley developed were *in addition* to the regular services and work of the respective churches to which people belonged.

Wesley authored the *Rules of the Band Societies* on December 25, 1738. These "bands" met weekly for discussion, as well as to confess their sins, temptations, deliverance, and secrets.[69] The third question for admission to this first iteration of Wesley's societies was, "Have you the witness of God's Spirit with your spirit that you are a child of God?"[70] Methodist scholar Tom Albin writes, "Before one entered a band, the individual had to experience justifying grace and saving faith."[71] In this regard, entrance into the early Methodist band paralleled the question the New England Congregational Cambridge Platform required of full church members: to be able to give an account of your experience of salvation.

After establishing the Methodist bands, Wesley decided that he needed to develop a group meeting designed for people who could not yet meet the "salvation" requirements of the band meeting. He wrote, "In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption." They desired, "that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads."[72] In turn, Wesley formed Methodist "classes" for those who "may the more easily [discern] whether they are indeed working out their own salvation."[73] Wesley provided only one requirement for admission into these societies, which was "a desire to flee from the wrath to

69. John Wesley, *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*, ed. Rupert E. Davies, Vol. 9, *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 77–78.

70. Wesley, *Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design,* 77.

71. Thomas R. Albin, "'Inwardly Persuaded': Religion of the Heart in Early British Methodism," in *"Heart Religion" in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements*, ed. Richard B. Steele (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001), 47.

72. Wesley, *Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*, 69.

73. Wesley, *Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design,* 69.

come, to be saved from their sins."[74] Albin explains, "the class meeting furnished the setting for new Christians to live and act according to the gospel even before they had undergone the new experience of 'New Birth' [*emphasis original*]."[75] Notice that Albin separates the "new Christian" from the experience of the "new birth." This separation might trouble modern evangelicals because some modern evangelicals collapse the concept of conversion into *only* a momentary, instantaneous experience. For Edwards, a conversion experience identified the visible church and provided further, but not certain, assurance of salvation. For Wesley, a conversion experience also provided further assurance of salvation, but it did not provide the ultimate line of demarcation between who was saved and not saved.

A few years later, Wesley's Methodist Society Conference meeting discussed the questions, "Can we know one who is thus saved? What is a reasonable proof of it?" They agreed that without the "miraculous discernment of the spirits" it was impossible to know for certain if someone was genuinely saved; yet they determined three "best proofs" of salvation. These proofs required the person to display unblameable behavior, have a conversion testimony, and be observed for "two or three years" after the conversion testimony.[76]

The Methodist Societies began reporting their membership numbers to each other in their annual meetings in 1766.[77] What is important to observe is that these numbers represent a large umbrella of people who were at various stages of their spiritual journeys—some who were simply curious enough to attend a class meeting, others who attested to a conversion testimony, and others who were ministers and preachers within the society. What we do not see in the Methodist societies is any attempt to count "decisions." Similarly, they did not count or report "conversions."[78] The Methodist way was to evangelize the masses and to get respondents into weekly meetings where they settle down and work out salvation over time.

Summary of Early Evangelicals and Decisions

Edwards and Wesley illustrate that early evangelicals upheld the reality of a momentary conversion experience which typically functioned as an important but small part of a much larger scheme of evangelism and conversion. The conversion experience provided greater, but not certain, assurance of salvation. For Edwards, a clear conversion experience enabled full membership within his church; for Wesley,

74. Wesley, *Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design,* 70.

75. Albin, "'Inwardly Persuaded'" 45.

76. John Wesley, *The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of the Conference*, ed. Henry D. Rack, Vol. 10, *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 132–33.

77. Wesley, *Methodist Societies: The Minutes of the Conference*, 306n28, 319.

78. Charles Wesley kept a collection of written conversion testimonies. See Hindmarsh, *Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, 130–33.

a clear conversion experience enabled a Methodist society member to transfer from the class meeting to the band meeting. The scope and theology of these issues went far beyond making and counting a one-time decision. Early evangelicals did not count decisions—that would be an invention of later evangelicals.

Part 3: Later Evangelicals and Decisions

Space does not allow for a thorough discussion of how evangelicals adjusted their understanding of conversion so that it could be a thing that is counted through decision-making. But two key influences will help us bridge the gap from early evangelicals like Edwards and Wesley to modern evangelicals like Bill Bright: Charles Finney and the rise of evangelistic tracts in the nineteenth century.

Charles Finney

The plea for conversion continued after the first generation of early evangelicals. Charles Finney is noted among those in the mid-nineteenth century for his revivalist preaching for immediate conversions. He described conversion and regeneration in synonymous ways. Finney augmented the evangelical understanding of regeneration and thought it possible to ascribe regeneration to human initiative. At other times he described conversion and regeneration as a product of simultaneous human and divine interaction. Finney introduced, more than the other prominent evangelicals before him a higher capacity to humans to initiate and methodize their experience of conversion and regeneration than early evangelicals.

Finney believed that a minister could control the conversion and regeneration of a person. For him this process was scientific. He argued that revival "is a result we can logically expect from the right use of God-given means, as much as any other effect produced by applying tools and means."[79] He added, "There is a long-held belief that the task of furthering Christianity is not governed by ordinary rules of cause and effect. … No doctrine endangers the church more than this, and nothing is more absurd."[80] To accomplish this cause-and-effect process of revival and conversion, Finney advocated for three "new measures:" anxious meetings, extended meetings, and the anxious seat.[81] These measures led to the mechanization of evangelical conversion.

79. Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revival*, ed. L.G. Parkhurst (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1988), 13.

80. Finney, *Lectures on Revival*, 14.

81. Finney, *Lectures on Revival,* 167.

Evangelistic Tracts

The Religious Tract Society in England began producing short religious tracts in 1799. By 1849 they had distributed over 500 million tracts of five thousand separate titles and were shipping 20 million per year.[82] That year, they wrote that because of their activities, "sinners have been converted to God; Christians edified and comforted; backsliders mercifully restored; and numerous evils presented by timely admissions."[83] Their most successful tract, *The Dairyman's Daughter*, sold over four million copies. In 1825, the American Tract Society was formed when the New York and New England Tract Societies, formed in 1812 and 1814, merged.[84] Historian Lincoln Mullen writes that, over time, these tract companies "codified and popularized the kind of conversion experience that Finney had described in his preaching."[85] A common feature of these short publications was what came to be well-known as the "sinner's prayer." Mullen writes, "The sinner's prayer made conversion more punctual; that is, it tended to collapse the process to one point."[86] Finney provided theology and mechanization for immediate conversion which were perfectly suited for the short form nature of printed tracts.

The American Tract Society tract, *One Thing Needful*, illustrates these features. An 1818 sermon by the same name was authored by the Rev. George Burder of London and condensed in 1825 in to a short four-page tract.[87] The tract takes the form of a conversation that ends with the enquirer asking, "All this is right; and I wish from my heart I were as you say. Pray tell me how I may become so?" The evangelist replies, "will you not now come to him, who though Lord of all worlds, has once died for sinners? O hesitate no longer. Say heartily, 'I cannot live without God, without Christ, without hope.' 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.'"[88] This tract is just one example of many ATS tracts that, as Mullen explains, "insisted that sinners convert immediately."[89]

82. Ian C. Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness: The Evangelical Impact on the Victorians* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), 42.

83. Bradley, *Call to Seriousness*, 43.

84. John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 169.

85. Lincoln A. Mullen, *The Chance of Salvation: A History of Conversion in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 33.

86. Mullen, *Chance of Salvation*, 35.

87. George Burder, *Village Sermons: Or Ninety One Discourses, on the Principal Doctrines of the Gospel: Intended for the Use of Families, Sunday Schools, Or Companies Assembled for Religious Instruction in Country Villages* (Philadelphia: W.W. Woodward, 1818), 254–61; American Tract Society, *The American Tract Society Documents, 1824-1925* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 381; American Tract Society, *Tracts of the American Tract Society: General Series* (New York: American Tract Society, 1825), 81–84.

88. American Tract Society, *Tracts of the American Tract Society: General Series*, page 4 of the tract, page 85 of the collection.

89. Mullen, *Chance of Salvation*, 41.

Finney and the evangelistic tract publishers were not without their critics, but their perceived success influenced the practice of evangelicals significantly. Dwight Lyman (D. L.) Moody was born at the height of Finney's revivals and began his ministry in Finney's final years. Moody built upon Finney's methods as he diligently advertised his campaigns, introduced an "inquirers room" where listeners could further inquire about salvation and make an "instant decision" to receive salvation,[90] and developed "decision cards" to capture the names and details of respondents (as well as provide details for local pastors to follow-up). At the turn of the twentieth century, revivalists further embraced evangelistic methodology that presumed a rapid evangelistic process and experience. Books and manuals on presenting the plan of salvation, instructions about how to "pray Jesus into your heart," standardized "sinners prayers," and evangelistic tracts including written prayers to receive salvation emerged with increasing frequency.[91] For example, in 1918, the Moody Bible Institute printed a tract with the title, "Important Election," across the top. Below this title was the question, "Will You Be Saved?" with three rows of responses: first, "God has voted: Yes;" second, "Satan has voted: No;" and, last, "A TIE! Your vote must decide the issue," accompanied by an open check box for the reader to respond, "yes" or "no."[92]

The mechanization of conversion through standardized evangelistic tactics continued from the turn of the twentieth century and met Bill Bright through the ministry of Henrietta Mears. Mears's maternal grandfather, William Wallace Everts, had been instrumental in founding Morgan Park Seminary in Chicago in 1863—one of the first students who attended the seminary was a young D. L. Moody.[93] Everts's daughter, Margaret, served as a Bible teacher in the church of noted fundamentalist William Bell Riley. Upon her death, Riley said of Mears's mother, "When she visited the homes of the poor, or talked with the convicted sinner, they alike understood that a messenger from the Holy One was at work for him."[94] At the age of nine, Mears stood before Riley and the deacon board of her church to share her faith in Christ and requested her baptism; two years later, she taught her first Sunday school class.[95] The leading historian of Mears wrote, "Since Mears grew to maturity under the ministry of Reverend William Bell Riley at First Baptist, Minneapolis, it is no surprise that his

90. Charles L. Thompson, *Times of Refreshing: A History of American Revivals from 1740 to 1877, with Their Philosophy and Methods*, 3rd ed. (Golden Censer Company, 1878), 384.

91. Paul Harrison Chitwood, *The Sinner's Prayer: An Historical and Theological Analysis* (PhD Diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001), 42–61.

92. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 100; *The Christian Workers' Magazine* (Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1918), 493, 924. Thank you to Amber Thomas Reynolds for bringing this tract to my attention.

93. Earl O. Roe, *Dream Big: The Henrietta Mears Story* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 47.

94. Roe, *Dream Big*, 55.

95. Arlin C. Migliazzo, "Progress of a Young Pilgrim: Henrietta Mears on the Northern Plains, 1890-1913," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 94, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016): 25.

fundamentalist perspectives played a significant role in her spiritual development."[96] Mears, thus, was "reared in fundamentalism," which was known for its relentless focus on evangelism and "soul winning."[97] In addition to stressing conversion, Bright inherited from Mears what she learned from the fundamentalist, Keswick, and Higher Life traditions—a notion of the post-conversion "surrender" to the Holy Spirit. This "second stage" of Christian life found its way into Bright's continued discipleship emphasis of the "Spirit-filled life" while the concept of surrender often mirrored his understanding of genuine faith, including initial faith in God.[98] When Bright entered into Mears's powerful ministry, he was formed by Mears's evangelical conversionist beliefs stemming from Finney, Moody, as well as those of Riley.

Part 4: Analysis of the Four Spiritual Laws and their Place in Evangelical Soteriology

Conversionism is at the core of evangelical identity. Yet, this identity spans nearly three hundred years. The underlying soteriological cause of Christian conversion is regeneration, but evangelicals have not communicated their identity through the term regenerationism. Regeneration is an invisible work of God upon the unseen human soul. Conversion is a visible work of God experienced by the human body and soul. Evangelicals focus on the human experience of conversion rather than the invisible work of regeneration. The two are linked together but are not synonymous and not necessarily synchronized.[99] Early and modern evangelical belief about regeneration has changed very little. But from what we have seen above, early evangelicals, such as Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, and modern evangelicals, such as Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ, understand the human experience of conversion quite differently. To conclude, we will examine five categories in which Bill Bright's ministry departs from that of early evangelicals.

First, we must consider the *context* of Christianization. When early evangelicals sought to convert people, the people that they evangelized were typically individuals who already considered themselves Christians. The early evangelical revivals in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland involved, by and large, people who had been baptized, raised in the church, and attended church with frequency. The early evangelical revivals in the American colonies succeeded among a similar group of people. A frequent sermon title and theme among early evangelicals was "The Almost Christian" that targeted people who thought they were Christians, but who

96. Arlin C. Migliazzo, "The Education of Henrietta Mears: A Fundamentalist in Transition," *Baptist History and Heritage* 46, no. 2 (June 2011): 66.

97. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 19.

98. Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 76–85; Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 72–80; Turner, *Bill Bright*, 26, 38, 86–88.

99. McGever, *Born Again*, 201–3.

were told that they were not because they had not been born again.[100] Bill Bright believed that his evangelistic audience was similar to those from hundreds of years earlier. He said, "I've found that most people already understand the Gospel. We've surveyed hundreds of thousands all over the world, but more in this country than any other, and we've found that men's hearts are already prepared. Pre-evangelism has already taken place. We're simply coming in to tell them how to make their commitments."[101] In locations where Campus Crusade staff encountered college students who were largely already Christianized, the approach of Crusade was likely to find greater success because this is exactly the audience that Bright had in mind for his ministry. When early Crusade staff encountered students that were less Christianized or counter-Christian, for example the student base at the Berkeley Blitz, the same approach found far less success.

Second, Bill Bright truncated the *content* of the gospel proclamation when compared to the gospel proclamation of earlier evangelicals. Bright believed that effective gospel proclamation should be brief; the content should be minimal and move quickly to challenging the recipient to make a "decision." Bright explained, "They understand Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They understand that He died for their sins. They understand that they need a Saviour. They understand many facts contained in the Scripture. But they don't know how to receive Christ." He continued, "The people who criticize us are hung up on the proposition that we still have to do the sowing, and the fertilizing and the watering and irrigating and harvesting ourselves … it's harvest time today. And those who find fault in the Four Spiritual Laws and other so-called simplistic approaches are people who don't recognize where the masses are."[102] Bright believed that the "masses" already knew the content of several crucial aspects of the gospel: Jesus is God, I am a sinner, Jesus died for my sins, I need a savior, and a belief in the facts of Scripture. The focal point of Campus Crusade evangelism, *The Four Spiritual Laws*, assumed that the recipient was largely in agreement with these beliefs. Because of this, Bright's approach moved quickly beyond these issues in order to get to the content that Bright believed had not been presented, which was succinct content about how to make a decision for Christ.

Third, Bright believed that the *cadence* of conversion happened quickly. Because Bright assumed that most people were Christianized and in agreement with the foundational beliefs of evangelical Christianity, the beginning-to-end process of helping a person make a decision for Christ could happen within a short conversation.

100. The second sermon in John Wesley's widely distributed standard collection of sermons is titled "The Almost Christian." Sermons by this title in this era were commonplace; one of Whitefield's repeated sermons had the same title and theme. John Wesley, *Sermons*, ed. Albert C. Outler, Vol. 1, *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), 131; George Whitefield, *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield*, ed. John Gillies (London: Printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, 1771), 6:174ff.

101. "Door Interview: Bill Bright," *Wittenburg Door*, February-March 1977, 8.

102. "Door Interview: Bill Bright," *Wittenburg Door*, 8.

For Bright, what mattered was if *The Four Spiritual Laws* "worked." And in his assessment, they did. His authorized biography stated that "despite the accusation that they are simplistic, Bill Bright feels that they've worked and that they've worked well. And for him, that's the ultimate issue."[103] The cadence of conversion is one of the largest departures by Bright from the approach of early evangelicals. Early evangelical sermons often concluded with a call for people to respond—for example, at least thirty-three of the fifty-nine standard sermons of Whitefield called for an immediate response to turn to Christ to be saved.[104] Yet, the call for this urgent response did not take the form of "making a decision" right there and then—the immediate human mechanization of conversion was invented by Charles Finney, refined further through "sinners prayer" evangelistic tract literature in Finney's era, and this trajectory continued through the ministry of Bill Bright and Campus Crusade.

Fourth, because early evangelicals evangelized a Christianized people who were already culturally connected to a local church, the *centrality of the church* was assumed. Edwards's revivals happened within his church. Wesley's Methodist Societies supplemented the religious life of people who were connected to their local churches on Sundays and other times. Early Crusade staff left because the ministry's "greatest struggle" was, as Turner explains, its "failure to motivate students to become involved in local churches. It was relatively easy for Crusade's charismatic speakers to persuade a group of students to pray to 'receive Christ,' but it was more difficult to get even those who had made serious commitments to look beyond the local Campus Crusade chapter to the wider Christian world."[105] As we have seen, Crusade dedicated attention to this issue when they commissioned a study of their 1976 Here's Life America campaign and discovered that their campaign failed to cause people who made decisions to become new members in a local church. What we see, again, is that Bright's approach was tailor-made for people who were already Christianized—it should not surprise us that his approach was much less effective with those who were not already connected to a church.

Fifth, early evangelicals did not count conversions in the same way that Bright counted decisions. It is difficult to understate how much Bright focused on the priority of counting decisions for Christ. He stated that if his 1976 Here's Life America campaign did not cause 25 million Americans to make decisions for Christ before the end of the event, that America "will experience another thousand years of dark ages."[106] As shown above, 536,824 people responded, 24.5 million less than Bright's doomsday threshold. Early evangelicals would have found Bright's concept of counting decisions strange. The numbers that Edwards reported in his accounts were the number of people who became full communicant church members. The

103. Quebedeaux, *I Found It!* 180.
104. McGever, *Born Again,* 114–15.
105. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 134.
106. Turner, *Bill Bright*, 160.

numbers that Wesley reported in his conferences were the number of people who joined Methodist societies. The numbers that Whitefield reported were how many people attended his sermons. Early evangelicals placed little or no priority on counting conversions. The numbers they reported were additional church members, society members, or attendance at events.

Bill Bright's *The Four Spiritual Laws* serve as an artifact in the trajectory of the history of evangelical soteriology. Conversionism continues to be a central tenant of evangelicalism, yet what conversion means and how best to convert people has changed considerably since the era of early evangelicals.

JBTS 8.1 (2023): 81 – 110

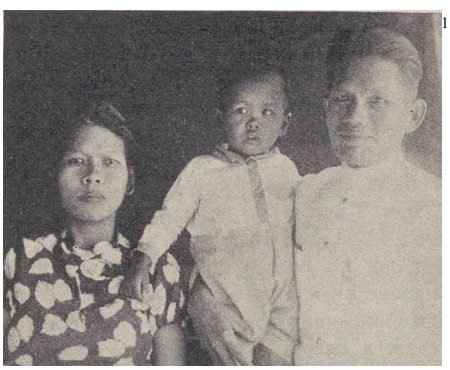
The Indelible Mark of Boon Mark Gittisarn on Twentieth-Century Christianity in Thailand: A Brief Biography

Karl Dahlfred

Karl is professor of church history at Chiang Mai Theological Seminary and missionary with OMF International

Abstract: Over the course of nine decades in the twentieth century, Thai pastor and evangelist Boon Mark Gittisarn tirelessly preached the Gospel throughout Thailand, asserted Thai leadership when missionaries were slow to yield control, and helped launch Thailand's Pentecostal movement. His spiritual journey began with American Presbyterians and shifted to fundamentalism, then Pentecostalism, and ended with Seventh Day Adventism. During this time, he linked himself to diverse evangelical, fundamentalist, and Pentecostal figures including John Sung, Carl McIntire, and T. L. Osborn. Bold and charismatic, Boon Mark fought against missionary paternalism, decried theological liberalism, and provided leadership that united and divided Thai Christians and missionaries, leaving an indelible and transformative mark upon the churches of Thailand.

Keywords: evangelicalism, Pentecostalism, fundamentalism, Thailand

 [1]

Introduction

In the predawn hours of December 8, 1941, the Japanese military launched an invasion of Thailand, quickly securing the surrender of the Thai government who

1. Image used with permission from the Presbyterian Historical Society. Allen Bassett, "Buddhism Often Paves Way for Christ," *Women and Missions* 15, no. 8 (November 1938): 265.

concluded that it would be suicidal to resist.[2] As the Japanese began their occupation with the cooperation of Thai forces, American Presbyterian missionaries in the far north fled over the mountains into British-controlled Burma and those further south were initially put under house arrest before being interned at the Thammasat University campus in Bangkok. Thai church buildings, as well as mission schools and hospitals, were commandeered by the Japanese as needed to be used as troop barracks and administrative posts among other purposes. In the years leading up to the war, the nationalist campaigns of Thailand's Prime Minister Plaek Pibulsongkram pressured Thai Christians to "return to Buddhism" and government employees were often required to pay homage to a Buddha image as proof of loyalty to the Thai nation. With the commencement of Japanese wartime occupation, Christian public worship was prohibited. Christians sought to lay low and avoid attention with many intentionally distancing themselves from the Christian faith entirely. Given these circumstances, Japanese troops were probably caught off guard when one day they entered a certain church in Bangkok and encountered Thai pastor and evangelist Boon Mark Gittisarn (บุญมาก กิตติสาร).

> "Get away from this place! This is God's church!"[3]

Though he could have been arrested or shot, Boon Mark was not going to allow Japanese soldiers to take the church. Surprisingly, Boon Mark's rebuke was enough to get the soldiers to leave with no further consequences.

With the missionaries out of action and many Christians afraid to show themselves, Boon Mark and a handful of Thai Christian leaders took the initiative to travel throughout Thailand, visiting Thai believers and encouraging them to stay faithful in the midst of wartime scarcity and social pressure to abandon the faith. And Boon Mark did not forget about the missionaries either, disguising himself as a bicycle rickshaw driver in order to sneak supplies into Thammasat University where the missionaries and other expatriates were interned until they were repatriated in 1942.[4]

In the decades leading up to the Second World War and in the decades afterwards, Boon Mark Gittisarn was a powerful force in Thai Christianity, alternatively uniting and dividing both Thai believers and missionaries. Though Boon Mark shifted denominational and theological allegiances multiple times, joining forces with figures as diverse as John Sung, Carl McIntire, and T. L. Osborn, Boon Mark's

2. David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 245-47.

3. These may not have been his exact words, but this is the essence of what Boon Mark told the Japanese according to his youngest son. Sornsark Gittisarn, Interview by Karl Dahlfred, telephone call, March 1, 2023.

4. Karl Dahlfred, "History of Christianity in Thailand," in *Missions in Southeast Asia: Diversity and Unity in God's Design*, ed. Kiem-Kiok Kwa and Samuel K. Law (Carlisle, UK: Langham Publishing, 2022), 130-31; Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023.

driving purpose in life remained constant. He worked tirelessly to bring Thai people to faith in Jesus Christ and to enjoy greater depths of spiritual experience in God. Though his ministry spanned twentieth century evangelicalism, fundamentalism, and Pentecostalism, Boon Mark always easily fit within David Bebbington's oft-cited definition of an evangelical as one who is committed to conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism.[5] Like many Western evangelicals, he fought against modernism. Yet in the mission context of Thailand, his battle against modernism was closely linked to his struggle to be free from missionary paternalism. Boon Mark benefitted from and aided the ministries of foreign evangelists and missionaries in Thailand, but he did not allow himself to be limited or controlled by them. He felt at liberty to shift loyalties from one person or group to another when the new one seemed to better align with Boon Mark's core convictions, namely advancing evangelism, providing deeper Christian experience, or more closely adhering to the Bible. He was neither antimissionary nor anticolonial but he aggressively criticized fellow Christians, foreign or domestic, whom he thought were harming Thai churches or impeding evangelism through paternalistic control or bad theology. As we will see in the following biographical sketch of his life and ministry, Boon Mark Gittisarn was his own man. His shifting loyalties and inveterate cross-denominational networking were driven by his evangelical commitments, even while his charismatic and divisive manner provoked strong reactions from fellow Christians whom he dismissed as opponents of the truth. Sadly, in his later life, advocacy for rebaptism in the name of Jesus only and a moral failure left a permanent stain on Boon Mark's record in the eyes of many.

Boon Mark is not well known today and is largely only remembered by older Thai Christians and missionaries, and the small handful of people who study Thai church history. Yet, his constant promotion of evangelism and revival as well as his advocacy for Pentecostal experience have had a formative impact on churches in Thailand up to the present day. His legacy, mixed though it may be, has left an indelible mark on Christianity in Thailand and deserves to be known today for the lessons, both positive and negative, that current and future generations may draw from it.

American Presbyterian Beginnings

Although he did not always see eye to eye with them, Boon Mark's spiritual journey began with the missionaries of the American Presbyterian mission (APM) in Thailand who invested substantial time, energy, and finances into his personal, spiritual, and educational development. Born on September 1, 1898, into a Buddhist family in Ratburi province, Boon Mark entered Padoongrasdra School in the city

5. David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 1-20.

of Pitsanuloke after his father was transferred to the city.[6] Padoongrasdra was a Christian school for boys run by the American Presbyterian mission and is likely the first place that Boon Mark was exposed to Christianity. However, his first impression of the faith was apparently not positive. He reportedly hated Christianity and even spat on the Bible.[7]

But something changed in Boon Mark. Missionary John L. Eakin reported that "after a hard struggle with himself, he accepted Christ." In 1915, he was baptized at Christkunanukul Church in Pitsanuloke.[8] Boon Mark was given an educational scholarship from the Presbyterian mission station in Pitsanuloke to continue his studies at Bangkok Christian College, a mission-run boys high school in Bangkok.[9] Paul Eakin, brother of John and executive secretary for the American Presbyterian mission in Thailand, reported that at Bangkok Christian College, Boon Mark "always took a strong Christian stand, and was always ready to take leadership in Temperance and Street evangelistic meetings."[10] Paul Eakin, whom Boon Mark would eventually come to regard as an opponent, also noted retrospectively that "even at this time [during Boon Mark's studies at Bangkok Christian College], he showed that he was erratic and loved to be sensational."[11] This criticism may be an overstatement, though further developments in Boon Mark's life lend some credibility to Eakin's assertion. Eakin wrote prolifically about the American Presbyterian Mission's work in Thailand and was a generally reliable recorder of events, even if his commentary on those events reflected his personal biases. Boon Mark was growing into a bold and fearless evangelist who did not hesitate to speak his mind. His trajectory did not mesh well with Eakin's emphasis on avoiding offending Thai cultural sensibilities and witnessing to Christ through Christian living in mission schools more than direct verbal proclamation of the Gospel.[12]

6. John L. Eakin recorded in 1938 that Boon Mark's father was a lieutenant in the Thai army and that Boon Mark grew up in a military barrack. However, John's brother Paul Eakin reported that Boon Mark was the son of a police officer. Sornsark Gittsarn also recalled that Boon Mark's father was a police officer. John L. Eakin, "Siam's Delegation to the Madras Conference," *Siam Outlook* 9, no. 4 (October 1938): 149-51; Paul A. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists in Thailand", 1956, RG017/80, Box 1, Folder 14, Eakin Papers, Payap University Archives (PUA), Chiang Mai, Thailand; Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023.

7. Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023.

8. Eakin, "Siam's Delegation"; Jaakko Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara: The Independent Churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area, Thailand, their Historical Background, Contextual Setting, and Theological Thinking* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2000), 68.

9. Though Herb Swanson and Sornsark Gittisarn place Boon Mark's conversion at Bangkok Christian College, both John Eakin and Paul Eakin indicate that he came to faith at Padoongrasdra School in Pitsanuloke. Herbert R. Swanson, "Boon Mark Gittisarn," in *Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, ed. Scott Sunquist (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 89-90.; Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023; Eakin, "Siam's Delegation"; Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

10. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

11. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

12. For more on Eakin's theology and philosophy of ministry, see Karl Dahlfred, "Conservative

An Outspoken, Young Evangelist

Following his graduation from Bangkok Christian College in 1921, Boon Mark was offered a job by an American firm but instead chose to become a station evangelist for the American Presbyterian Mission in Pitsanuloke.[13] Over the next ten years or so, Boon Mark traveled far and wide, both in the Pitsanuloke area and other parts of Thailand, proclaiming the Gospel along with missionary and Thai coworkers. Writing in 1938, John L. Eakin affirmed that "[f]rom the beginning he was interested in the evangelistic work and proved himself an able and faithful helper in this field."[14]

In late 1924, Boon Mark got a taste of cross-cultural evangelism when he and some coworkers took the train from Pitsanuloke to Sawankaloke district of nearby Sukhothai province to visit Karen tribal villages to share the Gospel. Writing about his experience in *Siam Outlook*, the American Presbyterian Mission in Thailand's quarterly magazine, Boon Mark said that he hoped to get a Karen preacher from northern Thailand to accompany them on their next trip because the Karen villagers would understand him much better than they did Boon Mark and his coworkers when they presented the Gospel in Thai. "The Siamese language to Siamese about spiritual things is very hard to understand," reported Boon Mark, "but to talk to those of a different language is much more difficult."[15]

Boon Mark's evangelistic journeys also brought him to Petchaburi province, southwest of Bangkok, where he assisted John A. Eakin, father of Paul and John L., with evangelistic outreaches.[16] It was in Petchaburi that he met his future wife, Muan Suphaban (ม้วน สุภาพันธ์). Some time after meeting Muan, Boon Mark paid a visit to Paul Eakin to tell him that he was going to get married. Eakin, however, cautioned him that the "ascetic life did not jibe [sic] with his present intentions [to marry]."[17] The reason he said this was because, in the early 1920s, Boon Mark had developed an interest in Sundar Singh, a controversial Indian Christian mystic, ascetic, and itinerant preacher who became well known for both his stories and parables, as well as his claims of miraculous experiences and visions.[18] Boon Mark translated an account of Singh's life into Thai and, according to Paul Eakin, "boasted that he was going to be another Sundar Singh for Thailand." Eakin expressed concern that Boon

in Theology, Liberal in Spirit: Modernism and the American Presbyterian Mission in Thailand, 1891-1941," (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2020), 112-15, 132-35, 215-18.

13. Eakin, "Siam's Delegation"; Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023.

14. Eakin, "Siam's Delegation," 149.

15. "Thai" and "Siamese" are used interchangeably in this article. Boon Mark Gittisarn, "The Karen People, North of Sawankaloke" *Siam Outlook* 4, no. 4 (April 1925): 141-43.

16. John A. Eakin to Paul Eakin, February 26, 1924, RG017/80, Box 5, Folder 2, Eakin Papers, PUA.

17. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

18. Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Clouds of Witnesses: Christian Voices from Africa and Asia* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2011), 157-66.

Mark could not hope for happiness in family life if he still held to the superiority of the ascetic life. Boon Mark told Eakin that he had changed his mind.[19] Boon Mark and Muan married in 1923 and eventually had six children together.[20]

In Pitsanuloke, missionaries Herbert Stewart and Alvin Cooper taught a three-year Bible course to Boon Mark and other Thai church workers. However, according to Boon Mark, no single mission station could provide all the training needs of the church, so a larger, more formal Bible school was needed. "The work of God is growing and our churches need more men and women to advance the work," wrote Boon Mark. "We must be well educated and have a great knowledge of the Bible and know how to deliver the Truth."[21] In light of this widely recognized need, in 1927, an advanced post-high school level class was opened at McGilvary Theological Seminary in Chiang Mai. Founded in 1912, the seminary was already offering training for church elders and lay people, but the American Presbyterian mission wanted to start an upper-level class in order to train men for ordained pastoral ministry. Boon Mark was one of six men in the school's first advanced class. Students spent six months of the year in Chiang Mai for their studies and the other six months in their respective stations, preaching and touring. But even while in Chiang Mai, evangelism was a regular part of student life. Boon Mark reported,

> We also do evangelistic work while we are here in school. We go out in groups many Sundays to preach the Gospel in villages near and far. Some of the men of the lower classes go out for three days at the end of the weeks. The Laos people accept teaching more easily than the Siamese of the South. But we must work for all and we must learn to be patient. Every night and morning we meet for prayer. Sometimes we visit a Buddhist Temple in the city. The priests, and the men and women listen to us when we talk about religious matters. Some are quite interested and some very far away from understanding. But by the Grace of God, we hope to reap from the seed that is being sown."[22]

During his studies in Chiang Mai, Boon Mark reportedly got into trouble with local Buddhists, and the matter was relayed to Prince Damrong (สมเด็จฯ กรมพระยาดำรงราชานุภาพ), a senior member of the Thai royal family who paid close attention to mission affairs. The content of Boon Mark's criticisms is unknown, though Paul Eakin characterized them as "unjust." Due to Boon Mark's connection with the American Presbyterian Mission, Damrong contacted Paul Eakin to rein in Boon Mark for the

19. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

20. Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023; Swanson, "Boon Mark Gittisarn," 89; "Former Official of the Church of Christ in Thailand Passes Away," *Church News ข่าวคริสตจักร* (April 1987): 47

21. Boon Mark Gittisarn, "McGilvary Theological Seminary, Chiengmai," *Siam Outlook* 6, no. 2 (October 1926): 34.

22. Gittisarn, "McGilvary Theological Seminary," 34.

sake of maintaining good relations between the mission and the government. Eakin claimed that he did his best to "reason with the boy, but did not get far. He continued his tactics, saying that he must 'obey God rather than man.'"[23] There is no record of Boon Mark's perspective in this situation, but it is probable that he thought that Eakin should have stood behind him as a Christian evangelist instead of taking the side of the Buddhist government. Also, it is odd that Eakin referred to Boon Mark as a "boy" given the fact that Eakin was only eight years older than Boon Mark, who was around thirty years old at the time of the incident. However, referring to him in this way may be a reflection of the difference in power and authority between the two and Eakin's judgment that Boon Mark lacked tact and discernment in how he spoke about Buddhists and Buddhism. This conversation with Eakin was likely just one of many incidents that contributed to the eventual rift between the two men, as well as Boon Mark's later criticism that the American Presbyterian mission was compromised by modernism and paternalism.

This incident was not the last time that Boon Mark's forthrightness caused mission leaders to question the cultural appropriateness of his communications. Following graduation from McGilvary Theological Seminary in 1930, Boon Mark continued at Pitsanuloke for a time before transferring to the Bangkok station in 1931 to work with Paul Fuller, an American Presbyterian missionary with fundamentalist leanings. Fuller had supported Boon Mark's studies in Chiang Mai and was glad to have Boon Mark as a full-time member of his evangelistic team. Fuller praised Boon Mark as "a tower of strength … [who] has had much varied and valuable experience."[24] Boon Mark's love for direct proclamation of the Gospel meshed well with Fuller's evangelistic drive. Yet not all in the American Presbyterian mission in the 1930s shared those convictions for speaking the truth plainly. In a letter to Paul Eakin, missionary educator Kenneth Wells flagged up a section from a Sunday school lesson written by Boon Mark that Wells felt had the potential to unnecessarily anger Buddhists. The section that had Wells concerned urged readers to

> Dispose of idols and come and seek the living God… Buddhist statues don't have life but Christ is alive. In the body of a statue, there is nothing but in the will of Christ there is love. Those who bow to statues will in a little while become like those statues they worship, namely they will have no life or soul; they will have no love or mercy. Therefore, dispose of idols and come to Jesus Christ. You will have more and more life, love, and mercy just like Him (*author's translation*).[25]

23. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

24. Paul Fuller to Cleland McAfee, September 1931, RG84, Box 10, Folder 14, UPCUSA COEMAR Secretaries Files: Thailand Mission, Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS), Philadelphia, Penn.

25. Kenneth Wells to Paul Eakin, March 4, 1935, RG001/78, Box 14, Folder 2, APM, PUA.

"Is there no way of censoring S.S. stuff like the enclosed?" Wells asked Paul Eakin. "Every once in a while some wild statement which weakens the cause creeps in. In this respect Kru Mark and Paul Fuller are a bad combination. Surely it is not necessary to anger those whom we would win."[26] It is unlikely that any action was taken on Wells's suggestion to censor Boon Mark's Sunday school lessons because several months later, Wells felt compelled to write to Eakin again about one of Boon Mark's Sunday school lessons. This time, he objected to "another long tirade against the Seventh Day Adventists, in which they are spoken of in a very derogatory manner." Though Wells admitted that he had no love for the Seventh Day Adventists, he hated to see them spoken about "on such a low plane" because it reflected poorly on the dignity of the Presbyterian church.[27] Eakin spoke with Boon Mark about the matter and reported back to Wells that Boon Mark had "good reason for some strong statements he makes." The Adventists had falsely claimed that Boon Mark had come over to their side, and they were very aggressive in many places. Boon Mark was getting letters about them from other places around Thailand. Though Eakin and Boon Mark had their differences, Eakin felt that Boon Mark had some justification in this instance.[28]

Though there are no further details about the events that gave rise to Boon Mark's criticism of the Adventists, their claim that he had come to their side may indicate that Boon Mark had significant contact with Adventists and had become interested in their teachings. He may have criticized them, but he was also curious. Given Boon Mark's long-term trajectory of moving from group to group and maintaining a broad network among diverse Protestant and Pentecostal figures, churches, and organizations, it is highly likely that Boon Mark had at least occasional interactions with Seventh Day Adventists through the years. Although he would not significantly expand his connections with non-Presbyterian groups until after the war, Boon Mark was already demonstrating that he was open to exploring other Christian traditions that meshed with his essential evangelical commitments. Boon Mark's relationship with Seventh Day Adventism will receive further consideration later in this article when Boon Mark becomes formally associated with the Adventists near the end of his life.

Boon Mark's Rising Star in the Thai National Church

Despite the concerns of some missionaries about Boon Mark's approach and style, his star continued to rise in mission and church circles through the 1930s. Even as he

26. *Kru* is a Thai word meaning teacher. Kenneth Wells to Paul Eakin, March 4, 1935, RG001/78, Box 14, Folder 2, APM, PUA.

27. Kenneth Wells to Paul Eakin, September 26, 1935, RG001/78, Box 2, Folder 12, APM, PUA.

28. Paul Eakin to Kenneth Wells, October 1, 1935, RG001/78, Box 2, Folder 12, APM, PUA.

continued to work with Paul Fuller in doing evangelism, Boon Mark accepted a call as pastor of Second Church in Bangkok, a position that he held from 1933 to 1948. In the early 1930s, the first Thai Protestant church denomination was being organized. The idea of a national church denomination had been in discussion for many years, and Boon Mark wrote publicly about the need for it as early as 1926. "Some of the laws and rules of the United States are hard to follow," asserted Boon Mark, "and correspondence takes so long between Siam and America….We Siamese must wake up and meet the need."[29] When the Church of Christ in Siam (later Thailand) was formally established in 1934, it was largely made up of churches associated with the American Presbyterian Mission, with a smaller number having been founded by American Baptists. Thai pastor Pluang Sudikham (เปลื้อง สุทธิคำ) was elected as the first moderator, former American Presbyterian missionary Bertha McFarland was chosen as general secretary, and Boon Mark was chosen as assistant general secretary. As a former missionary highly regarded by both Thai and foreigners, McFarland, in her role as general secretary, served as a liaison between the Presbyterian mission and the new Thai denomination, being fully part of neither but trusted by both. The American Presbyterians hoped to help the Thai establish administrative and ecclesiastical structures and procedures similar to their home denomination in the United States, and for the first four years of the denomination's formal existence, McFarland coached Boon Mark and other Thai leaders in how to run their church. In 1938, she stepped back from this position after Boon Mark was elected as general secretary of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). In this role, he chaired the CCT's executive committee, which met more frequently than the triennial General Assembly and, therefore, had greater practical executive power for everyday ministry decisions than did the assembly.[30]

Promoting Revival and Arguing with Missionaries

As pastor of Second Church and as a top leader of the newly formed Church of Christ in Thailand, Boon Mark used his influence to emphasize evangelism and facilitated the visits of multiple itinerant evangelists from China. In 1935, Boon Mark traveled the country with Rev. Paul Lyn, a US-educated Cantonese evangelist who emphasized repentance from sin, prayer, and the blessing and power of the Holy Spirit. Lyn left a strong impression on both Boon Mark and others. Lyn was followed by another Chinese evangelist, a certain Mr. Linn, and then a China-based American missionary revivalist. Boon Mark assisted each of these visitors, but Paul Eakin reports that this

29. Gittisarn, "McGilvary Theological Seminary," 35.

30. Bertha Blount McFarland, McFarland of Siam (New York: Vantage Press, 1958), 233-39; Prasit Pongudom, History of the Church of Christ in Thailand [*ประวัติศาสตร์สภาคริสตจักรในประเทศไทย*] (Chiang Mai: Archives Unit, Church of Christ in Thailand, 1984), 173.

series of visiting evangelists left Thai believers confused and divided.[31] Yet none of the foreign evangelists who visited Thailand in the prewar period were as significant as John Sung (Song Shangjie), who left a lasting impact on the Thai church.

Boon Mark reported that leaders in the Church of Christ in Thailand had wanted a revival preacher, and Dr. Sung was the most important one that they had heard of. Therefore, it was suggested that he be invited to conduct meetings in Thailand. However, some of the missionaries, including Paul Eakin and Graham Fuller, opposed inviting Sung. Fuller had gotten word from China that Sung's preaching was divisive, and Eakin wrote to Henry Sloane Coffin of Union Seminary in New York City, who confirmed that Sung had been committed to a mental institution while studying at the seminary.[32] Eakin spoke in the CCT's Assembly Council against inviting him while Boon Mark spoke until tears rolled down his face because he really wanted Sung to come put on a revival. The council voted thirteen to one against inviting Sung, with one abstention. Boon Mark was the sole dissenting vote and subsequentially took the prerogative to invite Sung anyhow, despite the council's vote.[33] The risk of division apparently did not bother Boon Mark as long as there was the opportunity for revival and spiritual renewal.

John Sung visited Thailand for a month from September to October 1938 and again from May to August 1939.[34] Boon Mark traveled with Sung and served as translator, though on some occasions, Boon Mark's friend and former seminary classmate Sook Pongsanoi (สุข พงศ์น้อย) translated. Boon Mark said that Sung spoke broken English, but he thought that they did a good job translating for him. Sung at first spoke at churches in Bangkok, Nakon Pathom, and Trang. Although some Thai were initially opposed to Sung, his preaching made such a positive impression that CCT leadership formally invited him to return for several months in 1939, during which time he made a tour of northern Thailand. Bold, direct, and dramatic, Sung emphasized themes of sin, repentance, salvation in Jesus Christ, personal sanctification, and the need for evangelism. It was reported that many backslidden Christians repented, and people were deeply convicted of their sins. He prayed for healing and for people to receive the Holy Spirit. Even Thai and missionaries who had opposed inviting Sung could not deny that Sung's ministry had brought spiritual renewal and a fresh commitment to evangelism among Thai believers. Sung made a lifelong impression

31. Boon Mark Gittisarn, "A Chinese Evangelist," *Siam Outlook* 12, no. 3 (July 1936): 128-29; Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

32. For an examination of conflicting accounts of Sung's time at Union Seminary and conversion, see Daryl R. Ireland, "John Sung's malleable conversion narrative," *Fides et Historia* 45, no. 1 (2013): 48-75.

33. Boon Mark Gittisarn, interview by Chayan Hirapan, December 28, 1978, transcript, Code OHT 73/79, PUA, 3-4; Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

34. The most comprehensive examination of Sung's ministry in Thailand is Seung Ho Son, "Christian Revival in the Presbyterian Church of Thailand between 1900 and 1941: An Ecclesiological Analysis and Evaluation" (ThD diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2004)

on Boon Mark and Sook. Even though Boon Mark judged that receiving the Holy Spirit at Sung's meetings didn't have as much effect as postwar Finnish Pentecostal meetings because no one spoke in tongues during Sung's meetings, Boon Mark was still more impressed with Sung. In a 1978 interview, Boon Mark stated, "I am almost 82 years old, and I have never seen anything like Sung's meetings."[35] After Sung left Thailand, Boon Mark convinced CCT leaders to retroactively reverse their decision to not invite Sung and to write a thank you note to him for coming since they had seen the fruit of his ministry.[36]

In the wake of Sung's visits, Thai Christians formed traveling evangelistic teams, or witness bands, along the lines that Sung had instructed. Sung had also held a twelve-day Bible school in Bangkok, a model that Thai Christians wanted to emulate. A group of Thai believers, along with a handful of missionaries, petitioned the American Presbyterian mission in Thailand to approve the opening of a lay Bible institute using the facilities of McGilvary Theological Seminary in Chiang Mai. They requested that fundamentalist-leaning missionary Loren Hanna be their instructor.[37] Though the seminary already had both lower and advanced classes, those inspired by Sung's ministry wanted their own school. The seminary's director, Carl Elder, had strongly opposed John Sung and had bristled at Sung's deprecation of an educated ministry over against the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Elder was also sympathetic to theological modernism, which caused Sung, Boon Mark, and others to not trust him. Elder's seminary colleagues Banchop Bansiddhi (บรรจบ บันสิทธิ์) and Prasert Intaphantu (ประเสริฐ อินทะพันธ์) reported that Sung and Boon Mark said that the seminary was "no use and it was useless to study there." They also claimed that Boon Mark had used Sung and his words to "advertise and get popularity for himself."[38] While Paul Eakin and other mission leaders wanted to encourage Bible study among Thai Christians and to conserve the enthusiasm generated by Sung's visits, they ultimately rejected the request for the new lay Bible institute. Thai church historian Prasit Pongudom (ประสิทธิ์ พงศ์อุดม) believed that refusing the lay Bible institute request was a way to bring peace to a divided church, which required resisting the rising power of Boon Mark.[39]

Through Sung's revivals, Boon Mark had gained followers and allies in advocating for Sung-style fundamentalist-oriented evangelism and Bible teaching in Thailand. Personal loyalty to Boon Mark was also growing. In his position as general secretary, Boon Mark was increasingly able and willing to assert Thai

35. Boon Mark Gittisarn, interview, December 28, 1978, transcript, 5-6, 8.

36. Boon Mark Gittisarn, interview, December 28, 1978, transcript, 7.

37. Attendees of Bangkok Bible Conference to Executive Committee of Siam Mission, RG001/78, Box 11, Folder 15, APM, PUA.

38. Banchop Bansiddhi and Prasert Intaphantu to Paul Eakin, October 25, 1939, RG001/78, Box 11, Folder 15, APM, PUA.

39. Pongudom, *History of CCT*, 88.

leadership in decision-making in the Church of Christ in Thailand, even when the missionaries disagreed. Boon Mark often argued with the missionaries in church leadership meetings. When interviewed many years later, Boon Mark recalled that when he was general secretary of the CCT, the missionaries regarded themselves as advisors or guardians of the church and had lots of issues. There was always a representative of theirs in the big CCT meetings. They wanted to take pictures and take photos together. "It wasn't good," remembered Boon Mark. "I didn't like it." Though there is a high value in Thai culture on smooth personal relationships and maintaining harmony, Boon Mark recalled that he argued with the missionaries until he was red in the face. Boon Mark and the missionaries argued so much that Mrs. Tardt Pradipasena (ตาด ประทีปะเสน), a long-time Thai language teacher for the mission, would not look him in the face.[40]

When conflicts arose at the Pitsanuloke station, which the mission had provisionally turned over to CCT control in 1934, Boon Mark and the CCT executive committee refused to accept the American Presbyterian mission's proposed solutions.[41] Mission executive secretary Paul Eakin judged the CCT executive committee's demands as unworkable, but fellow missionary Herbert Seigle had an alternative perspective. In his judgment, because the CCT executive committee of Lek Taiyong (เล็ก ไทยง), Boon Mark, and Mark Mojadara (มาร์ค โมชดารา) would not do things the way the Thailand mission leadership wanted them to, the mission decided to take back the station and put in charge some Thai "yes men" who would conform to the mission's wishes. Boon Mark and his Thai colleagues were determined not to be just "yes men."[42] Eakin, however, claimed it was "Boon Mark's group" that was responsible for breaking up the Pitsanuloke nationalization project.[43] Prior to the Second World War, Boon Mark was beginning to bristle underneath the paternalism that he sensed from the American Presbyterian mission but there were few other Protestant groups in Thailand with whom he might work. But that was about to change.

Postwar Tensions and Resignation from Second Church

With the onset of World War Two, there was a temporary suspension of hostilities between Boon Mark and the missionaries as Thai Christians faced the bigger task

40. Boon Mark Gittisarn, interview, December 28, 1978, transcript, 144-45.

41. Karl Dahlfred, "A Bumpy Road to Indigenization: The American Presbyterian Mission and the Church of Christ in Thailand," Journal of Presbyterian History 99, no. 1 (Spring / Summer 2021): 40-42.

42. Paul Eakin, "Brief Review of Recent History of Pitsanuloke Project", February 17, 1940, RG001/78, Box 10, Folder 14, APM, PUA; Albert and Jeanette Seigle to Margaret and Ken Landon, August 21, 1940, SC-38, Box 94, Folder 3, Landon Papers, Wheaton College Special Collections, Wheaton, Illinois.

43. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

of surviving and staying faithful to Christ during the Japanese occupation and accompanying religious suppression. Thai believers were on their own for five years and had become accustomed to managing their church's affairs entirely by themselves. At the first postwar CCT general assembly, the majority voted to invite the American Presbyterian missionaries to return, but Prasoke Chairatana (ประสก ชัยรัตน์), the moderator of the assembly, resigned in protest, believing that although they should come back eventually, that moment was not the right time. Starting in 1946, American Presbyterian missionaries started to trickle back into Thailand, bringing with them postwar relief supplies and helping Thai Christians reclaim church properties that had been seized during the war. They also reinstituted the same mission structures that they had used before the war. However, the Thai church had matured during the long absence of the missionaries and was no longer happy in the role of "little brother."[44] Though the Presbyterian Church USA was starting to seriously re-evaluate the relationship between their missions and the so-called "younger churches," change could not come fast enough for Boon Mark.

Boon Mark had been pastor of Second Church in Bangkok since 1933, but he had a growing sense that it was not really his church. The people in the church did not want him to leave but Boon Mark felt like the church belonged to "them," meaning most likely the American Presbyterian mission. In Boon Mark's mind, "they" built it. "They" started it. "I helped Second Church for a long time until I decided it was time for me to leave because I needed to go start my own church that would be mine, that would be my own nest. They saw me as a mother hen who just came and sat on someone else's eggs in someone else's nest."[45] One point of tension with the American Presbyterian mission was the appropriate use of church property. During the war, some students stayed at the church when they could not return to their home provinces. In 1946, Boon Mark wanted to use the church property to open a student hostel for girls, but missionary John Eakin opposed this, and the two men got into an argument. It was the understanding of missionary Margaret McCord, a friend of Boon Mark, that this argument led to Boon Mark's resignation from Second Church.[46] Though this incident was likely a contributing factor, Boon Mark made no mention of it when discussing his reasons for leaving Second Church when interviewed three decades later. He was clear, however, about his dissatisfaction with some elders and church members who were resistant to Boon Mark's leadership. Some did not follow Boon Mark's lead in going out to do evangelism, a fact which he resented. "Someday when I am in a coffin, they will follow me," grumbled Boon Mark. "But they won't

44. Karl Dahlfred, "A Bumpy Road to Indigenization: The American Presbyterian Mission and the Church of Christ in Thailand," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 99, no. 1 (Spring / Summer 2021): 40-42.

45. Boon Mark Gittisarn, interview, December 28, 1978, transcript, 9-10.

46. Margaret McCord to Margaret Landon, July 6, 1946, Series 2, Box 93, Folder 8, Landon Papers, Wheaton College Special Collections, Wheaton, Illinois.

follow me to evangelize."[47] Against the will of the Second Church session (board of elders), Boon Mark dug a hole in the ground next to the church to be used as a baptistry, having become convinced that baptism must be done by immersion. On at least one occasion, Boon Mark urged the church's elders to climb onto the church's roof to join him in prayer. Though Boon Mark had numerous supporters and followers at the church, as evidenced by the fact that many followed him when he left, there were still many people at Second Church who displeased Boon Mark. A committee of the CCT Bangkok district council, which included mission executive secretary Paul Eakin, tried to convince Boon Mark to stay at Second Church. Boon Mark was unpersuaded. On Sunday, April 6, 1947, Boon Mark preached his last sermon at Second Church and set off strings of Chinese firecrackers as a testimony against the church members.[48] Together with some of the elders and a substantial portion of the members, Boon Mark shortly thereafter started his New Smyrna Church (later Bangkok Church) in the backroom of the American Bible Society, a property that he had taken care of during the war.[49] His original intention was for this new church to be part of the Church of Christ in Thailand, but events took Boon Mark and the church in a different direction.[50]

Withdrawal from the Church of Christ in Thailand

The American Presbyterian mission in Thailand had given Boon Mark his start and had provided him with many opportunities for personal development and ministry. All his schooling had been at mission schools. He had worked as a station evangelist in Pitsanuloke and Bangkok. He had pastored a Presbyterian church in Bangkok and been chosen as general secretary of the national church. In 1938, Boon Mark and a handful of other Thai leaders traveled to India for a meeting of the International Missionary Council.[51] In his own way, Boon Mark had also shown commitment to the CCT churches and was intending to bring his new church plant into the CCT. But his time with the American Presbyterian mission was coming to an end.

In February 1947, the mission's executive committee decided to send Boon Mark to Biblical Seminary in New York with a view to getting him in as a representative

47. Boon Mark Gittisarn, interview, December 28, 1978, transcript, 10.

48. Paul Eakin reported that Boon Mark "cursed the Second Church saying it would die, and then burned incense and set off fire-crackers in the Church to give himself an auspicious start in his new Smyrna Church." In Boon Mark's 1978 interview, however, he made no mention of incense, cursing the church, saying it would die, or trying to achieve an auspicious new start. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

49. Boon Mark Gittisarn, interview, December 28, 1978, transcript, 10; Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

50. Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara,* 69.

51. Eakin, "Siam's Delegation."

at the International Missionary Council meetings in Montreal, Canada, in July 1948. Eakin reported that Boon Mark found out about this decision and started boasting about this special favor he was being given, even before the Board of Foreign Missions in the U.S. had approved it. He also claimed that he would raise money in the USA for building his new church and would tell the truth about the Mission and Church to the church in America. Thai leaders were furious. When their opinion got to the Board, they decided against sending him to the US.[52]

In the postwar period, Boon Mark continued his criticisms of the Presbyterian mission while simultaneously branching out and making new contacts. Previous to World War Two, there were a limited number of Protestant mission groups working in Thailand. The American Presbyterians were by far the largest and most dominant. In postwar Thailand, a vast number of evangelical and Pentecostal church and parachurch groups entered the country.[53] On November 17, 1946, two of the first Pentecostal missionaries, Verner and Hanna Raassina of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission (FFFM), arrived in Bangkok. Due to a change in government policy in Finland, their home church was forced to cut off all funds to them, and the couple was left nearly broke.[54] Boon Mark heard of their plight and invited them to stay at Kittikhun Wittaya School, which belonged to Boon Mark's wife, Muan. This was the beginning of a long friendship with the Raassinas and was the launching point of Boon Mark's connection with Pentecostalism in Thailand.[55]

In 1948, a definitive break came between Boon Mark, the American Presbyterians, and the Church of Christ in Thailand. In that year, the Church of Christ in Thailand joined the World Council of Churches (WCC), and Boon Mark formally withdrew from the CCT in protest. In Boon Mark's mind, membership in the WCC represented a compromise with theological liberalism and constituted a further move away from evangelism and gospel fidelity. Boon Mark's friend Sook Pongsanoi and a handful of other Thai leaders also left the CCT around this time. Boon Mark wrote that the World Council of Churches wanted to unite all denominations regardless of belief, but Boon Mark believed that it was necessary to agree on belief and practice in order to unite together. How then, reasoned Boon Mark, could he have a heart to unite with Christians who smoke, drink beer, dance, watch movies, and are not interested in proclaiming the Gospel? "We separate from Catholics," wrote Boon Mark, "because they added human opinions to the faith." The WCC was similar because they "do not

52. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

53. Alex G. Smith, *Siamese Gold, a History of Church Growth in Thailand: An Interpretive Analysis 1816–1982* (Bangkok: Kanok Bannasan [OMF Publishers], 1982), 221-23.

54. Ervin E. Shaffer, *Under the Shade of the Coconut Palms: Missions—Thailand* (Bangkok: Thai Gospel Press, 1974): 10-12.

55. James Hosack and Alan R. Johnson, "Pentecostalism in Thailand," in *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements Past, Present, and Future, Volume 1 Asia and Oceania*, eds. Vinson Synan and Amos Yong (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2016), 198-99.

have the Bible as a foundation, and selectively take the beliefs they like. They take anybody, but they block those who want to preach the Gospel."[56]

Joining Forces with American Fundamentalist Carl McIntire

Having severed formal connections with the American Presbyterians and the CCT, Boon Mark continued to pursue his own ministry priorities and form new associations and connections. His new church was growing quickly, and he traveled the country with his church's evangelistic team, selling gospel portions and tracts, preaching the Gospel, and visiting and encouraging other churches. One day in late 1949, after returning from an evangelistic trip to northern Thailand, he found a short note from Rev. John Young of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), who wanted to see him. Boon Mark had never heard of Young or the ICCC, but the following day, the two men met up. Boon Mark reported that they had a "wonderfully … long conversation about the churches and the problems of the East." The ICCC, a fundamentalist organization founded by American preacher Carl McIntire as an alternative to the more ecumenically-minded WCC, was having a meeting in Bangkok and invited Boon Mark to be a delegate to their meeting, an invitation which he happily accepted.[57] McIntire, Young, and other members of the ICCC had come to Bangkok to attend some of the sessions of the East Asia Christian Conference, an interdenominational organization of churches associated with the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. McIntire and his associates were denied entrance to the meetings that were held from December 4 to 11, 1949, at Wattana Wittaya Academy, a Presbyterian mission school in Bangkok. In response to being barred from the WCC meetings, the ICCC held their own conference and formed a regional fundamentalist group of churches called the Council of Christian Churches in Asia (CCCA) to counter the "apostate ecumenical movement," as McIntire termed the World Council of Churches. Boon Mark was honored with being made a vice president of this new organization.[58]

McIntire charged that the World Council of Churches and their representatives in Bangkok were both modernists and communists. The charge of communism was repeated in an editorial article in the *Bangkok Post*, a leading English-language newspaper in Thailand. McIntire and Boon Mark also brought the accusation of communism to the local authorities. As a result, Thai secret police followed WCC delegates around the city, both during the meetings and in the days following. The police eventually gave up on this, having become convinced that the charges were

56. Boon Mark Gittisarn, "Dr. McIntire" *Church News [ข่าวคริสตจักร]* (December 1952): 20-22.

57. Boon Mark Gittisarn, "An Appeal for Sound Missionaries for Siam," *Christian Beacon* (Dec 29, 1949): 4.

58. Carl McIntire, *A Testimony in Europe: Travel Letters on Missions* (Collingswood, NJ: Christian Beacon Press, 1951), 38.

false.[59] Though Boon Mark surely considered his actions in this matter as standing for the truth, some Thai Christians were greatly upset by the conflict and public criticism caused by Boon Mark and the ICCC. Saranya Chairatana (สรันย์ ชัยรัตน์), who became general secretary of the CCT after Boon Mark's resignation, claimed that "if this often happened that one group of Christians set up a fight with another group of Christians in the same Oriental city, and especially in Thailand, it would be more like giving a dose of poison to the Christian moment than giving it a boost."[60] Several months after the WCC and ICCC meetings in Bangkok, Tardt Pradipasena shared with Paul Eakin her dismay with Boon Mark's behavior towards CCT churches and the Presbyterian mission:

> Among ourselves we do not altogether understand each other. Look at Kru Boon Mark. He seems to have gone completely off. He seems to be really happy in opposing us and our Church. And he seems to honestly think he is doing God's will. I just saw him for the first time in three years as I got on the bus the other day. His first greeting was, "I am going to Switzerland, and perhaps on to America." And before he got down from the bus he said: "Kru Boon Mee (of Chiangmai) has also left the Church and gone off to start up on his own with me" and laughed. This was the first I had heard of this so had no answer ready. All I said was, "I hope you have a good journey to Switzerland; take good care of your health there." My oh my! How is it possible that he has gone off like this? I understand that he has already left on the same plane with Rai Chaiyo. It seems as if there is as much confusion in our religious circles as there is in politics.[61]

Though Boon Mark was happy in his new church, he was evidently still upset with the direction of CCT churches in Thailand and felt compelled to pressure those churches to turn from their wayward course. He also wanted to expose the American Presbyterian mission, which Boon Mark believed was harming Thai churches through suffocating paternalism and liberal theology. McIntire paid for Boon Mark to travel as a representative of the ICCC to Europe and the United States, where he raised funds and told audiences about the damage done to Thai churches by the American Presbyterian mission.

The publishing arm of McIntire's organization was also open to Boon Mark. In an open letter in McIntire's *Christian Beacon*, Boon Mark issued "An Appeal for Sound Missionaries for Siam."[62] In this letter, he criticized the Presbyterian mission for contenting themselves with school and hospital work while neglecting to evangelize

59. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

60. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

61. Tardt Pradipasena to Paul Eakin, August 20, 1950, RG)017/80, Box 3, Folder 5, Eakin Papers, PUA.

62. Gittisarn, "Appeal for Sound Missionaries."

the masses, a theme often repeated among churches and organizations outside of the CCT.[63] In addition, most of the mission's Christian workers were "worldly and modernistic," and it was the mission's fault. "When the missionaries had lost the spirit of evangelizing and sacrificing, what are we going to expect of the native leaders?" asked Boon Mark. "There you are. One hundred and twenty years and we have only dying churches!" Boon Mark concluded his letter by asking American churches to send "many fundamental missionaries, like the early missionaries who came here, who will do the pioneer work and evangelize Siam." However, Boon Mark also conceded that there were some good missionaries in Thailand. He specifically cited the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Pentecostals, and the World Wide Evangelistic Crusade. Their only weakness was a failure to "speak out against the modernist and social gospel." What Boon Mark really wanted was "missionaries who will not be silent but try their best to win the modernistic church back to the old faith." He also wanted help in starting a fundamental Bible school and publishing Christian literature.

In a booklet coauthored with McIntire, Boon Mark similarly struck out against the "modernist missionaries" who dominated Thai churches through funding and false doctrine, thereby preventing Thai churches from becoming self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting.[64] He asserted that CCT churches were not growing, and for all their claimed conversion numbers, their altar calls were merely bullying Buddhists into making professions of faith. Bundled up with his accusations of modernism were accusations of paternalism. From Boon Mark's perspective, both were wrapped up in one package, and he wanted neither:

> This is our land and our country and we do not want the modernistic doctrine to be sown here, especially in the Church of Christ in Thailand. They are not American churches, they are Siamese churches; but our Siamese churches cannot become Siamese until the American people let them alone. I love the American people as a whole. It does not matter who they are, but I would love to see all the American missionaries let our churches alone. They are Siamese churches; they are my church. … Please do not say that, if the missionaries leave us, the churches will fall. There is no truth to it.[65]

In light of Boon Mark's frequent criticisms of missionaries and the American Presbyterian mission in particular, it is important to understand that he was neither antimissionary nor antiforeigner in general. He did not have an anticolonial chip on his shoulder. He did, however, oppose missionaries who put low value on the verbal proclamation of the gospel or stood in the way of Thai Christians asserting

63. Smith, *Siamese Gold*, 159-69.

64. Carl McIntire and Boon Mark Gittisarn, *Modernism Takes Its Toll of Mission* (Collingswood, N.J.: Christian Beacon Press, n.d.).

65. McIntire and Gittisarn, *Modernism Takes Its Toll,* 34.

leadership over Thai churches. If missionaries were happy to relate to him as an equal and shared his essential doctrinal convictions and evangelistic commitments, then he was happy to welcome them to Thailand as partners in the gospel. Yet, relationships between Westerners and Christians in the global church are complicated. Paul Eakin thought that McIntire was taking advantage of Boon Mark to pursue his own agenda, but Boon Mark clearly saw his newfound association with McIntire and the ICCC as an opportunity to further his evangelistic ministry and to make known abroad the problems of the churches in Thailand. Both Boon Mark and McIntire benefitted from their association with one another, but it is hard to say whether their relationship was symbiotic or parasitic. Who was using whom in order to further their own agenda? Or did the two men regard each other as equals and were content with the benefits gained and provided?

It should also be noted that Boon Mark's assertions were often very black-and-white with little nuance, which makes it important to consider his claims of paternalism and modernism against the views of others. Though there was most certainly missionary paternalism and tensions between missionaries and Thai leaders, most Thai leaders felt that the paternalism they experienced was not bad enough to compel them to withdraw from the CCT.[66] Boon Mark's accusation of "modernistic" or liberal theology, on the other hand, is more contested. In the prewar period, there was a quiet yet real segment of American Presbyterian mission personnel who favored modernistic theology and social gospel modes of Christian influence.[67] Korean Presbyterian missionary Samuel Kim, who worked in Thailand with the CCT from 1956 to 1978, reported that theological liberalism and ecumenism increased after the war, especially at McGilvary Seminary.[68] It was not until the 1970s, asserted Kim, that the CCT awoke from a postwar "dark period" of "domination of liberal policies and their emphases."[69] However, during this same period, there were also strong evangelical influences in the CCT. In the immediate postwar period and the early 1950s, CCT moderator Rev. Puang Akkapin (พ่วง อรรฆภิญญ์) and pastor Tongkham Pantupongs (ทองคำ พันธุพงศ์) conducted itinerant evangelistic and revival services after the style of John Sung.[70] In the 1950s and 1960s, evangelical missionaries with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship found like-minded Thai Christians and

66. For more on postwar tensions between Thai and mission leaders, see Dahlfred, "Bumpy Road to Indigenization," 42-44.

67. Dahlfred, "Conservative in Theology," 215-22.

68. Samuel I. Kim, *The Unfinished Mission in Thailand* (Seoul: East-West Center for Missions Research and Development, 1980), 145-48, 156-59.

69. Kim, *Unfinished Mission*, 232.

70. Herbert Swanson, *Pastoral Care and the Church of Christ in Thailand: A Report on the State of Pastoral Care in the CCT Today* (unpublished report, Office of History, Church of Christ in Thailand, 1994); Prasit Pongudom, "Puang Akkapin," trans. Herbert Swanson, in *Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, ed. Scott Sunquist (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 677-78.

CCT churches with whom they could fellowship and cooperate on a limited basis.[71] In the assessment of Thai church historian Herbert Swanson, CCT churches have been far more exposed to conservative and evangelical Western theologies than to liberal ones.[72] Though Boon Mark painted the American Presbyterian mission and the Church of Christ in Thailand as "modernistic" and he himself as biblical or fundamental, the theological reality of the postwar CCT was much more complex.

Yet in the face of theological diversity within the CCT, Boon Mark chose to throw in his hat with Carl McIntire, whose for-me-or-against-me fundamentalism meshed well with Boon Mark's own dichotomous approach. Boon Mark continued his association with McIntire as a vice-president of the ICCC until at least 1958.[73] At some point, however, there was a parting of ways. Paul Eakin claimed that Boon Mark was dismissed by McIntire because he had not used the funds he had raised under the banner of ICCC to erect a church building but instead used the money for his wife's school.[74] However, Boon Mark's son Sornsark recalled that some of the offering money raised by Boon Mark in the United States for ministry in Thailand was never given to Boon Mark.[75] Aside from financial matters, Jaakko Mäkelä has suggested that the break with the ICCC happened because Boon Mark adopted a Pentecostal view on baptism in the Holy Spirit.[76] From the evidence available, it seems likely that both money and Boon Mark's growing advocacy for Pentecostalism contributed to his departure from the ICCC and the end of his association with Carl McIntire.

T. L. Osborn Revival Campaigns and Advocacy for Pentecostalism

The Pentecostal faith had begun to grow slowly in Thailand through the ministry of the Raassinas and a small handful of other Pentecostal missionaries in the late 1940s and early 1950s. However, a big leap forward for Pentecostalism occurred when healing evangelist T. L. Osborn visited Bangkok in 1956. Invited by Boon Mark's friend, Finnish missionary Verner Raassina, the young American went from one government office to another seeking permission to use a large public field for his campaign. After being denied, then granted, then denied, then granted, then denied permission, Osborn had few options left for choice of venue. A CCT church considered letting him use their facility but then decided against it. Boon

71. Neel Roberts, "Comity Agreements: The Not-so-simple Art of Cooperation," *Mission Round Table* 10, no. 1 (2015): 32-37.

72. Herbert Swanson to Karl Dahlfred, personal email communication, March 28, 2023.

73. "The Testimony of the ICCC," 1958, RG001, Box 466, PCA Historical Center, St. Louis, Missouri.

74. Eakin, "Influence of Foreign Evangelists."

75. Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023.

76. Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara, 70.*

Mark, however, offered the compound of his wife's Kittikhun Wittaya School. This venue was smaller than he had hoped for, but on Monday, March 5, 1956, Osborn welcomed a thousand people to the first night of his revival, preaching salvation in Jesus Christ and the power of God to perform healing miracles.[77] Osborn's first foray into preaching in Thailand a month earlier had suffered from the lack of a competent translator. But for Osborn's main campaign, Boon Mark recruited his friend Sook Pongsanoi to translate the meetings. Osborn wrote in his diary that Sook was "a saint, and God used him to communicate our messages to the people. His knowledge of English was thorough."[78] Osborn preached nightly for over a week, reporting hundreds of people committing their lives to Christ and numerous healing miracles. Following his Bangkok meetings, Osborn traveled to the far southern province of Trang, where his translator, Sook Pongsanoi, worked as a pastor. In Trang, Osborn held meetings in a public field for two weeks, with similar results to his Bangkok crusades.[79] After Osborn left Thailand, Boon Mark worked and traveled with Osborn's ministry associate, Don Price, advocating for the Pentecostal faith. It was through Boon Mark's continuing association with Osborn and Price that Boon Mark received funds to construct a building for his church that was erected on the compound of his wife's school.[80]

Prior to the Osborn campaigns, the infant Pentecostal movement in Thailand had remained fairly isolated from the CCT and other Protestant groups. This type of situation was common for Pentecostals globally, in large part due to widespread Pentecostal belief that those who did not speak in tongues were not preaching the "full gospel" and were likely not saved. Though conservative Protestants and Pentecostals shared similar evangelical convictions, mutual suspicion and differing convictions on charismatic gifts kept them apart. But in Thailand, that status quo was about to change. Osborn's campaign in Bangkok left a deep impression on many Thai Christians, including those from CCT and other non-Pentecostal churches. Samaan Vannakiat (สมาน วรรณเกียรติ), a Presbyterian CCT pastor, and Chaiyong Watanachantin, a Baptist, were reportedly filled with the Holy Spirit and had dramatic healing experiences. Eager to share their experience with others, they made a tour of CCT churches in the far northern province of Chiang Rai, preaching the Pentecostal faith. Small groups of Pentecostal believers began to form amid CCT churches in the north, and tensions arose. Many of these believers either left their churches or were

77. T. L. Osborn, *Personal Diary Notes: 1956 Osborn Miracle Ministry in Bangkok Thailand*, (Tulsa, OK: Osborn Publishers, 2004).

78. Osborn, *Diary Notes,* 6-9; Thammada Pongsanoi et al, *Beloved Barnabas [บาระนาบาที่รัก]* (Bangkok: Christian Bannasat Publishers [กองคริสเตียนบรรณศาสตร์], 1972), 33.

79. Osborn, *Diary Notes,* 19-22.

80. Edwin Zehner, "Church Growth and Culturally Appropriate Leadership: Three Examples from the Thai Church," School of World Mission (unpublished manuscript: Fuller Theological Seminary, 5 November, 1987), 58.

pushed out and formed independent Pentecostal groups. Having heard about what was happening up north, Finnish Pentecostal missionaries and Boon Mark Gittisarn toured Chiang Rai, visiting these new Pentecostal believers, teaching and encouraging them. As new Pentecostal churches formed, tensions ran high between them and CCT churches in the area. CCT leaders accused the Pentecostals of stealing their members, while the Pentecostals claimed that the CCT churches were spiritually dead and the believers who had left were kicked out.[81] Alongside Finnish and other Scandinavian missionaries, Boon Mark was instrumental in promoting the Pentecostal movement in Thailand during these years, thereby paving the way for the widespread charismatic influence that may be seen in Thai churches today. Boon Mark's Bangkok Church became a center of Thailand's Pentecostal movement in the late 1950s, and a national Pentecostal conference was held at the church in 1958.[82] In 1959, Boon Mark was invited to Finland and spoke at the National Summer Conference of the Pentecostal movement in Kouvola. According to Jaakko Mäkelä, the Thailand-based Finnish missionaries and Boon Mark gave the impression to conference attendees that Boon Mark was one of the Pentecostal leaders in Thailand.[83] Like McIntire, the Finnish Pentecostals provided Boon Mark with expanded opportunities and connections, and both sides benefitted. Yet the relationship was not exclusive, and Boon Mark had irons in other fires.

The *Sahapan* and Cross-Denominational Networking

Though Boon Mark had long ago severed his formal connection to the Church of Christ in Thailand, it would be a mistake to see him as jumping from one exclusive alliance to another. Boon Mark maintained and fostered connections with individual Christians and churches in the CCT at the same time as he was building new relationships with Finnish Pentecostals, American fundamentalists, and other believers, foreign and domestic, who aligned with his evangelical values and priorities. Boon Mark wanted to bring his overlapping circles of connections and followers with him as he went in new directions and preached the gospel as he saw best. In the 1950s, Boon Mark attempted to pull together his various connections in the *Sahapan Kristsachak Thai* (สหพันธ์คริสตจักรไทย), or Association of Free (Independent) Churches. This was not a new denominational entity but rather an unstructured association of churches that remained part of their existing denominations but thought of themselves as independent. In 1959, Boon Mark appointed his son-in-law Charan Ratanabutr

81. Herbert Swanson, "The Finnish Free Foreign Mission and the Origins of Pentecostalism in Thailand, 1946-1960," *Herb's Research Bulletin*, no. 6 (June 2003), https://www.herbswanson.com/_files/ugd/4cfa9b_54cf820a72a24ba4b161f32a916250a5.pdf, accessed March 27, 2023; Johnson and Hosack, "Pentecostalism," 200-201.

82. Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara*, 71.

83. Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara*, 72.

(จรัญ รัตนบุตร) as general secretary of his *Sahapan* association, though there was reportedly not much for Charan to do since Boon Mark did most of the organizational work himself through his network of personal contacts. As Boon Mark's Pentecostal emphasis grew stronger, some *Sahapan* churches pulled back and withdrew from the association. Other *Sahapan* churches became Pentecostal at the leadership level but remained in the Church of Christ in Thailand. Still others left their existing denominations and joined a Pentecostal denomination associated with the Finnish Free Foreign Mission or similar church.[84]

United Pentecostal Church and "Jesus Only" Baptism

Boon Mark's charismatic personality, evangelistic drive, and ability to network and connect people all contributed to the significant personal following that he amassed. Yet his ability to attract loyal followers proved to be a double-edged sword that facilitated the first major split in the nascent Thai Pentecostal movement. Although the timing of his trip to the United States is unclear, sometime around 1960, Boon Mark was staying with Don Price in the USA when he encountered the United Pentecostal Church (UPC). The United Pentecostals are a oneness Pentecostal group, holding a Unitarian view of God and practicing baptism in the name of Jesus only. Boon Mark became convinced that this was the proper form of baptism and was duly rebaptized. Boon Mark invited William "Billy" Cole of the UPC to come to Thailand as a missionary.[85] Don Price, who had formerly been part of the UPC, warned Boon Mark against working with Cole. Always his own man, Boon Mark invited Cole anyway.[86]

Upon his return to Bangkok, Boon Mark announced to his *Sahapan* association that he was disbanding it and forming a new association. This new group was denominational in nature and connected to the United Pentecostal Church. Boon Mark led about half of the membership of his Bangkok Church out of that church and into the UPC. After Boon Mark's departure, Boon Mark's son-in-law Charan Ratanbutr became the new pastor of Bangkok Church, which did not continue its association with the Pentecostal movement.[87] Working with Boon Mark, Billy Cole stayed in Thailand no longer than three years or so, though he returned later for shorter visits.[88] Cole's 2009 obituary reported that he established "53 churches in the nation of Thailand, where he baptized 289 Buddhist priests into the Lord Jesus

84. Zehner, "Church Growth," 55-58.
85. Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara,* 73.
86. Zehner, "Church Growth," 59.
87. Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara,* 73.
88. Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara,* 73.

Christ."[89] Though these numbers seem suspiciously high, the United Pentecostal Church initially experienced rapid growth as many Thai Pentecostals who trusted Boon Mark's leadership followed him into the UPC and were rebaptized in the name of Jesus only. For many Thai Christians, however, rebaptism in the name of Jesus only was a bridge too far. In what Herbert Swanson calls "an almost bizarre replay" of the visits he made only a few years earlier, Boon Mark went around to the Pentecostal churches in Chiang Rai, preaching that baptism must be in the name of Jesus only. Numerous Thai believers who had followed him into Pentecostalism broke ties with Boon Mark over his latest teaching. Boon Mark's long-time friend Sook Pongsanoi came out publicly against rebaptism.[90] The Finnish Pentecostal missionaries of the FFFM opposed Boon Mark and his "Jesus Only" baptismal teaching, trying to persuade Thai Pentecostals to stay in FFFM- associated churches when Boon Mark tried to lead them into the UPC. Boon Mark's advocacy for "Jesus only" oneness Pentecostalism has been seen by many as a lowlight of his long ministry career and a sad turn of events that caused division and confusion in the Pentecostal movement in Thailand.[91] For those who followed Boon Mark into the UPC, however, it was the FFFM missionaries who were causing division by opposing Boon Mark's leadership.[92] Boon Mark's advocacy for the United Pentecostal Church continued for some years before he withdrew from leadership in the group. After Boon Mark's departure, UPC membership numbers declined.

Divorce, Remarriage, and the Seventh Day Adventists

During Boon Mark's many decades of ministry, he often traveled, preaching and visiting churches while his wife remained home, working full-time to support the family. This type of arrangement is not uncommon among Christian leaders in Thailand and has become a snare for some, including Boon Mark.[93] Though it has proven impossible to determine precise dates, when Boon Mark went out on evangelistic trips in his later years, there was a certain female assistant who accompanied him. She eventually became pregnant, and Boon Mark made the choice to divorce his wife Muan in order to remarry this new woman in order to take responsibility for their child.[94]

89. Rev. William H. "Billy" Cole, *Find A Grave*, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/39946859/william-h-cole, accessed March 27, 2023.

90. Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara,* 76.

91. Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023; Allan Eubank, Interview by Karl Dahlfred, telephone call, March 1, 2023; Swanson, "FFFM."

92. Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara,* 82.

93. Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023.

94. Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023.

Though the timeline of events is unclear, having withdrawn from leadership in the UPC and having divorced and remarried, Boon Mark faded from public view in his later years and eventually became part of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) church in Thailand. Given his public criticism of the Adventists in the 1930s, it is ironic that Boon Mark made a seemingly abrupt change of direction to join them later in life. However, it is probable that Boon Mark maintained at least occasional contact with Seventh Day Adventists in Thailand over the years. In 1951, Adventist Siam Mission president W. A. Martin described encountering a group of former members of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) who were very impressed with SDA teaching materials and had become convinced that Saturday was the true Sabbath. Martin wrote, "There is one Siamese preacher who would like to become the leader of this group and, while they have accepted some help from him, they really don't want him for their leader because he is too radical."[95] Although he is not named, there is a strong likelihood that the radical Siamese preacher was Boon Mark. Evidence is scant, but it would make sense that Boon Mark, an inveterate networker, would want to keep as many connections with as many people and churches as possible unless they showed themselves to be clearly opposed to him. If Boon Mark had loose relationships and connections with Adventists throughout his life, the fact that he joined them near the end of his life may not have been as completely out of the blue as it appears.

Herbert Swanson has suggested that Seventh Day Adventism may have appealed to Boon Mark due to its Presbyterian-like ecclesiastical structure, its literalist interpretation of the Bible, and its nonecumenical attitude towards other Christian groups.[96] Throughout his life, Boon Mark repeatedly demonstrated that he did not mind being part of a beleaguered minority, even within such a small world as Thai Christianity. His moves towards Carl McIntire's fundamentalist association and then to the non-Trinitarian United Pentecostal Church both show that he did not mind being on the fringe. The fact that Adventists are often considered heterodox in relation to broader Protestantism would not have bothered Boon Mark. However, Boon Mark's motivation for throwing in his lot with the Seventh Day Adventists may have been for personal rather than ministry reasons. His son Sornsark suggested that maybe the Adventists took care of him and visited him in the hospital as he got older, showing love for him at a time when many people had less respect for him than previously.[97]

His advocacy for rebaptism in the name of Jesus only and his subsequent divorce changed the way that many Thai Christians viewed Boon Mark. Though

95. Frederick J. Schwartz, *Thailand and the Seventh-Day Adventist Medical and Missionary Work* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1972), 57.

96. Herbert Swanson, email communication, June 1, 2023.

97. Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023.

he was formerly known and respected as a national-level leader of Protestant and Pentecostal churches in Thailand, Boon Mark became a tragic figure. Having faded from the limelight, Boon Mark Gittisarn passed away quietly on May 20, 1987, at nearly ninety years old.[98]

Legacy of Boon Mark Gittisarn

During the nine decades of Boon Mark's life, Thailand experienced massive societal changes. The Thai church likewise experienced great transformation, developing from an American Presbyterian-dominated mission field of only a few thousand Thai Protestants to a multidenominational, multiorganizational, international mosaic of evangelical and Pentecostal growth. Boon Mark was both influenced by those changes and a driver of the changes that shaped Christianity in Thailand in the twentieth century. Boon Mark's core convictions put him on the broader map of global evangelicalism, yet his readiness to criticize other believers and his association with marginal groups caused division as he shifted from one group to another in search of better modes of evangelism, revival, and spiritual experience.

Although any evaluation of his legacy will depend on one's theological perspective, it is clear that the impact of his life and ministry was most profound in a few key areas.

First, Boon Mark's lifelong passion was telling people about Jesus Christ. He talked about evangelism, and he did evangelism. In true evangelical fashion, he aimed for conversions, and he took action. His preaching was powerful, and his personality was positive and effervescent. He proclaimed Jesus Christ as Lord and called people to make decisions for Christ.[99] He loved street preaching. His son Sornsark recalled his father going to the public grounds at Sanam Luang in Bangkok every Sunday to preach. He took people from his church with him, and he saw people become Christians.[100] Boon Mark loved visiting people and churches, and it was the tireless dedication of Boon Mark and a small band of other Thai Christian leaders who kept the Thai church together during the war and carried it into a changed postwar world. His example can surely serve as inspiration for Thai Christians today who want to see their fellow Thai put their faith in Christ.

Boon Mark not only loved preaching, but he loved bold, dramatic, and intense preaching that sought impressive, immediate results. This was seen in his prewar promotion of foreign revivalists, culminating in John Sung. In the postwar years, Boon Mark linked up with the Finnish Pentecostals and T. L. Osborn, who sought

98. "Former Official of CCT Passes Away," *Church News ข่าวคริสตจักร* (April 1987): 47; Swanson, "Boon Mark Gittisarn," 89-90.

99. Interview with Allan Eubank, March 1, 2023.

100. Interview with Sornsark Gittisarn, March 1, 2023.

conversions and experiences of power through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and healings. In his advocacy for these figures and movements, Boon Mark helped to popularize and strengthen a desire among Thai churches for large-scale, high-impact evangelistic events that left a lasting mark on Thai ideas about evangelism. However, it is debatable whether such events have done as much to strengthen and grow Christian churches in Thailand as some assume. In fact, it has been suggested that such activities are not as valuable, or at least no more valuable, for growing churches in Thailand than less spectacular everyday Christian practices, or "ordinary means of grace," such as Sunday preaching, prayer, baptism, communion, small group ministries, home visitation, children's Sunday school, personal communication about Christ, and loving others through practical service.[101] Nevertheless, the belief of Boon Mark and other Thai Christians that large-scale, revival-type events are helpful and necessary in church life mirrors the development of Western evangelicalism from the time of the Second Great Awakening onward. Early nineteenth-century evangelist Charles Finney believed that "novelty" and "new measures" were continually necessary to make the gospel attractive to the modern world and that sudden conversion rather than conversion through the slow process of everyday church practices was the normative and preferred way for people to come to faith.[102] This emphasis on revival events and crisis conversion has continued in Western evangelicalism up to the present through the ministries D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, and others. This philosophy of ministry has also found homes in the non-Western world, as seen in the ministries of figures like John Sung and Boon Mark Gittisarn.

Second, in the years leading up to World War Two and immediately following the war, Boon Mark led the way in asserting Thai leadership at a time when the missionaries were slow to listen to the voices of Thai colleagues. His voice was not the only Thai voice to express different opinions than the missionaries, but his leadership paved a road that others could walk along. While it might be argued that the way he communicated his views was not always courteous or charitable, his personal charisma and dedication to proclaiming Christ inspired people to follow him, and he became an influential voice in mid-twentieth-century Thai churches. Bold and direct, Boon Mark knew what he wanted and sought to speak the truth convincingly, even if he might offend the sensibilities of Thai Buddhists or foreign missionaries. In his own words, Boon Mark said, "I myself am what people call someone who wants to do something and just does it. And when other people don't

101. Swanson, *Pastoral Care and the CCT*; Dwight Martin and Marten Visser, "Sense and Nonsense of Large-Scale Evangelism," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (April 2012): 136–7.

102. Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (Virginia Beach, VA: CBN University Press, 1978), 4, 286; Karl Dahlfred, *Theology Drives Methodology: Conversion in the Theology of Charles Finney and John Nevin* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 108-17.

do it, I myself want to do it."[103] Like Western evangelicals, Boon Mark had to contend with theological liberalism and social gospel modes of Christian influence that he thought were harming churches in his country. But unlike those in the West, Boon Mark's protests against these forces were wrapped up in a struggle to be free from paternalistic missionaries and to negotiate mutually beneficial associations with like-minded foreigners.

Third, Boon Mark lent his influence, network, and resources to an infant Pentecostal movement, giving invaluable assistance to the Finnish Pentecostals, T. L. Osborn, and others looking to advance their "Spirit-filled" message among Thai Christians and Buddhists. However, even though Pentecostals were indebted to Boon Mark for his advocacy for their cause, he became a thorn in the side of Pentecostals in Thailand, both missionary and Thai, through his promotion of oneness teaching and baptism in the name of Jesus only, thereby sowing division and confusion.

Boon Mark's leadership, charisma, and evangelistic commitment inspired great loyalty among many Thai Christians, even as he offended and alienated others whom he considered to be opponents of what he believed and valued. One wonders if Boon Mark might have had a similarly influential ministry without the division and vitriol had he taken inspiration from his friend Sook Pongsanoi. Sook was likewise committed to revival and widespread cross-denominational preaching. For Sook, this also extended to an influential radio ministry. Yet Sook chose not to seek a personal following and instead used his influence to promote increased cooperation between various Protestant and evangelical groups within Thailand. Shortly before his death in 1972, Sook helped establish the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand, an umbrella group that facilitates communication and cooperation within Thailand's diverse Protestant community.[104] Boon Mark, on the other hand, became more and more isolated as he sought to bring his followers and network contacts along with him as he changed from group to group. He was a dedicated and charismatic evangelist driven by key evangelical commitments, but he wanted unity on his terms.

Boon Mark contributed to the development of Christianity in Thailand in many ways that both Thai Christians and missionaries appreciated, and it might be said that his overall impact and contributions to churches in Thailand were positive ones. Yet Boon Mark had feet of clay and did not finish as well as he started. His infidelity and divisive Unitarianism left marks on his record that are difficult to ignore. Thus, his legacy is mixed. His faults should not be glossed over, just as the Bible does not gloss over the faults of Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, and others. Yet amid victories and failures, peace and conflict, faithfulness and infidelity, orthodoxy and heresy, the life of Boon Mark Gittisarn deserves to be known not only for the positive and negative lessons that may be gleaned from it but also for the indelible

103. Boon Mark Gittisarn, interview, December 28, 1978, transcript, 9.

104. Mäkelä, *Khrischak Issara,* 76-77.

mark that he has left upon Christianity in Thailand and, more broadly, the fabric of global evangelicalism.

JBTS 8.1 (2023): 111 – 128

Evangelicals Shift to the South, 1900-2020: Decentering Western Perspectives and Building Global Equality

Todd M. Johnson

Todd is the Eva B. and Paul E. Toms Distinguished Professor of Mission and Global Christianity and co-director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, as well as Visiting Research Fellow at Boston University's Institute for Culture, Religion and World Affairs

Abstract: In 1900, 7.8 percent of all Evangelicals lived in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. By 2020, this grew to 77 percent, representing an epochal shift to the Global South. Yet, Evangelicalism is still characterized as a European faith, with Western perspectives normalized in theology, spirituality, leadership, and other areas. This article examines what it would look like to decenter Western perspectives and build equality for perspectives from cultures around the world. We consider how increasing diversity within Evangelicalism impacts the reading of scripture, the development of key theological concepts, holistic or integral mission, relationships between Christians of different denominations, and relationships with people of other religion or no religion.

Keywords: Evangelicalism, Global North, Global South, global equality, Scripture, theology, unity, diversity, contextualization

Introduction

The global Christian family (and consequently, Evangelical family) is an extended family—a vast assemblage of aunts, uncles, cousins, and other relatives.[1] Ever since the first century the Christian family has reflected a broad and far-reaching collection of people related by faith—approximately 8 billion Christians since the time of Christ (out of 38 billion human beings).[2] Today the world's 2.5 billion Christians

1. The global family of Christians is described in more detail in Todd M. Johnson and Cindy M. Wu, *Our Global Families: Christians Embracing Common Identity in a Changing World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015).

2. David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends, AD 30-AD 2200: Interpreting the Annual Christian Megacensus* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2001), 97.

constitute 32.3 percent of the global population.[3] Christians have never spoken just one language, represented just one ethnicity, or lived in just one country. As the demographic center of Christianity (and Evangelicalism) shifts, its new global complexion is essential to understanding its future.

The contemporary comprehensive practice of counting Christians can be traced back to an Anglican missionary in Kenya in the 1960s who wrote his doctoral dissertation on 6,000 African Independent church movements.[4] Against all odds, for fourteen years, the Rev. Dr. David B. Barrett had traveled to nearly every country in the world, compiling information on the religious status of "every soul on earth." The result was the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, a thousand-page oversized volume listing twenty thousand Christian denominations in the world and recounting the history of Christianity in every country from the time of Christ to the present.[5] Barrett also provided a detailed snapshot of the status of all religious affiliation, the first time such a comprehensive treatment had been achieved. In 1982, *Time* magazine called him the "Linnaeus of religious taxonomy," dubbing his magnum opus "a miracle from Nairobi" and a "benchmark in our understanding of the true religious state of the planet."[6] In the years that followed, the *WCE* was cited extensively in both Christian and secular publications. Consequently, Barrett is largely responsible for launching the modern field of religious demography. In 2001, Barrett and I published the second edition of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* and in 2019, Gina Zurlo and I produced the third edition.[7]

Christianity's Dramatic Shift to the South

The cultural and linguistic composition of Christianity has changed drastically over the past century.[8] The demographic shift of the religion from the Global North to the

3. See Gina A. Zurlo, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, "World Christianity and Religions 2022: A Complicated Relationship," in *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 46, no. 1 (January 2022): 71-80.

4. David B. Barrett, *Schism and Renewal: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

5. David B. Barrett et al., *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, AD 1900–2000* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982).

6. Richard Ostling and Alistair Matheson, "Counting Every Soul on Earth: [Miracle from Nairobi: the first census of all religions]," *Time Magazine*, May 3, 1982.

7. David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2 vols; Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

8. For sources and methodology related to counting religionists (including Christians), see Todd M. Johnson and Brian J. Grim, *The World's Religion in Figures: An Introduction to International Religious Demography* by (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). Primary sources for Christian figures include censuses in which a religious question is asked, censuses in which an ethnicity or language question is asked, surveys and polls, scholarly monographs, religion statistics in yearbooks and

Global South has challenged centuries-old traditions of theological interpretation, liturgical expression, and relationship to culture. The recent growth of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America has had a distinctive impact on linguistic expression and theological education, despite the fact that less than eight hundred of the world's seven thousand languages have a complete Bible in their mother tongue.

The shifting cultural contexts of Christianity and Evangelicalism form the background to and impetus for exploring what it would look like to decenter Western perspectives and build equality for perspectives from cultures around the world. We consider how increasing diversity within Evangelicalism impacts the reading of scripture, the development of key theological concepts, holistic or integral mission, relationships between Christians of different denominations, and relationships with people of other religion or no religion. We begin with a brief discussion of the population and demographics of Christians and Evangelicals across the globe.

Table 1 shows the shift in Christian demographics by continent from 1900 to 2020. While 68 percent of all Christians lived in Europe in 1900, by 2020 only 22 percent lived there. By contrast, less than 2 percent of all Christians lived in Africa in 1900, skyrocketing to almost 27 percent by 2020. The Global North (defined by the United Nations as Europe and Northern America) contained over 82 percent of all Christians in 1900, falling to 33 percent by 2020. This demographic shift is the single most important trend in global Christianity as we consider its main characteristics.

Table 1. Christians by Continent, 1900, 2000, and 2020

	1900		2000		2020	
Continent	Christians	%	Christians	%	Christians	%
Global North	459,901,000	95.0	816,017,000	78.5	833,360,000	74.9
Europe	380,647,000	94.5	562,140,000	77.3	565,416,000	76.1
Northern America	79,254,000	97.1	253,877,000	81.2	267,944,000	72.6
Global South	98,445,000	8.7	1,172,950,000	23.0	1,685,474,000	25.2
Africa	9,640,000	8.9	382,510,000	46.8	667,169,000	49.3
Asia	21,966,000	2.3	279,960,000	7.5	378,735,000	8.2
Latin America	62,002,000	95.2	486,111,000	92.5	611,964,000	92.1
Oceania	4,837,000	77.4	24,369,000	78.0	27,606,000	65.1
Global total	558,346,000	34.5	1,988,967,000	32.4	2,518,834,000	32.3

Source: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed August 2022).

handbooks and governmental statistical reports. Further chapters on data and methods offer the rationale, techniques, and specific problems associated with counting religionists. Case studies illustrate how these sources and methods are used in counting Muslims, Christians, and other religious communities.

Who is a "Christian"? Who is an "Evangelical"?

To properly count Christians, we adopt the United Nations definition of a Christian as one who self-identifies as such.[9] Under this rubric, the global Christian family is made up of all who consider themselves Christians, regardless of theological differences. Utilizing this method does not render one less committed to their particular tradition. Rather, it provides the opportunity to see beyond one's own network, to learn about and express solidarity with all who consider themselves Christians.

From an ecclesiastical view, Global Christianity can then be divided into four different traditions: Catholics, Independents, Orthodox, and Protestants. Independents are a critical part of this taxonomy because, throughout the past two centuries, thousands of networks have broken off from the other three. These are especially prominent in Africa (African-Instituted Churches) and China (house churches), but this category also includes postdenominational networks in the Western World.[10]

In addition to these major traditions, two movements cut across the four traditions. First are Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, now numbering over 640 million.[11] Pentecostals and Charismatics hold the distinctive teachings that all Christians should seek a postconversion religious experience called baptism in the Holy Spirit and that a Spirit-baptized Christian may receive one or more of the supernatural gifts known in the early church: the ability to prophesy; to practice divine healing through prayer; to speak (glossolalia), interpret or sing in tongues; to sing in the Spirit, dance in the Spirit; to receive dreams, visions, words of wisdom, words of knowledge; to discern spirits; and to perform miracles, power encounters, exorcisms (casting out demons), resuscitations, deliverances or other signs and wonders.

Evangelicalism, another movement within these traditions, now includes over 380 million Christians. From an historical perspective, David Bebbington's 1989 fourfold set (quadrilateral) of Evangelical descriptors—conversionism, activism, Biblicism and crucicentrism—continues to be a relevant and widely-used definition of Evangelicalism.[12] It is argued that these characteristics are the common features defining the movement over time, despite the many changes Evangelicalism has undergone since its inception in the eighteenth-century revivals among Protestant groups While some of the particulars within each of these descriptors vary among

9. The starting point in any analysis of religious adherence is the United Nations' 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 18: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." The full text of the UN resolution can be found in Paul M. Taylor, *Freedom of Religion: UN and European Human Rights Law and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 368–72.

10. See "Independents" in *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed., 22.

11. See Todd M. Johnson, "Counting Pentecostals Worldwide," *Pneuma* 36, no. 2 (2014): 265-88.

12. David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 2–3.

denominations, the general scope and importance of each remains the same for the broader Evangelical movement as it has spread around the world.[13] From a sociological perspective, how evangelicals relate to Pentecostals, how they are counted worldwide, and how they differ in terms of culture, is much more complex than the Quadrilateral might suggest.

Quantifying Evangelicals Around the World

First, in her seminal article, "Demographics of Global Evangelicalism," Gina A. Zurlo observed that "using denominational affiliation to define Evangelicals is a method generally popular among social and political scientists."[14] Zurlo demonstrates that various methods of defining and counting Evangelicals—in terms of denomination, of self-identification, or of theology—have both strengths and weaknesses. She also sees denominational strategies as most helpful in measuring Evangelicals before the rise of surveys and censuses. She further noted Barrett's definition of Evangelical (echoing the Bebbington quadrilateral):

> A sub-division of Protestants consisting of affiliated church members calling themselves evangelicals, or all persons belonging to Evangelical congregations, churches or denominations; characterized by commitment to personal religion (including new birth or personal conversion experience), reliance on Holy Scripture as the only basis for faith and Christian living, emphasis on preaching and evangelism, and usually on conservatism in theology.[15]

To count Evangelicals, the World Christian Database uses a denominationally based method, adding (1) everyone in 100 percent Evangelical denominations, (2) all individuals in non-Evangelical denominations who identify as Evangelicals, and (3) all individuals who are not affiliated with churches who identify as Evangelicals. Note that this definition and its measurements include all forms of Evangelicalism regardless of denomination or country.

Second, there is an overlap between Evangelical and Pentecostal movements. We estimate that more than one third of all Evangelicals are Pentecostals. For example, Classical Pentecostal denominations like the Assemblies of God are largely Evangelical in that they belong to Evangelical councils in most of the countries they are located in. On the other hand, Charismatic Catholics are counted as Pentecostals

13. This case is made by historian Brian Stanley in his chapter "The Evangelical Christian Mind in History and Global Context," in Timothy Larsen, ed., *Every Leaf, Line, and Letter: Evangelicals and the Bible from the 1730s to the Present* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2021), 276-301.

14. See Gina A. Zurlo, "Demographics of Global Evangelicalism," in *Evangelicals around the World: A Global Handbook for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Brian C. Stiller, Todd M. Johnson, Karen Stiller, and Mark Hutchinson (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2015), 34–47.

15. Barrett et al., *World Christian Encyclopedia* (1982), 826.

but very few identify as Evangelicals. Consequently, Evangelicals and Pentecostals are not mutually exclusive categories. The overlap is not precisely known because if 10 percent of a denomination is Evangelical and 10 percent of the same denomination is Pentecostal, they could all be the same Christians, or they could all be different people (or some the same and some different). In each case, the method is transparent because the codes and percentages for each denomination is available in the World Christian Database.

Third, based on this method of tabulation, the number of Evangelicals in the world has increased from 81 million in 1900 to 386 million in 2020 (see table below).[16] Increasingly, Evangelicalism is a predominantly non-White movement, with 77 percent of all Evangelicals living in the Global South in 2020. This is up from only 7.8 percent in 1900. This reality runs against the popular perception in the West that the United States is the home' of contemporary Evangelicalism, where it is a largely White, politically conservative movement.[17] Nine of the ten countries with the most Evangelicals in 2020 are in the Global South.

The situation is similar on a continental and regional basis. In 1900, Evangelicals exceeded 40 percent of the total population in Northern America and in Northern Europe but also in Australia, New Zealand, and in Polynesia (where just over 50 percent of residents were Evangelicals). A century later, although they have seen significant growth in some areas, Evangelicals make up no more than 20 percent of the total population of any region except in Oceania, where they represent 31 percent (highest in Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia). Africa has had the most profound shift, since Evangelicals were only 1.7 percent of the population in 1900 (and mostly in South Africa), but in 2020, 12 percent of the continent is Evangelical. Africa's share of global Evangelicalism has increased from 2 percent in 1900 to 42 percent in 2020. If trends continue, more than half of all Evangelicals in 2050 will be Africans.

The denominations with the most Evangelicals worldwide in 2020 include the Assemblies of God in Brazil, the Southern Baptist Convention (USA), the Three-Self Patriotic Movement in China and the Anglican Church of Nigeria. Two global organizations are of special note in representing Evangelicals: The World Evangelical Alliance (founded 1846) and the Lausanne Movement, established in a 1974 meeting spearheaded by American evangelist Billy Graham. Many countries also have national Evangelical alliances that work to bring Evangelicals together.

Table 2. Evangelicals by Contintent, 1900, 2000, and 2020

	1900	2000	2020

16. See "Evangelicals" in *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed., 25.

17. See John G. Stackhouse, Jr., Introduction to *Evangelicalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 1-4.

Continent	Evangelicals	%	Evangelicals	%	Evangelicals	%
Global North	74,593,000	15.4	74,860,000	7.2	87,009,000	7.8
Europe	33,062,000	8.2	14,651,000	2.0	15,907,000	2.1
Northern America	41,531,000	50.9	60,209,000	19.2	71,102,000	19.3
Global South	6,319,000	0.6	194,776,000	3.8	298,817,000	4.5
Africa	1,789,000	1.7	91,235,000	11.2	161,716,000	12.0
Asia	1,336,000	0.1	62,742,000	1.7	80,442,000	1.7
Latin America	825,000	1.3	36,066,000	6.9	50,595,000	7.6
Oceania	2,370,000	37.9	4,732,000	15.2	6,063,000	14.3
Global total	80,912,000	5.0	269,636,000	4.4	385,826,000	4.9

Source: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed August 2022).

Decentering the Western Evangelical Perspective

Though Evangelicalism is shifting South, Westerners often fail to grasp its impact, as they continue to consider their particular expressions culturally and theologically normative.[18] The social and theological debates of White Evangelicals in the USA are unlike the debates of most other Evangelicals worldwide. Whereas USA Evangelicals have often narrowly prioritized matters regarding sexuality and abortion, Evangelicals around the world are also more broadly concerned with economic equality, immigration, climate change, the poor, and social justice.[19] With a demographic shift from the North to the South, one would expect many new theological insights to emerge in the Global South. But Western theological perspectives have taken a privileged place among non-Western theologies. Consequently, theology needs to be de-Westernized and contextualized among the peoples and languages of the Global South. Latino theologian Juan Martínez's observation in this regard is judicious, "One of the most important contributions contextual theologies can make to U.S. evangelical theology is to help it name itself as a contextual theology. Because of the outsized influence of U.S. evangelicalism, it will be particularly difficult for it

18. Initial reflections appear in Todd M. Johnson, "The Rise of Global Christianity and Theological Education" in *Torch Trinity Journal* 22, no. 1 (2019): 7-51. Some of the examples that follow are explored in my chapter "Evangelical Mission in an Age of Global Christianity" in *Advancing Models of Mission: Evaluating the Past and Looking to the Future*, eds. Kenneth Nehrbass, Aminta Arrington, and Narry Santos (Littleton, CO: William Carey, 2021), 189-202.

19. See Deborah Fikes, "A Challenge to My Fellow Evangelicals," *New York Times*, Opinion Page, August 19, 2016, https://archive.nytimes.com/kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/08/19/a-challenge-to-my-fellow-evangelicals/

to name its theologies as contextual. But until that happens all 'minority' theologies will be marginalized."[20]

While the Global South is in the majority, the Global North still has the majority of the resources. As mentioned, most theological education is derived directly from Western culture. Most Christian worship music is Western in origin. Soong Chan Rah, Professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, asserts that in order for Western churches to engage the globalized Church of the twenty-first century, it must break away from its captivity to Western culture. Missionary endeavors, spearheaded for the past several centuries by Westerners, transmitted both faith *and* culture—distinctly white, Western cultures. Evangelism and colonialism often went hand in hand. The result was white, Western theological traditions imposed upon non-Western peoples, with insufficient regard for their cultural expressions. Rah offers at least four classic characteristics of white, Western cultural captivity: individualism, racism, materialism, and consumerism.[21]

The United States has a substantial influence on Western ecclesiology and missions, and the spirit of rugged individualism nurtured in our country's cradle has contributed to division within our society. Sociologists Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, in their landmark book on racism in the American Church, *Divided by Faith*, contend that "contemporary white American evangelicalism is perhaps the strongest carrier of this free-will individual tradition."[22] Not surprisingly, America has the highest national score (91 out of 100) in a study on individualism.[23] Individualism in the extreme tends to be self-centered and independent, rather than interdependent. Materialism and consumerism only exacerbate these trends.

Most theological training today is squarely based in the Western way of thinking; it is ironic that Global South pastors are now being trained in a highly individualistic Western mindset. While individuality is important, community is the basis for many non-Western cultures. Theological education is not a complete package developed in the West and delivered to the rest of the world. Instead, tools for doing theology from a variety of cultures can assist Evangelicals everywhere in their study of God. What if the cultures of the Global South were to lead in biblical and theological reflection? They are already building the kingdom in their own communities, but Global South perspectives could also open up new possibilities for the life and health of Evangelicalism around the world. According to Finnish World Christianity scholar Mika Vähäkangas, "All theology is contextual in the sense of it

20. Quoted in William A. Dyrness and Oscar García-Johnson. *Theology without Borders: An Introduction to Global Conversations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 8.

21. See the compelling analysis of Soong-Chan Rah in *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009).

22. Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 29.

23. Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1997), 79-108. Visit www.geert-hofstede.com for more.

being constructed in a time and a place, and failure to recognise this does not make it universal. Once one has recognised the cultural boundedness of one's work, there is an opportunity to ponder how to best communicate across the disciplinary, cultural, linguistic, religious, etc. borders."[24] Evangelicals risk losing the sense of "good news" if its shift to the Global South is not accompanied by theological reflection from fresh cultural perspectives.

For example, the story recorded in Luke 15 of the young man who squanders his inheritance is usually introduced as the Parable of the Prodigal (or Lost) Son. Hwa Yung writes, "To read it from the Western perspective of sin and guilt draws attention to the twin themes of repentance and forgiveness. Nevertheless, it misses something crucial. Only when we understand the *shame* that the son's act has engendered for the family in the setting of an Asian (or, Middle-eastern and African) village, and the fact that the father has totally 'lost his face' in the eyes of the whole community, with nowhere to hide, can we begin to grasp the costliness and the depth of the divine love in the heart of God."[25] Africans who read this story suggest that it might be more appropriately labeled "The Welcoming Father."

Dismantling the Ethnic Food Aisle in Evangelicalism

One way to illustrate the futility of Western dominance is through the ethnic food aisle. The ethnic food aisle is a modest section in most American grocery stores where one can find food items that originate outside of the Western World. This aisle traces back to World War two when US soldiers encountered and brought back food from the various places they served. But does it make sense to have such an aisle today? *New York Times* reporter Priya Krishna highlighted some of the issues it raises, as follows:

> "Consumers are trained, if they want Indian products, to go to that aisle," said Ms. Agrawal, 42. "Do I like the fact that that is the way it is? No." New York, where she runs her company out of her home, is one of the most diverse cities in the world. Yet even there the ethnic aisle is ubiquitous, and its composition often perplexes her. "I buy Finnish crackers. Why are they not in the ethnic aisle?" she said. "An Asian rice cracker would be in the ethnic aisle."

The problem that Agrawal points to is that while certain foods are considered ethnic, others are not. Specifically, "food" belongs to the White community, and "ethnic food" belongs to the non-White community.[26]

24. Sigurd Bergmann and Mika Vähäkangas, eds., *Contextual Theology: Skills and Practices of Liberating Faith* (London: Routledge, 2021), 223.

25. Hwa Yung, "Theological Issues Facing the Asian Church," 2 (paper presented at ALCOE V, August 2002, Seoul). See also his more detailed proposal in Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (Oxford: Regnum, 1997).

26. Priya Krishna, "Why Do American Grocery Stores Still Have an Ethnic Aisle?" *New York Times*, August 10, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/10/dining/

As it pertains to Evangelicals, one can find the obvious parallels in the theological library. "Theology" is in the main part of the library while contextual theology or "ethnic theology" is relegated to its own small section.[27] Like the grocery store, the library considers White or Western contributions to be without context, while assigning non-White contributions an "ethnic" adjective. In so doing, both the library and the grocery store do not match reality. Krishna concludes, "Today, the section can seem like an anachronism—a cramming of countless cultures into a single small enclave, in a country where an estimated 40 percent of the population identifies as nonwhite, according to the Census Bureau. … The word 'ethnic,' emblazoned on signs over many of these corridors, feels meaningless, as everyone has an ethnicity."[28]

Indeed, everyone has an ethnicity, and so to imply that Western or White Evangelicals—by virtue of lacking a cultural bias—produce a theological standard by which all others are measured is misguided. Instead, as stated in the Cape Town Commitment, "Ethnic diversity is the gift of God in creation and will be preserved in the new creation, when it will be liberated from our fallen divisions and rivalry. Our love for all peoples reflects God's promise to bless all nations on earth and God's mission to create for himself a people drawn from every tribe, language, nation, and people. We must love all that God has chosen to bless, which includes all cultures."[29] As all peoples are equally valued by God who created them, so must they be equally valued by all his children. When we go to the theology section of the library, we should encounter a collection representative of all the voices that are faithfully reflecting on God's Word.

Evangelicalism is not a Western movement any more than all food is Western. When the ethnic aisle is dismantled—both at the grocery store and library—one will more fully encounter the richness of humanity, a foretaste of the Great Banquet when "people will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:29, NIV).

Building Global Equality

So far, we have overviewed the population and demographics of Christianity and Evangelicalism and argued that Western perspectives should be decentered. We now address how increasing diversity within Evangelicalism impacts various themes, including the reading of scripture, spirituality and discipleship, leadership, Christian unity, relationships with people of other religion or no religion and holistic or integral mission.

american-grocery-stores-ethnic-aisle.html.

27. Catholic missiologist Stephen B. Bevans argues that "all theology is contextual" in *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 3.

28. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 3.

29. See https://lausanne.org/content/ctcommitment#capetown

Global Scripture Readings

In his book, *Reading While Black: African-American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*, New Testament professor Esau McCaulley offers a strong biblical rationale for justice for all peoples.[30] He opened my eyes to some fresh perspectives on both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants and the global gathering of the peoples in Revelation 7:9. Western missiological readings of these texts emphasize God's love for all peoples and, therefore, prioritize mission to peoples previously unfamiliar with the gospel. Rightly so. But as McCaulley points out, these passages also speak of equality and justice for all peoples. He writes, "What do Abraham and David together mean for the Black and Brown bodies spread throughout the globe? It means that the vision of the Hebrew Scriptures is one in which the worldwide rule of the Davidic king brings longed-for justice and righteousness to all people groups."[31] Because the biblical view of righteousness is global, wherever the gospel goes, so goes the hope for equity and justice for all peoples. Typical White exegesis, which generally comes from a place of wealth, privilege, and power, often overlooks these themes woven throughout the Scriptures.

The global gospel call that compels believers to go to the ends of the earth to fulfill Christ's vision for representation of all peoples compels an equal commitment to Christ's vision for biblical justice for all peoples. These passages also legitimate theological perspectives from all peoples. Since all theology is contextual, all contexts have an equal voice in describing the Christian faith. This is freeing for Black, indigenous, and other peoples of color because they have been told, in so many Orwellian words, that some theologies are more equal than others. White theology, in particular, tries to locate itself at the center of the Christian story. But these biblical passages do not allow that. McCaulley writes, "Our distinctive cultures represent the means by which we give honor to God. He is honored through the diversity of tongues singing the same song." He continues, "Therefore inasmuch as I modulate my blackness or neglect my culture, I am placing limits on the gifts that God has given me to offer to his church and kingdom. The vision of the kingdom is incomplete without Black and Brown persons worshiping alongside white persons as part of one kingdom under the rule of one king."[32] This vision is much more compelling than the world's peoples singing exclusively White hymns or choruses.

You would have to look long and hard to find a book in any theological library with the title "Reading While White." In fact, if such a book were to exist, it would likely be cataloged under "General Works of Interpretation," whereas one would find McCaulley's book under "Black interpretation," sandwiched between the separate

30. Esau McCaulley, *Reading While Black: African-American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 105.

31. McCaulley, *Reading While Black*, 105.

32. McCaulley, *Reading While Black*, 115-116.

categories of "Demythologizing" and "Feminist criticism." In other words, the Library of Congress classification assumes that reading the Bible through a White lens is normative and that 'non-White cultures' read with *perspective*. McCaulley addresses this problem when he writes, "Everybody has been reading the Bible from their locations, but we [Black people] are honest about it."[33]

Global Spirituality and Discipleship

In the same way we might consider differing cultural perspectives to better understand the Scriptures, we also benefit from this diversity in spirituality and discipleship. British theologian Alister McGrath describes Christian spirituality as a set of beliefs, a set of values, and a way of life. More specifically, he defines Christian spirituality as the *quest* for a *fulfilled* and *authentic* life, which involves taking the beliefs and values of Christianity and weaving them into the fabric of our lives so that they "animate" them, providing the "breath" and "spirit" and "fire" for our lives.[34] Evangelicals globally resonate with this understanding.

But British theologian Rose Dowsett warns us, "We too often read into Scripture Greek dualism, thus profoundly misunderstanding texts that speak of the soul (e.g. Matt 16:26). Modern Western culture, in the wake of the Enlightenment, emphasizes (entirely falsely) that the spiritual and the rational/material are totally separate, the latter being objective and the former subjective and beyond verification (and therefore unreliable)."[35] As Dowsett explains, many Western cultures fail to deliver a holistic spirituality. Western Christians might be challenged to move toward a spirituality that involves the whole person—in every dimension of life, in community, and in dialogue with other cultures.

With spirituality at the heart of different cultures, one would expect it to be diversely represented among the world's peoples. And yet, at the same time, Evangelical spirituality—if focused on Christ—is pointing to the same purpose. We see the interplay of the local and the global: Global is not an overarching, noncontextual form of spirituality but a conversation between various local cultures about differences and the commonality of spiritualities.

Finally, gender also plays an important role in global Evangelical spirituality. Indian theologian John Amalraj writes, "Women are considered more spiritual than men in most cultures. Women are the bearers of culture … in the Indian context, it is the devout women who sacrificially set aside money, rice, wheat, etc. for the cause of giving to missions. It is the mothers who most often dedicate their sons to become

33. McCaulley, *Reading While Black*, 20.

34. Alister McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999).

35. John Amalraj, Geoffrey W. Hahn, and William D. Taylor, eds., *Spirituality in Mission* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2018), 7

pastors or missionaries. It is the mothers who are always praying for the prodigal son or daughter."[36]

Yet, despite these realities, the vast majority of writings and reflections on spirituality are from men of the Global North. Understanding global Evangelical spirituality means overcoming this limitation and favoring the voices of women to truly represent what is happening in our communities. By representing the world's cultures, especially those of the Global South, and highlighting the contributions of women, we can begin to comprehend a truly global Evangelical spirituality.

Global Leadership

We see that belonging to a worldwide family requires the decentering of Western ideas (that is, no longer making them the standard) while giving equal status to ideas from around the world. While this is perhaps more obvious in areas of scripture reading, spirituality and discipleship, it is more difficult than it sounds when it relates to leadership. In fact, most of the time "global leadership" refers to Western styles of leadership taught around the world. While Western leadership texts, translated and distributed abroad, offer helpful information, they cannot represent a truly global leadership. In fact, global leadership experts reveal liabilities of Western leadership concepts, with respect to a world that is inclusive, multidirectional, interlinked, and complex.

Western institutions, seeing these wider realities as an inconvenience, tend to underscore similarities while underestimating differences. For instance, this mindset is manifested in questions such as:

> "Aren't we all basically the same?"
>
> "Aren't others becoming more like us?"
>
> "Isn't the world converging toward common standards?"[37]

In other words, most Western leaders assume—either directly or by default—that leading a global organization is not very different from leading a local or regional one, that the same approaches apply to securing resources, building, and motivating teams, creating and applying new models, understanding and serving different situations, and so on. What they do not realize is that Western positions are not neutral in a global context. They can actually cause harm.[38]

36. Amalraj, Hahn, and Taylor, eds., *Spirituality in Mission*, 17.

37. Ernest Gundling, Terry Hogan, and Karen Cvitkovich, *What is Global Leadership? 10 Key Behaviors that Define Great Global Leaders* (Boston: Nicholas Brealey, 2011), 33.

38. Angel Cabrera and Gregory Unruh, *Being Global: How to Think, Act, and Lead in a Transformed World* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012), 3-4.

Global leadership, on the other hand, recognizes the complexity of executing in a cross-national, cross-cultural context. A new set of skills is required to navigate today's complex world. Surveying leaders from many countries, researchers have found that global leaders

- lead with a natural curiosity about the world and with an interest in people different from themselves
- inspire visionary initiatives and organizations that span national boundaries
- recognize the impact of their actions on surrounding communities and constituencies
- understand that personal prosperity is dependent upon the prosperity of others
- craft solutions by bringing together people and resources across national, cultural, even organizational boundaries
- address worldwide challenges and social injustices that have been ignored or long deferred
- identify and call on individuals who together possess the pieces necessary to make the vision a reality
- discern the cultural, social, or political differences that divide contributors and find ways to connect them despite, and sometimes because of, those differences.[39]

In the context of a truly global Evangelical, leadership training must value indigenous perspectives, as opposed to parroting those of the West. While the West (a minority of Evangelicals) still speaks with the loudest voice, Evangelicals of the Global South (the majority) are producing new and exciting perspectives on leadership, delving into different cultures and connecting them to address the world's most pressing issues.

Allow me to illustrate this further. While commemorating five hundred years of the Protestant Reformation at an Evangelical conference in Wittenberg in 2017, I presented research showing that over 40 percent of all Protestants were Africans. Yet, out of the one hundred people at the meeting, only a few were African. I was sitting next to a leader from Ghana when someone from the stage said that Africans were welcome at the table in this Evangelical movement. It was then that my colleague quietly recounted a Ghanaian proverb to us: "It is good if you invite me to your table, but it is far better if you invite me into the kitchen."

His point was clear: Why are Evangelicals from the Global South simply invited to a table in the Global North when they should be found with everyone else in the kitchen? What would it mean to have Africans as decision-making hosts instead of being relegated as perennial guests? And why, in light of a gospel for all peoples, are Black, indigenous and people of color normally invited to a White table?

39. Cabrera and Unrush, *Being Global*, 12.

These perspectives differentiate a global organization—one that is polycentric in its decision-making—from an international organization, which radiates its leadership from its home country (usually in the West). Global leaders and their organizations will be the ones that show the way to mutuality and solidarity in our endeavors.

Global Christian Unity?

How does the shift to the Global South impact global unity? Western Evangelicals seem to value individual choice over unity. There are now over 45 thousand Christian denominations in the world, mostly found among Protestants and Independents, and, consequently, among Evangelicals.[40] One solution to denominational fragmentation is for Evangelicals to identify themselves primarily as followers of Jesus Christ across all of the cultures of the world.

Social psychologist Christena Cleveland offers unique insights into why Christians are divided.[41] She observes that Christians tend to cluster in theological groups, gender groups, age groups, ethnic groups, educational groups, and economic groups. They freely criticize those who disagree with them, do not look like them, and do not act like them. Subsequently "we" apply the term *Christian* exclusively to "us" and not to the broader, diverse Christian family. Ultimately, culturally dissimilar Christians are labeled "them" and are treated like outsiders. Cleveland says we exaggerate our differences with culturally different Christians and cling to our subordinate identities (that is, identities based on ethnic, denominational, theological, or political affiliations) while distancing ourselves from our common identity—our identity as members of the worldwide body of Christ. Once we do this, we may technically share group membership and the label of "followers of Christ," but we are no longer a team. We are driven by our own needs, not the needs of the entire group.

From the earliest days of the Christian family, prophetic writers have called the global Church to unity. Yet our history is one of division. While there are important theological differences, much of our problem can be attributed to cultural and social differences. Today, Evangelicals have the opportunity to come together in unity while maintaining distinctives. This quest for reconciliation and unity is rooted in the gospel we proclaim. Believing in a God who reconciles and heals in Jesus Christ, the churches are obliged to heal their own divisions through prayer, theological dialogue, and witnessing together in the world. The process of healing and reconciliation is rooted in our common faith and heritage in Christ.

40. See Gina A. Zurlo, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, "World Christianity and Religions 2022: A Complicated Relationship," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 46, no. 1 (January 2022), 76.

41. Christena Cleveland, *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces that Keep Us Apart* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014).

Global Interactions with People in other Religions?

The twenty-first century began with two major unexpected trends in relation to the world's religions.[42] First, despite the prognostications of leading academics in the mid-twentieth century, the world is becoming increasingly religious. In 2020, 88.7 percent of people worldwide profess a religion—up from 80.8 percent in 1970. The demographic pivot was the collapse of Communism in the late twentieth century and the opening of China to the rest of the world. China, the world's largest country, has experienced a resurgence of religions of all kinds since the end of the Cultural Revolution (1970s). Russia has reclaimed its Orthodox heritage, as have other former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe.

Second, the world is becoming more religiously diverse, especially when measured at the national level. This is especially true in Asia—which has always been the most religiously diverse continent—and beyond, where immigration has transformed previously homogeneous societies into more diverse communities.

Where do we find examples of robust interaction between people of different faiths? The Churches of the Global South are making original contributions in relations with other religions. They have the advantage of living in multireligious societies and are less likely to perpetuate a Christendom model of mission. One such place is Singapore where a 2013 study by the Institute of Policy Studies and OnePeople.sg found that more than nine in ten households are comfortable living and working alongside people of different faiths.[43] At the same time, Evangelicals in the West seem to know very little about people in other religions.[44] It follows that Evangelicals in religiously diverse places (like Singapore, and more broadly, Asia) might be the best guides for navigating an increasingly diverse religious future.

This becomes even more significant in light of the fact that, broadly speaking, Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims have relatively little contact with Christians, and this has not changed much in the last two decades. An estimated 87 percent of Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims do not personally know a Christian.[45] This finding reinforces the fact that Christians are still separated from those furthest from the gospel. In the Global North, increasing diversity often brings increasing cultural isolation. In the Global South, Christians are more likely to interact with their non-Christian neighbors. If non-Christian peoples are to hear of Christ, Evangelicals

42. This section is condensed from "Religions" in *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed., 28.

43. See Abigail Ng Wy, "Building Bridges to Greater Interfaith Understanding," *The Straits Times*, Singapore, April 1, 2017, https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/building-bridges-to-greater-interfaith-understanding.

44. See Luis Lugo and Alan Cooperman, eds., "U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey," Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Washington D.C., 2010, http://www.pewforum.org/2010/09/28/u-s-religious-knowledge-survey/.

45. Johnson and Zurlo, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed., 29.

must be willing to cross cultures, learn languages, build friendships, and become religiously aware.

Global Holistic or Integral Mission?

Two streams flow from the Lausanne 1974 meeting: a call to address the unreached peoples of the world and a call to minister to the poor and advocate social justice. The scriptures, when read in the Global South, are clear on the need for integral mission. Yet, historically, many in the Global North struggle with the relationship between proclamation and demonstration. Thus, globally, Evangelicals diverge in opinion on the place of social activism. Is not the greatest gift we can offer someone the eternal message of salvation? If so, why concern ourselves with temporal sufferings? Detractors of a social gospel warn against a salvation produced by works (Eph. 2:8–9), while promoters of social action point to exhortations in Scripture to live out our faith in word and in deed (James 1:22).

Social concern recognizes the inherent value of all humanity based on the concept of *imago Dei*. The Lord is Maker of us all (Prov. 22:2; 29:13). As image bearers and vicarious representatives of God, the actions of Christians toward others are then to be viewed as actions on behalf of God himself. Oppressing the poor is insulting our Maker (Prov. 17:5); conversely, whoever is kind to the needy honors God (Prov. 14:31). If doing good to the least of these is doing it unto Jesus (Matt. 25:40, 45), justice can become an act of worship. The Scriptures are clear that concern for the poor is not optional for Christians (Matt. 25:31-46).[46]

Doing justice is multi-dimensional and holistic, and this is pervasive in Scripture. Paul took up a collection for the poor during his missionary journeys (Acts 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:1; Gal. 2:10). Jesus's ministry included filling stomachs and healing hurts while at the same time speaking to hearts (Mark 6:32-44). South African Bishop Desmond Tutu said, "I don't preach a social gospel; I preach the gospel, period. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is concerned for the whole person. When people were hungry, Jesus didn't say, 'Now is that political or social?' He said, 'I feed you.' Because the good news to the hungry person is bread."[47] Evangelicals concerned for our global human family walk with the Bible in one hand and in the other hand holding whatever tool of service God gives us to change the world. This might be a breadbasket to feed the poor, a drill to dig a water well, a laptop to report about injustice, or a seed to plant a tree. Doing justice can serve as a vehicle for evangelism but justice is also a worthy end in itself.

46. Dewi Hughes, "Understanding and Overcoming Poverty," in *Transforming the World? The Gospel and Social Responsibility*, eds. Jamie A. Grant and Dewi A. Hughes (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009), 176.

47. Johnson and Wu, *Our Global Families*, 166.

Conclusion

We live in an age of global Evangelicalism, where the typical Evangelical is a woman from the Global South. Yet Evangelicalism is considered by many as a Western faith. Fortunately, Western perspectives can be both acknowledged and decentered, no longer considered as the standard for all to follow, while global voices increasingly represent who we are. Since all biblical and theological studies are contextual, our understanding of scripture will be greatly enriched by the hundreds of new cultural perspectives Evangelicals are found in today. In fact, its global diversity strongly encourages new theological reflection. It can be difficult to ascertain exactly *how* these new insights might impact traditional interpretations of scripture, but it is nevertheless necessary for the perspectives of other cultures to speak into what has been accepted as the "original vision" of the gospel for people all over the world. This same dynamic can be found in global spirituality, discipleship, leadership, and Christian unity. In addition, we live in an age of increasing religious fervor and diversity around the world where churches of the Global South are taking the lead in interfaith relations and mission. Finally, our path forward in global Evangelicalism is recapturing an integral mission of sacrifice that takes into account grave injustice and courageously preaches a gospel for the poor and downtrodden. The true test of a global Evangelical community is how diverse cultural perspectives will be received, considered, and encouraged.

JBTS 8.1 (2023): 129 – 159

Book Reviews

Christensen, Scott. *What about Evil? A Defense of God's Sovereign Glory*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2020, pp. 544, $30, hardback.

Scott Christensen, is the author of the highly acclaimed *What about Free Will?*, foreword by D.A. Carson (P&R, 2016). Scott worked for nine years at the award-winning CCY Architects in Aspen, Colorado; several of his home designs were featured in Architectural Digest magazine. Called out of this work to the ministry, he graduated with his MDiv from The Masters Seminary with honors. He pastored Summit Lake Community Church in southwest Colorado for sixteen years and now serves as the associate pastor of Kerrville Bible Church in Kerrville, Texas.

What About Evil?, by Scott Christensen, is a theologically rich resource that provides a defense of God's sovereign glory and a reason for why God allows evil in the world. In seeking to answer the problem of evil, Christensen provides a robust solution that he calls the Greater-Glory Theodicy. In combining aspects of the Greater-Good Theodicy and fragments of the Best-of-All Possible Worlds Defense, the Greater-Glory Theodicy seeks to resolve the problem of evil in the backdrop of studying what brings God the greatest glory (p. 7). Christensen argues that Jesus' redemptive work on Calvary is the work that most magnifies God's glory, therefore, for Christ's work to be necessary, there must be a good world that has been ruined by evil and calls out for restoration (p. 7).

In his introduction, Christensen takes a reformed perspective in arguing that the fall of humanity was no mistake but was planned by God to bring about the greater good of redemption (pg. 8). Christensen begins to exposit his thesis in the first section (chapters 2 – 6) by examining how the historical record has sought to answer the problem of evil. He demonstrates why past defenses and theodicies have lacked certain qualities that downplay God's sovereignty, aseity, and omnipotence, specifically critiquing the Free-Will Defense. He then shifts in the second section (chapters 7 – 9) to extoling God's meticulous sovereignty and power as the transcendent God of the universe and addresses some issues of how one understands the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. The heart of the book can be found in the third section (ch. 10-13) where he frames the Greater-Glory Theodicy in a monomyth narrative and provides a biblical defense for his theodicy. Christensen concludes the last section (chapters 14 – 17) by describing Jesus' redemptive work on the cross and the importance of his incarnation to be the perfect substitute to accomplish God's cosmic plan of salvation.

Probing more into Christensen's thesis, that the greatest good is what will bring God the greatest glory (p. 281), he provides numerous examples from scripture that strengthen his argument. Psalm 115:3 and Romans 11:36 proclaim that God is free

to create the world in any way He desires, and He specifically chooses to create the world for his glory and pleasure (p. 286). Christensen says, "Everything-absolutely everything Christ made-is 'for him,' to magnify his glory (Col. 1:16; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb 2:10, p. 289)." Christensen's God-Centered Theodicy exemplifies the specific need for people to know they are not the center of the universe and that God's ultimate purpose is not to make man materialistically happy, but to glorify himself (p. 292). Ironically, this God-Centeredness is the vehicle that provides man with ultimate satisfaction and eternal happiness as Christensen concludes that God's glory is our good for it is God's desire to glorify himself that leads to him constructing and bringing about his plan of the redemption of his people through the blood of Jesus (pg. 294).

One inimitable aspect of Christensen's argument is the use of describing God's story of redemption as a monomyth. Building on J.R.R. Tolkien's dialogue with C.S. Lewis decades before, Christensen says that the fundamental storyline of the Bible is how God's glory is magnified in his response to evil through the sending of a redeemer, his beloved Son, Jesus Christ (p. 260). Christensen uses Freytag's Pyramid that distinguishes the different plot points of a story to map out how the "One True Story" of the Bible falls nicely into Freytag's five categories. In contrast to traditional stories of monomyth, the Biblical storyline does not follow a u-shaped storyline (where the blissful state at the beginning is ruined by a tragedy, only to be restored to its original paradisical state in the conclusion), but instead follows what Christensen calls a "J-shaped storyline" (pg. 285). This J-shaped storyline demonstrates that the conclusion of redemption in Christ and his work of overcoming the crisis of the fall is greater and more glorious than the original state of paradise at creation. The J-shaped storyline further buttresses Christensen's Theodicy that the Fall and evil were "fortunate" to bring about an exceedingly greater good for mankind. In this acknowledgement, Christensen aligns himself Alvin Plantinga, who also argues for a theodicy utilizing the *felix culpa* motif. However, different from Christensen, Plantinga champions a free-will defense even though supralapsarianism (which is associated with a *felix culpa* theodicy) is traditionally more aligned and coherent with a reformed Calvinist perspective of theology (p. 299). Christensen claims that the reason for this incoherency with Plantinga may be due to him being raised as a Dutch Reformed Christian that held to a reformed view of the divine decrees (p. 300).

What About Evil?, is a book that adds tremendous value to the field of theology and apologetics for the theologian who is seeking to sharpen his or her knowledge of how to reconcile God's divine sovereignty with human responsibility. Most readers will benefit specifically from Christensen's critique of the commonly held Free-Will Defense. Christensen provides a charitable demonstration of the Free-Will Defense by listing its strengths and weaknesses but then demonstrates why it seems to fall short when examining the biblical data and storyline of Scripture in comparison to a compatibilist view of freedom; in both a compatibilism between divine decree and foreknowledge with human freedom.

Although not a key point in the book, readers will find the explanation of the necessity of Jesus' incarnation to fully to accomplish the work of redemption for mankind's good and God's glory extremely helpful. Specifically, Christensen provides practical truth of how a Christian can cope with the problem of evil when he discusses the impassibility of God. Despite misconceptions about divine impassibility, Christensen communicates a high Christology making clear distinctions between God having affections but not having passions. By leaning on Scripture and the Reformers, Christensen demonstrates that Jesus in His divine nature did not suffer; but, in His humanity, he fully suffered and can sympathize with our weaknesses being our great High Priest (p. 378-389).

The audience most suited for this theological treatise would be a student, teacher, or pastor of higher education and/or training. The book is very steep in its doctrine and would be difficult to digest for the beginner in theology or average lay person of a church. As students interact with the book, they should specifically look for how Christensen methodically highlights the glory, grandeur, and transcendence of the Triune God in every chapter. Students should prepare for a rigorous dive into some difficult and heart wrenching questions about God, evil, and the Bible's solution, being prepared to change one's views if compelled.

Andrew Slay
PhD Student, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Spencer, Mark K. *The Irreducibility of the Human Person: A Catholic Synthesis.* Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2022. 448 pages. $34.95.

The Irreducibility of the Human Person: A Catholic Synthesis is a rich philosophical exploration of the foundations for a theological anthropology. Mark K. Spencer covers tremendous ground that provides a unique contribution to the literature in the philosophy of theological anthropology—closely aligned with theological anthropology proper. Spencer's treatment of the human person is less like a well-prepared steak and more like a buffet, but a themed buffet where the master chef has carefully chosen all the dishes, arranged them, and done so in a way that each mutually inform one another providing the palette with a variety of related dishes that make one both full and artfully satisfied. Let me explain what I mean by this by highlighting some of the features of *The Irreducibility of the Human Person.*

Spencer contributes a novel reflection on the human person, but unlike most treatments that are largely coming from this or that tradition he blends the worlds of philosophical discourse in a harmonious way. It is analytic in that it prizes clarity, logical rigor, conceptual clarification, and drawing from the tools of the analytic philosophical tradition. His treatment surpasses, in some ways, the analytic tendency to prepare and cook a high-quality steak that is not only well-seasoned but craftily

cooked with precision. Instead, Spencer's treatment of the person is far more synthetic, holistic, and historically sensitive with a bit of fat. Good fat, as many recent dietitians will attest, is a necessary part of a healthy well-rounded diet and it can be quite savory. So, in this way it is as the Thomist would define it aimed at the good, but also pleasurable. While this sensibility and set of skills is reflected in Spencer and often reflected in treatments outside the analytic literature, this is not to say that no analytic philosophers of religion and theologians are concerned with a more well-rounded diet that prizes synthesis, systematics, history and the like. One such fine example leaning in this direction that stands out amongst the analytic religious literature is the recent *T&T Clark Handbook to Analytic Theology.* But, as most honest philosophers and theologians will attest, it is actually quite difficult to demarcate between the analytic and continental traditions. There are varying characteristics that, one might argue, are artfully displayed in each of the respective traditions. Spencer, however, not only courageously defies these categorical demarcations, he positively brings them together in this fine volume. He reminds me of the rare exception to the analytic tradition emulated in the likes of the great Stephen Priest who, like the master chef, is able to carefully prepare not just one dish (that would be good all on its own) but multiple dishes that are arrayed in such a fashion as to enhance the individual dishes as a complete meal.

Spencer is likened to the master chef of the buffet in another way. By working in the Thomist tradition, he contributes to the recent set of philosophical foundations for theology literature. Notable examples of this recent and growing literature include J. T. Turner's *On the Resurrection of the Dead*, Edward Feser's *Aquinas,* along with the philosophy and theology adjacent treatments from Jeffrey's Brower's *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World,* and J. P. Moreland and Scott Rae's excellent broad treatment of Aquinas in *Body and Soul* with insights from science as exemplified in Matthew Owen's fine treatment *Measuring the Immeasurable Mind.* Turner's being the most notably theological of the bunch. There are other worthy Thomist works deserving a mention from the likes of Robert Koons on the analytic side and Adam Cooper on the more continental and theological side of the aisle. Of course, Spencer's exploration differs from these not in his analytic sensibilities but in his desire to capture something often missing in the analytic Thomist treatments—namely that which is, arguably, uncapturable by analytic propositions and minimized in most Thomist accounts, the irreducible nature of each person. The fundamental uniqueness of persons is often an insight from modern philosophers of which earlier Thomist's were simply not concerned. So, on the other side, Spencer reminds me of other Thomist treatments found in the existential Thomists and the phenomenologists. He is arguably the philosophical parallel to the Thomist theologian Matthew Levering for his insightful engagement across traditions and his breadth of Thomist knowledge.

But, there is another way in which *The Irreducibility of the Human Person* is likened to the master chef of a grand and beautiful buffet. Spencer displays a

knowledge of the Thomist literature across the Roman Catholic theological tradition. In this way, his buffet is not only thematic and focused, but, as anyone familiar with the Roman Thomist literature, it is vast. Naturally, Spencer could have engaged with a wider set of literature in Thomism and in the Reformed traditions, but, in this way, his aims are clear. And, he capably brings a synthesis across the Catholic Thomist literature while seasoning these accounts with the insights from the phenomenologists.

While space is short, I am unable to explore and analyze all the themes and contributions found therein. Spencer covers a broad range of topics from metaphysics, to phenomenology, and finally theology.

With all that has been said of a positive nature, there are some criticisms that might hinder those dining at Spencer's table. The palette required to taste all the variant flavors is quite extensive, generally speaking, which will make it difficult to taste all the variant flavors. However, more specifically, one of the aims of Spencer is to show why Thomist hylomorphic dualism is superior to both substance dualism and idealism. He attempts to do this by extrapolating the virtues of Thomism. While giving a nod to Descartes' valuable contribution that we are not simply souls but unique souls not explainable by metaphysical complexity, Spencer seems to think Thomistic phenomenology can provide an accounting without being compromised by Thomas's matter-form composite metaphysics. I'll leave the reader to decide whether he is successful on this point—I am not so confident. The related problem of what has been called 'Thomist survivalism' in the disembodied discussions, too, remains complex and will, undoubtedly, be controversial (see specifically pp. 316-325).

Often simultaneously giving a nod to Cartesianism, Spencer also gives a nod to idealism as having numerous resources to account for the human person. But, according to Spencer idealism suffers from an insufficient account of the material body of which Thomism is superior. Carefully pointing out the tendency amongst some toward materialist emergentism, he states: That we can predict what someone is thinking about based on neural activity (or other bodily signs) merely shows that intellect and sense are connected, but it does not show the nature of that connection. Features of intellect already considered show that it first raises sense to share its mode of being, rather than (as emergentism has it) being caused by sense in a "bottom-up" way, so much for materialism or its cousin-emergentism (see p. 79, p. 102 fn. 86, p. 256). As far as it goes, most dualists and idealists agree. But Spencer argues that idealism reduces individual persons to concepts to be grasped, which undermines irreducibility. This is a fascinating line of objection to idealists and one that is not without some warrant—although I am sure there are viable responses. Something like a Berkeleyan idealism would not fall prey to this objection because all ideas are communicated by one mind—the Divine mind. Created minds are rather originary ideas in the mind of God but published as it were as substances with powers in their own right and by themselves (one way of articulating the independence criterion of substance). So, Berkeley's idealism is not obviously susceptible to this objection.

Neither is a kind of Cartesian substance dualism. But, Spencer does have an objection to Descartes as well.

He objects that Descartes and his progeny are susceptible to the 'interaction' problem. His solution is that a more robust account of matter where souls are not only intellect that transcend materiality but also serve as the informing principle for matter, thus making *this* matter and not *that* matter. He argues that an 'experientially motivated hylomorphic distinction between two kinds of contact': one that is spatial and the other that permits actuality and potentiality to connect (p. 170). Apart from two common responses: (1) simple dualists posit a singular relation, and (2) that the interaction problem is an overrated objection, there may be more to say in favor of either dualism or idealism that posits a sufficiently rich account of contact between the two substances or sets of properties. Both dualists and idealists, are, of course, able to draw from versions of Divine occasionalism that permit a robust exchange between matter and soul that is rooted in Divine intentionality. In a similar way, Descartes's interpreters like Suarez have moved in a parallelism direction that permits a two-way exchange of information that is originally designed by God. There is also likely a hybrid view of these two views that is suggested by Descartes and one that leans hylomorphic without buying wholesale into Aristotelian metaphysics. Some interpreters are happy to call Descartes' mind-body view hylomorphism, but this is probably a bit mis-leading. He certainly affirms that the mind is present at each part of the body intellectually, yet not spatially. He readily affirms that the mind has a unique relation to the body and gives intellectual sense to it. Additionally, he has a complicated view that the body sends-representation information to the mind that is translated into ideas by the mind yet he does so without the mysterious distinction found in Aristotle. Causally, the body can send signs to the mind as a trigger that God designs to receive information about the world. In other words, the movements of the body become 'occasions' for the mind that are triggered by the body and parallel the body in those instances. With that sketch in mind, it's important to point out that it is not clear that a Thomist hylomorphic ontology is necessary to explain the world and our relation to it as irreducible creatures.

While *The Irreducibility of the Human Person* is a masterful treatment of numerous subjects, at times the reader will feel as if Spencer is drawing from a number of resources that arbitrarily thicken up his Thomism, but it is not always clear that the same couldn't be done by the Christian idealist (of the Berkeleyan variety) or the Christian Cartesian. Nonetheless, Spencer's *The Irreducibility of the Human Person* deserves re-visiting as it brings together several distinct plates that beautifully complement one another for the refined palette. It would not serve the introductory student to Aquinas, but it would be a useful text in an advanced undergraduate or graduate course on Thomism and the philosophy of theological anthropology.

Joshua R. Farris
Humboldt Experienced Scholar Fellow, Ruhr Universität Bochum

Lee, Daniel D. *Doing Asian American Theology: A Contextual Framework for Faith and Practice*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022, pp. 216, $24.00, paperback.

Daniel D. Lee is the Associate Professor of Theology and Asian American Studies, and also the academic dean for the Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Lee's newest work, *Doing Asian American Theology*, presents his Asian American Quadrilateral (AAQ) as a heuristic tool to empower Asian Americans to live out Christian theology from their own contextuality/embodiment (p. 2). The elements of his AAQ are as follows: the first element is Asian heritage, which includes various inheritances from all across Asia, from the cultural to the religious (p. 68); the second element is the migration experience (p. 70); the third element is American culture, which includes American colonial histories in the Asian continent (p. 71); and the fourth and final element is racialization or, in other words, "the process of racial identity formation, navigating the Black/White binary, and the particular forms of discrimination the Asian Americans face as people of color" (p. 72). Lee's AAQ constitutes the main thrust of the nine chapters in his book where he tries to theologically understand how God reveals himself to Asian American Christians and how Asian American Christians can, in turn, respond to God in their embodied selves: "Theological contextuality arises out of divine self-revelation of a covenantal God who enters history, making creation part of the divine being. Because Jesus is eternally Jewish, our present particularities matter as well" (p. 15). As such, Lee's overarching point is that Asian American theology is both a task and calling that Asian American Christians ought to take seriously (p. 18).

As Lee proceeds with his AAQ as a framework for how an Asian American can do theology, one question that comes to mind is this: how do we even understand what "Asian American," much less "Asian," even means? With an umbrella term such as "Asian American," Lee's solution is to lean into Asian heritage and cultural archetypes in chapter four (the first chapter where Lee starts to expound on his AAQ in more detail). While there is much to say about the other parts of Lee's AAQ, it seems to me that Asian heritage and cultural archetypes is the cornerstone of Lee's AAQ, because it sets up a lot of what Lee does in the other three elements of his framework. Thus, the first part in particular of his AAQ perhaps presents the most thought-provoking element in Lee's theological methodology. His examination of Asian heritage begins with a treatment of the geographic, temporal, and theoretical distance that Asian Americans have in relation to their own ancestral histories (pp. 78-79). Lee then proceeds to state, "A direct way to theologically engage Asian heritage is through a frame of interreligious dialogue" (pp. 78-79). This begs a few questions, though: what if this is irrelevant to some Asian American Christians? How relevant would this be for, say, Asian American adoptees or mixed-race Asian Americans?

To illustrate, one section in particular that stood out in that chapter was Lee's analysis of Filipino heritage and cultural archetypes. As a Filipino American Christian, I took a great interest in this short but important section. Lee states, "The Philippine myths and indigenous spiritual beliefs are an important part of the Filipino cultural imagination" (p. 85). Now, it is important to mention that Lee wants to avoid cultural essentialism: "These elements should not be seen and handled as some eternal essence of ethnic culture" (p. 83). Yet, one cannot help but wonder this possibility: if a Filipino does not care much (much less know) about Philippine myths and indigenous spiritual beliefs, then is this Filipino *less* Filipino? If all a Filipino has ever known was growing up in church, then how important are these Philippine myths in light of the lived existence of the Filipino Christian? To give Lee the benefit of the doubt here, there is perhaps an element of truth in that there may perhaps be *some* trace of these indigenous beliefs in Filipino Christianity; but as to how important these cultural archetypes really are, is up for debate. To be sure, this is not only true with Filipino American Christianity, but also for other Asian American Christianities such as Chinese American and Korean American Christianity (both of which Lee highlights in chapter four).

Therefore, the student of theology and culture must ask whether or not culture can have the explanatory power to unite diverse people groups under an umbrella term such as "Asian American," or perhaps divide diverse groups further. In other words, students must realize the inherent complexity at hand when discussing theology and culture. To Lee's credit, though, he explains further in the chapter that there is a dialectic when it comes to culture: it is at once sinful (p. 100) and good if and only if God commandeers it to function as a witness (p. 101). And this, I think, is an important nuance that Lee makes close to the end of chapter four.

While chapter four had some weaknesses in terms of possible essentialism, chapter seven was Lee's strongest as he aims to discuss racialization of Asian Americans and how Asian American Christians can resist "the lordless powers" of White supremacy (p. 166). He frames this resistance by primarily engaging with the problematic White/Black binary in contemporary discussion on race in America. Lee correctly highlights that part of how Asian Americans experience the process of racialization is being deemed invisible because of this racial binary; Asian Americans do not know, in other words, when or even how to engage in questions of race because they, because of this binary, do not know if it is their place to engage in such discussions (p. 164). Thus, Lee is right: the question at stake here is if Asian Americans can truly be deemed as American.

As such, Lee, with his undoubtably Barthian flavor, does a great job in his "lordless powers" section by beginning to form a very apt theological anthropology. In other words, Lee is saying that it is our duty as Asian American Christians to resist what he calls "White normativity" (the idea that whiteness is the norm in society) because, in this resistance, we are saying *no* to this demonic power (p. 166) while

also becoming more human in the process (p. 168). Lee hence beautifully says that our embodied relationship with the incarnate God is simply to learn what it means to be more human (pp. 167-168).

In sum, Lee's new book is undoubtedly a great contribution to Asian American theology because he envisions a grassroots theology through his own lens of "contextuality" (p. 20). In addition, Lee should be commended for bringing Asian heritage into the conversation when talking about Asian American theology because our heritage always plays a subtle role in all that we do theologically; there is thus an element of truth to Lee's comment of there being a "cultural DNA" in an Asian American's psyche. Overall, Lee really brings to the forefront the complexities of having an Asian American theology. Therefore, students of theology and culture (especially Asian American Christians) can highly benefit from engaging with Lee's new work.

Kristoff Reese Grosfeld
Ph.D. Student, Princeton Theological Seminary

Miles, Todd. *Superheroes Can't Save You: Epic Examples of Historic Heresies*. Nashville: B&H 2019. pp. 208, $20 paperback.

Todd L. Miles is professor of Theology and Director of the Master of Theology program at Western Seminary in Portland, OR.

We are easily enamored with escaping our normal everyday lives to enjoy watching our favorite superhero destroy the evil villain, bring justice to the oppressors, and save the day. Whether you are a Marvel or DC fanatic, most people cannot resist seeing the newest superhero movie that seems to drop every few months. The connection and love we have with superheroes seem to highlight a deeper truth that as humans, we all desire someone who is more powerful and stronger than us to come and save us from the difficulties and sufferings in our lives. All superheroes are attempts to create a "savior-like figure" who can rescue us from our depravity using their super-human powers. Yet as Todd Miles demonstrates in his book, *Superheroes Can't Save You*, every superhero that we have created is an inadequate picture of the true hero of the story of reality: Jesus Christ.

Superheroes Can't Save You attempts to show how each one of our coveted heroes exhibits a "bad idea about Jesus," that can be traced back to the heresies that arose in the early church about the person of Christ. It is important to understand these heresies because these "bad ideas" undercut the gospel and can lead others away from embracing the true gospel. Therefore, each chapter of the book provides an explanation of a superhero; how each superhero displays an incomplete view of Jesus; and how Jesus is a much better idea than what is represented by each superhero (p. 7). Each chapter is divided up into five sections: an introduction of the superhero, the heresy that the superhero represents, how this heresy is still practiced today,

what the Bible teaches to combat this heresy, and why these truths about Jesus are important for our lives today.

Miles covers most of the heresies about the person of Christ from the early church, which include Docetism, Modalism, Arianism, Adoptionism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, and Eutychianism. The only heresy that Miles covers that cannot not be traced back to the early church is Liberalism, which he argues, was birthed in the 18th century by Friedrich Schleiermacher. Due to its focus on the heresies of Christ and the four famous councils of the early church, *Superheroes Can't Save You* aids in adding to the reader's understanding of the church history and Christology of the Patristics. The book is written to students in theological studies but can also be understood by the general Christian or skeptic who has an interest in learning more about the person and work of Jesus.

Four commendable aspects of the book can be seen in the readability of the prose, the relatability to understanding how each heresy is represented by a familiar symbol of a superhero, the linear progression of the author's thought, and the practical application and discussion questions at the end of each chapter. Throughout the book, Miles uses big theological terms but always defines and provides helpful examples to further the reader's understanding. One example can be seen when Miles explains how to understand Nestorianism through the character Gollum from *The Lord of the Rings*. Just as Nestorius believed Jesus had two natures and two separate consciousnesses, Gollum provides a practical example that most readers can relate to in his split personality with his other personhood of Smeagol.

Another example can be seen by each of the sub-headings of the chapters. Miles provides a short statement that describes each heresy in a way that is embodied by the superhero that is the subject of each chapter. For example, Docetism is described as thinking Jesus was simply "God in disguise" just as Superman disguised himself as a man in Clark Kent. The complexities of Eutychianism can be arduous to comprehend for most people, but relating this heresy to Spider-Man, knowing Peter Parker is part human and part Spider, is much easier for the reader to understand Eutyches' claim that Jesus had a hybrid nature in being part human and part god.

The similarity of the structure and organization of each chapter allows the reader to easily understand Miles' argument and flow of thought throughout the work. The framework of each argument also helps teach readers how to approach, understand, and combat false ideas that undercut the gospel. For example, Miles starts each chapter laying the background information by describing the superhero, how they emulate the heresy, and then the historical information of what the heresy is and how it originated. Once a charitable explanation of the heresy is given, he expounds on how we can still believe this false idea today and how it leaves a picture of Jesus that cannot save us. Miles then confronts the false idea with the truth of God's Word; and demonstrates who the Bible proclaims Jesus to truly be; and then concludes with why believing these truths about Jesus are important for our lives

today. This structure demonstrates the necessity of conducting sound historical research and biblical exegesis to demolish strongholds or any lofty thought that is raised up against the knowledge of God.

Lastly, the personal application sections and discussion questions are what make this book a user-friendly and a practical resource. When considering ideas that were espoused in the third and fourth centuries, readers can easily revert into thinking these ideas have nothing to do with them today. Yet, Miles provides everyday examples of how we can still fall into these heresies. For example, when looking at Modalism, most Christians understand the common fallacy of comparing the Trinity to H2O or a three-leaf clover, but very few realize they are falling into Modalism during prayer when they ascribe to the Father things that only the Son did (i.e. dying on the cross, Patripassianism). Miles then explains how having these false ideas about Jesus can have serious consequences. Using the Modalism example, if Jesus is just "one of three costumes God put on," then he cannot answer our prayers because the Bible teaches us to pray in a trinitarian way of praying to the Father, in the name of the Son, and through the Holy Spirit. More importantly, this view of Jesus cannot save us because it was the work of all three persons of the Trinity that was necessary to accomplish our salvation. To drive the application further for the reader, Miles ends every chapter with personal reflection questions, small group discussion questions, and a section for further study to foster deeper application and life transformation by meditating on the timeless truths about Jesus.

One critique of the book is the lack of scholarly contributions. There are few, if any, footnotes and there is no bibliography section. In Miles's defense, it does not appear that a scholarly and in-depth magnum opus of the heresies of church history and a thorough exegesis of Christology was his intention in writing this book. Rather in this work, Miles seeks to provide a practical resource for students of theology, youth workers, and avid superhero fanatics that provides sound historical theology, biblical exegesis, and Christology in an easy-to-read format and everyday language. Miles's creativity should be extolled in the way he exquisitely expounds how each heresy is emulated by superheroes that are easy to relate to and remember. Therefore, this book is for any Christian or skeptic who wants to take a deeper dive in understanding the false ideas about Jesus that are still being propagated today and how the Bible confronts those lies to demonstrate who Jesus truly is: two natures, one person, fully God, fully human. Superheroes can't save us, but praise God that Jesus can!

Andrew Slay
PhD Student, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Poidevin, Robin Le. *And Was Made Man: Mind, Metaphysics, and Incarnation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023, 256, $84.00, hardcover.

And Was Made Man by Robin Le Poidevin is an original, creative, and daring reflective proposal on the metaphysics of the incarnation. Poidevin is emeritus philosopher of philosophy at the University of Leeds. He is well-known for his work in the metaphysics of time having authored several books and numerous essays. Though he is an agnostic, Poidevin is interested in the philosophical issues raised by the incarnation and active in publishing in the various areas of the philosophy of religion.

The book is divided into two main parts: (1) models of the incarnation and (2) various problems or challenges to the incarnation. He covers four broad models. First, on the relational compositional model the Son as joined together with a concrete human nature, thus the Son becomes a part of (though not identical to) a divine-human composite. Second, on the transformational compositional the Son, by acquiring a concrete human nature, is *transformed* into a divine-human composite. Third, on the divided mind model, which may or may not be "compositional," the Son has two steams of consciousness in the single person. Finally, on kenotic Christology, there is significant variation but there is unity by treating the Son as giving up certain divine properties in becoming human. The main problems for the coherence of the incarnation he introduces relate to divine embodiment, divine necessity, divine goodness, and the incarnate God's relation to time. Each of these problems are relatively standard objections to the divine becoming human. How could an immaterial object become material? How could a necessary being die? Etc. Therefore, the first half of the book is designed as an introduction to existing views whereas the second section is focused on original and creative responses to common problems in Christology.

Throughout the book Poidevin advances a form of kenotic Christology wherein the Son *"gives up something*" to become incarnate (p. 93). He argues it is the ideal model for addressing these pressing Christological issues. As such, he believes kenoticism is profoundly emotionally, theologically, and philosophically satisfying. Notwithstanding, Poidevin's main goal is philosophical and not theological. He seeks to determine if the incarnation logically and metaphysically possible. And his conclusion is that it *is* possible. It is possible given a kenotic model wherein God gives up omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immateriality, self-sufficiency, and meta-ethical status (pp. 212-213). On Kenoticism there is a more satisfying answer to all four of the incarnational problems he introduces. For example, he argues that unless we appeal to kenosis the Son cannot be wholly embodied since it is impossible for a human brain to be omniscient, and thus, the divine mind isn't really "embodied" (p. 139). Similarly, he suggests that while the Father is absolutely necessary the Son is conditionally so since otherwise the Son couldn't truly be *human* since humans are

not absolutely necessary (p. 166). Radical as such an account may be, whether it is *true* is another matter that Poidevin does not consider.

Irrespective of what one makes of Poidevin's thesis, he is an especially lucid writer, providing refreshingly clear accounts of the various terms and concepts throughout his work. It is clearly organized and serves as a useful introduction to some of the important philosophical aspects of the incarnation. It is further quite obvious that Poidevin has decades of teaching experience in philosophy as his brief descriptions of the various metaphysical options for topics like time are especially useful. For example, in less than four pages he introduces the various main views on the metaphysics of time, offer reasons to accept and reject each view, and provide his own preferred rationale for one of the models. Such skill in lucid brevity is rare.

While Poidevin's book is well written, well organized, and well explained, it suffers from several potential weaknesses. First, Poidevin suggests that his account of the incarnation is more theologically satisfying throughout the work though at the end he pleads innocence by claiming that since he is not a theologian he must defer to theologians to make such a judgment (p. 212). While it is surely appropriate to be modest if one is a philosopher and dealing with theological matters, surely it is more appropriate to simply own any mistakes outright or to refrain from making strong claims about them.

Second, Poidevin's account is likely to be unsavory for nearly all Christians except for the most radically revisionist. A kenotic account like Poidevin offers, that requires God—even if only the Son—to give up omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immateriality, self-sufficiency, and meta-ethical status is no small cost. Further, Poidevin suggests there are numerous other unorthodox requirements or expectations for his model. For example, he thinks Social Trinitarianism (one of the requirements for his view) is better off simply accepting tritheism (p. 114). He thinks the only way to avoid the implication of tritheism is to accept a version of relative identity which he finds deeply troubling. If one is to remain committed to classical forms of logic and identity, they will be better off, and will be left with three gods. Elsewhere he thinks elements of Arianism cannot be avoided (p. 168). These are steep costs for any Christian account of the incarnation and most would likely consider it heretical. Proposing alternative models of the incarnation is certainly acceptable—especially as an academic book—but proposing radically revisionary of this sort will gain few hearers.

Third, Poidevin makes some curious claims at points in his book. For example, he suggests that "the creation of free beings is thus a kenotic act insofar as it involves a stepping back from full control of the created order" (p. 101). Whether one is a libertarian about freedom or not, surely this account of divine action is at odds with most traditional accounts. God does not act in a one-to-one fashion with creation. It is part of his nature as divinely transcendent that he can non-competitively act while we act freely simultaneously. A similar curious claim comes from his chapter on

divine embodiment. He offers three theories of God and space: occupation, identity, and knowledge and power. Either God is present by occupying every space, by being identical to space, or by having knowledge and power over space. However, these are by no means the only categories. And his definition of occupation is rather strange. For example, the section would have greatly benefited from interaction with the seminal works of Ross Inman who has published variously on accounts of omnipresence in venues he is surely familiar with like Oxford and T&T Clark.

So, how should the biblical-theological student interact with this book? For the student desiring to understand much of the philosophical categories and how they impinge on the doctrine of the incarnation, this resource presents a helpful guide. The student will find a wide range of careful and readable definitions and examples. However, a biblical-theological student from a traditional Christian background will find the book rather off-putting given its massive revisionary requirements. It should be noted that the book is not an undergraduate level text. It is best suited for graduate students and requires some level of prior philosophical-theological knowledge even while it offers definitions. Given this, I have trouble providing a firm recommendation of the book. While I personally disagree vehemently with most every conclusion in the book I did find it well-written and clearly argued. Two virtues that are not easily dismissed. Therefore, I may recommend it to graduate students for specific contexts. However, I would strongly avoid recommendation for undergraduates or those Christians not involved in academic study of religion.

Jordan L. Steffaniak
Wake Forest, NC

Gallagher, Robert L. and Edward L. Smither, eds. *Sixteenth Century Mission: Explorations in Protestant and Roman Catholic Theology and Practice*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021, 29.99, paperback.

Many readers will be able to recall a barbed quotation taken from the Jesuit, Robert Bellarmine, who castigated Protestantism for its evident lack of apostolic zeal for mission. He claimed that "they had hardly converted a handful" (Stephen Neill, The History of Missions, 1986, p. 188). As one who wrestled first to understand and then to explain to others the 'tortoise and the hare' phenomenon exhibited in the modest beginning of Protestant missionary effort in the sixteenth century, this reviewer was keen to examine Sixteenth Century Mission. The prospect of finding accounts of Reformation-era missions provided from both sides of the confessional divide in a single volume seemed promising. In this review, we shall consider Sixteenth Century Mission as to its concept, as to its methodology, and as to its overall quality.

The concept of Sixteenth Century Mission (hereafter SCM) is a noble one. Why hasn't someone brought together essays representing early modern Protestant and Catholic mission, before now? The volume offers an initial ten chapters describing

Protestant missionary activity within and beyond Western Europe, followed by eight chapters describing the Catholic mission activity which—because linked with transoceanic exploration of Columbus and da Gama—commenced before the dawn of the Reformation era. But this consideration of the laudable concept behind the book, leads naturally to a reflection on the methodology implicit in it.

In SCM we indeed see essays about Protestant and Catholic sixteenth century mission. But it is striking that the volume does not bring the two missionary movements together in any intersecting way. By volume-end, we are none the wiser as to what (if anything) Protestants thought about existing Catholic missionary endeavor, and vice versa. This lack of intersection is in part a reflection on the expectations spelled out in commissioning the conference papers which now form SCM chapters; it is also a reflection of the fact that the majority of chapters on Catholic mission are written by non-Catholics (which is the opposite of what we might expect).

Still thinking about methodology, on the whole, SCM employs a broadly historical method in its attempts at comparing Protestant and Catholic mission. Yet while some authors write from a rigorously historical perspective, emphasizing original sources (e.g. chaps. 7 &15); others utilize a blend of quite romantic nineteenth century accounts with modern scholarship (e.g. chap. 4). Some chapters (e.g. 5) are essentially historical-theological, while still others are extensively biographical (2,7,10, 13,14). It appears that the volume has overlapping chapters: two touch on the Genevan mission to Brazil (5&6), two explore European Anabaptist missionary activity close-to-home (9&10), while a further two (11&12) both touch on Jesuit missionary activity in China. It was not clear to this reviewer what warranted the inclusion of chapters 2 and 13, as they formed no real part of missionary history. It is enough to say that the project of bringing early Protestant and Catholic missionary activity into comparative focus was impeded by a lack of methodological unity and a clearer division of labor.

The reviewer wants to highlight strengths in this volume. An impressive opening chapter by Ray Van Neste sorted out fact from historical misrepresentation of early Protestant missionary efforts; this trend he traced back to German missiologist, Gustav Warneck (d. 1910). But Warneck, effectively dispatched in that first chapter, was still sowing frequent confusion later in the book. We find helpful surveys of Lutheran missionary expansion into Scandinavia in the early sixteenth century (chap. 3) and early, pre-Calvin Protestant proliferation in France (chap. 4). These chapters are primarily drawn from existing secondary literature. A chapter on the French Reformed mission in colonial Brazil (6) while largely dependent on a range of secondary literature, because written from within Brazil by Franklin Ferreira—did draw on Latin American literature and brought new insights which were truly helpful.

An insightful chapter (7) on the Zurich Reformation-era linguist, Theodore Bibliander, showed that this scholar was alert to the family of human languages and the theological implications of this inter-relatedness for the spread of the gospel. The

chapter on Ignatius Loyola and his Spiritual Exercises (10) while instructive, seemed oblivious to the fact that the unquestioning submission to papal authority encouraged in these exercises made Jesuit emissaries of the Pope 'persona non grata' in Catholic Spain, Portugal, France and the Philippines by the mid-eighteenth century. The one which follows, on Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit mission to China (11) does well in drawing attention to the pitfalls of the Jesuit strategy of accommodating the Christian message to non-European cultures. But this is not shown to be part of the larger tendency of this religious order which led to the coining of the adjective, 'Jesuitical', i.e. duplicitous. The reviewer admired the nuance observable in the chapter (12) on Jesuit missionary effort in West African Kongo; here it is shown that Jesuits involved themselves in unwelcome statecraft and mercantile trade, as well as the evangelizing which was their stated reason for being in the Kingdom.

A chapter on Bartolomé de las Casas (14) deserves credit for its acknowledgement that las Casas – while defending the native population against efforts to enslave them, promoted the enslavement of West Africans (a stance he later needed to repudiate). But the attempt to show that las Casas, a Dominican, was almost-Protestant and very nearly conformed to the Bebbington quadrilateral represented a tendency toward digression away from his task.

In sum, SCM represents a noble concept which points the way towards a wider understanding of still-other tangled questions. Its methodology needed to be much clearer, especially in drawing on actual representatives of the Roman Catholic tradition. It contains a good number of excellent chapters which I know I will return to regularly.

Kenneth J. Stewart
Covenant College

German, Brian T. *Psalms of the Faithful: Luther's Early Reading of the Psalter in Canonical Context*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017, pp. 232, $24.99, paperback.

In this work, Brian German presents a fresh perspective on the function of the faithful synagogue as an interpretive category within the *Dictata super Psalterium*, Martin Luther's first lecture series through the Psalms in the years 1513-1515. According to German, professor of theology at Concordia University Wisconsin and director of the Concordia Bible Institute, part of the importance of the *Dictata* for understanding the early Luther is the way in which it furnishes us with an almost daily account of his struggle to make sense of each passage unfolding before him. This struggle, German points out, provides a window, not only into the interpretive development of the young Doctor, but into the specific theological principles adopted, abandoned, or merely altered throughout his journey. As he says, "Luther, well informed of the

sacred tradition but not yet sure how best to use it, set out on a journey through the Psalter to see where it would take him" (p. 10).

German, an able guide throughout, begins by situating his discussion within the complex history of interpretation surrounding Luther's approach to Scripture in general and the Old Testament in particular. Specifically, the study is directed at further defining what is for Luther the abiding relevance of the Old Testament in the contemporary church, especially as it pertains to the place of the Psalms in the Christian life. To accomplish this, German focuses his attention on the notion of the faithful synagogue, outlining its role as a positioning system of sorts in recent efforts to trace Luther's theological movements within the *Dictata* with greater precision. The primary aim of the analysis is to examine how consideration of the Psalter's canonical structure informs previous attempts to discern what (or who) the faithful synagogue is and what role it plays in the overall theological system of Luther. This approach, German notes, "introduces a fresh set of questions in the realm of the faithful synagogue's relationship to the content of the Book of Psalms, such as where the faithful synagogue 'originates,' how Luther incorporates the faithful synagogue beyond its origination, what influence the faithful synagogue has on Luther's subsequent exegesis, and so on" (p. 22).

Of these previous attempts, those of James S. Preus and Scott Hendrix feature most prominently in German's argument. In his words, "Because Preus and Hendrix both grant some fluctuation in Luther's *Dictata* and yet argue for opposite ends of the spectrum regarding the theological significance of such, these two scholars, in our judgment, prove to be the most suitable conversation partners" (p. 19). More specifically, Preus and Hendrix concur in their understandings both of the distinctness of Luther's appropriation of the faithful synagogue in relation to his medieval climate and of his sea change taking place toward the end of the *Dictata*; however, where they differ is in their ultimate theological assessment of what this faith finally means for Luther. Does Luther signal a novel break with the medieval tradition by elevating to an extent the faith of the Old Testament community (Preus), or does he simply maintain his medieval inclinations toward the interpretive centrality of New Testament faith, albeit with some alterations to the received tradition (Hendrix)? Ultimately, while recognizing these contributions for clarifying the complexities of a moving Luther, German contends what is lacking in each case is an accounting for the structure of the text itself, namely "a moving Psalter" (p. 23).

Building on these developments by way of a more consciously canonical reading of the *Dictata*, German locates the origin of the faithful synagogue within the Asaphite corpus of the Psalter's third book (Pss. 73-83), significantly earlier than either of his interlocutors. The first step in his argument is "a much closer examination of Luther's unique emphases vis-à-vis Augustine and Cassiodorus," which allows one to see more clearly when Luther, on the one hand, is essentially appealing to their views and when, on the other, he is speaking with his own voice. Following this, the second

step is then to "enhance our findings by examining Luther's interpretation of similar psalmody appearing (canonically) before the Asaphite corpus in order to surmise what effect, if any, the new context in Book III may have had on his exegesis" (p. 29). In other words, wherever Luther departs from both his forebears and his earlier self, it is likely, German says, indicative of this interpretive shift shining through. After dealing extensively with each of these steps, German then moves beyond the Asaphite corpus to demonstrate how the faithful synagogue, once developed, maintains an abiding influence in Luther's exegetical decision-making throughout the remainder of the Psalter.

The overall analysis German provides is thorough and compelling, not to mention refreshingly readable for such a multi-layered discussion. Even though there are moments amid so many details where it can be easy to lose sight of the argument's main track, careful engagement along the way proves fruitful at journey's end. For example, the corrective offered by German in his treatment of "the most immediate hermeneutical implications of Luther's increasing preoccupation with the Old Testament perspective" as shown in his discussion on Psalm 119 and the *sensus literalis* in Luther is a convincing culmination to his previous findings, especially in their "answering how Luther's integration of the faithful synagogue relates to the fundamental task of interpreting Scripture" (pp. 131–132). Thus, insofar as he attempts to recalibrate our understanding of the faithful synagogue as a determining influence in the exegetical mind of Luther, German succeeds in painting a clearer picture of where such a conception likely originates and how it ought to inform our approach, not only to Luther, but to his beloved Bible.

Despite a rather modest concession that the study merely scratches the surface of so many distinct conversations, especially within Luther studies and biblical studies, scholars will not find themselves disappointed with German's contribution. Similarly, pastors and laypeople alike will find valuable guidance for how better to read the Psalms as members themselves of this faithful synagogue, having been prepared to move with greater confidence "into the uneven terrain of meditation and lament, promise and praise." (27) German, with a harmony of clarity and complexity, gives us a quintessentially human Luther longing to understand these quintessentially human prayers and, in so doing, gives us a model for our own struggles through this most precious of books.

Shawn M. Langley
Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology
Cambridge, UK

Verde, Danilo. *Conquered Conquerors: Love and War in the Song of Songs.* Atlanta: SBL, 2020, pp. 271, $40, paperback.

Danilo Verde is a postdoctoral associate with the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies in KU Leuven, Belgium, in addition to being a member of the Biblical Studies research group at the same university. In this revised edition of his dissertation that advances the frontiers of scholarship in Biblical Metaphor Studies, Verde provides readers with an insight into the military metaphors, similes and scenarios undergirding the Song of Songs' depiction of human love, for which no extensive research using cognitive linguistics exists. Conceptual metaphor theory and blending theory were mainly employed by Verde to demonstrate that the root metaphor LOVE IS WAR undergirds the Song's conceptualization of both the Song's lovers and their love, marking the Song as both conceptually unitary and thematically coherent, despite its seeming fragmentary composition. In organizing his argument, Verde adduces four surface metaphors – WOMAN IS FORTIFIED CITY (pp. 45–102), MAN IS CONQUEROR (pp. 103–132), WOMAN IS CONQUEROR (pp. 133–168), and LOVE IS STRIFE (pp. 169–202) – which he claims serve not only to sustain the aforementioned root metaphor throughout the Song but ultimately held the Song together as a literary piece.

With respect to the strengths of this monograph, Verde's stimulating observations and extensive analysis on how the Song's source domain of war interacts with its target domain of love to create blended concepts of the lovers as both conquerors and conquered is impressive, particularly at the level of detail drawn from the field of cognitive linguistics, the Hebrew Bible and cognate literature. The author clearly demonstrated to what extent the Song's warlike imagery is conventional in the conceptual world of its *Umwelt*, as well as aspects in which the Song's unconventional perception of eros and gender roles shines the brightest (pp. 45, 96–99, 130, 200). While the expression of love as strife is not entirely alien to the biblical tradition and cognate literature in the ancient Near East, what makes Verde's work stand out is his exposition of the unconventional trends unique to the Song's characterization of eros in warlike terms. This is done by portraying both the male and female lovers as simultaneously conquerors and conquered in a never-ending game of love; thus, reconfiguring gender stereotypes and constructions in the socio-cultural milieu from which the Song draws its inspiration (pp. 37, 103, 130–131, 216).

Another feature that sets the book apart is its creative recognition and interpretation of the Song's military language, in which the implication of the Song's warlike imagery is constructed from the encounter between the world of the author and the world of the book (p. 41). And by exhaustively analysing the Song's military metaphors based on their clausal constructions, underlying conceptualizations and communicative purposes, Verde effectively established that the Song's understanding of love as warlike strife is revealed internally in the perpetual tension between

the lovers themselves, and externally in the tension between the lovers and their environment (p. 201). As Verde sees it, the above three-level analysis helped to shed light on the underlying mechanism veiling some problematic texts within the Song's complex literary compositions, such as the unclear scene of the bride in a litter of military escort in Song 3:6–8 and the puzzling military dance of Song 7:1 (pp. 169–172, 216).

Similarly, the organization of the book, which shows how the root metaphor LOVE IS WAR is portrayed through the abovementioned four surface metaphors, with each surface metaphor being made evident through a number of figurative expressions, makes most of the author's argument both succinct and compelling (p. 31). At the same time, the author's use of recent developments in cognitive metaphor studies, particularly the blending theory and Gerald Steen's three-dimensional model, helped in the analysis of the undercurrent metaphor LOVE IS WAR in greater depth such that it is seen to underlie all the clusters of surface metaphors already mentioned.

Unfortunately, some of Verde's analyses seem less compelling than others. A good example is his argument that the female lover receives a novel portrayal with regard to her personality and sexuality in the Song, which is minimized by his admission that it is only through the eyes of the male lover that such recognition is acknowledged (p. 218). Likewise, a few of his analytical reasonings, leading to some of the blended concepts he drew from the Song, are less easily accessible than others. For instance, it is somewhat less convincing to the reviewer how he arrives at the blended concept *love subjugates all* in Song 8:6–7 (pp. 187–201). Moreover, it is hard to see the direct relevance of discussing *the dialectic of the Song's warlike metaphors* and *the Song's troublesome metaphors* under the concluding chapter when they could have been explored in more depth in a separate chapter.

On balance, in spite of some negligible shortcomings, the richness and range of Verde's work is remarkable. His monograph definitely makes up for the scant attention commentators have paid to the Song's military language. Not only is it a welcome addition to the literature on Biblical Metaphor Studies, but it will also prove an invaluable resource for anyone interested in Hebrew Bible metaphors in general and the Song of Songs in particular. For this reason, Verde's monograph could count as a seminal text in the field of Biblical Metaphor Studies.

Joseph Nnamdi Mokwe
KU Leuven, Belgium

Estelle, Bryan D. *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing a Biblical Motif.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018, pp. 351, $42, paperback.

Bryan D. Estelle is professor of Old Testament at Westminster Seminary, California, where he has taught since 2000. Estelle received his doctorate from The Catholic

University of America. He is the author of numerous essays, articles, and books, including *Salvation through Judgement and Mercy: The Gospel According to Jonah*.

Bryan Estelle takes his readers on a *tour de force* of one of the Bible's most significant themes, moving from Creation to the world-to-come in a sweeping survey of texts. On the surface, his book reflects a straight-forward yet comprehensive tracing of the biblical motif of exodus. In reality, Estelle has created a case study rich in methodological insight and hermeneutical acumen. In Chapter 1 he introduces the linguistic and philosophical backgrounds of *intertextuality*. He follows this discussion by stating his hermeneutical presuppositions and outlining his method for determining an allusion, including carefully clarifying what he means by typology.

In chapter 2 Estelle identifies the cosmic-mountain ideology of the ancient Near East in the Creation account and demonstrates the similarities between creational realities and the Tabernacle. Estelle is clear that both creation and exodus are essentially about a great king forming a people and bringing them to himself at his holy abode (pp. 64, 68, and 93). Estelle helpfully demonstrates that the exodus motif must include all stages of the Israelite journey, from initial deliverance to the wilderness wanderings and then finally to the conquest of Canaan.

Estelle then explores how the Psalter uses the exodus motif in chapter 4, and in chapter 5 Estelle examines Isaiah's use and adaptation of the exodus motif, demonstrating how Isaiah foretells a coming new and greater exodus and a "way" in the wilderness. Chapter 6 studies the use of the exodus motif within exilic and post-exilic writings by examining Jeremiah and Ezra-Nehemiah.

Chapter 7 discusses how Matthew and Mark develop the exodus motif. According to Estelle, Mark develops Jesus as the one who inaugurates Isaiah's "way" in the wilderness. Matthew portrays Jesus as a (new) and better Moses, the obedient son, and the one who takes up Israel's calling. In Chapter 8 Estelle treats Luke-Acts by tracing the use of the "way" terminology throughout the two-volume text, with a particular emphasis on the Gentile inclusion in Jesus' new exodus.

In chapters 9, 10, and 11, Estelle investigates the use of the exodus motif in the Pauline corpus, in 1 Peter, and in Revelation, respectively. Estelle's final chapter presents a summary of his findings by suggesting a number of contributions his study makes to the field of Biblical Theology. First, his study of one particular motif validated his appropriation of *intertextuality* as a method. Second, Estelle reiterates that the exodus motif in the Scriptures must encompass the entire trajectory of exodus from liberation to final destination in God's presence. For Estelle, the exodus motif can serve as a synecdoche for the story of salvation. Third, Estelle leans heavily on his own terminology of entitlement to the world-to-come as a forensic/legal notion and therefore proposes that the results of his study could inform recent debates on justification by providing a both/and approach rather than an either/or approach. For those interested in further study on *intertextuality*, Estelle includes a

lengthy appendix that provides significantly more background into the linguistic and philosophical background of *intertextuality* as developed by Kristeva and Bahktin.

Estelle must be applauded for undertaking a study of this magnitude in a consistent and even-handed manner. When compared with Robert and Wilson's book of the same title from the same year, Estelle's book is much more rigorous methodologically and thus much more convincing. Estelle's insistence on defining the exodus trajectory more broadly to include wilderness and the *telos* of exodus is one of the greatest contributions of his book for Biblical Theology.

In my opinion, chapter 5 (*Isaiah's Rhapsody*) was perhaps the heart of the book and functioned to bridge the use of the exodus motif from the Old Testament to the New by highlighting how Isaiah develops and re-imagines this crucial biblical theme. The use of this motif is particularly significant given that each of the Gospels incorporates Isaiah's use of this motif in their respective introductions.

Often when Estelle presents data regarding the similarities between exodus and creational themes, Estelle appears to prioritize exodus themes and language over creational themes and language with no real rationale for doing so. In this regard Estelle's exclusion of the Gospel of John for review seems to be a significant miss, given John's utilization of *both* creation and (new) exodus language. In his one-page entry on the book of Colossians (p. 284), Estelle appears to be grasping to demonstrate just exactly why the first chapter of Colossians reflects the exodus motif, while failing to mention the obvious creational motifs that are organic to the text. In addition, Estelle's conclusion that the "influence of the exodus motif on the apostle Paul is pervasive" (p. 285) seems overstated, in that while the motif is present, he fails to demonstrate the motif to be pervasive or controlling.

Due to its comprehensive and technical nature, Estelle's book will most likely find a home on the shelf of the academic or the serious student of the Word who desire to have a methodologically sound grasp of one of the most important themes for Biblical Theology. Students new to the concept of *intertextuality* will most likely find his theoretical engagement demanding, while students eager for a case-study in *intertextuality* will find his book rigorous yet rewarding.

Jared Kaessner
PhD Candidate, Columbia International Seminary

Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022, pp. xxv + 422, $29.99.

There are certain volumes which have imprinted themselves as being *par excellence* textbook material with respect to faculty and students alike. T. Desmond Alexander's

From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch, now in its fourth (!) edition, is one such work. Initially published over twenty five years ago (Baker, 1995) *From Paradise to the Promised Land* is *sui generis* with respect to its pedagogical sensitivity and academic integrity.

In this carefully revised, expanded, and updated fourth edition, Alexander does not disappoint in continuing to well-serve his audience through introducing the major themes of the first five books of the Bible alongside substantial, erudite engagement with modern critical approaches to the composition of the Pentateuch, effectively guiding readers through this stimulating, not insignificant portion of Scripture (see the back cover). According to the author, "the present volume seeks to (1) focus on the main themes of the Pentateuch, viewed as a unified literary work, and (2) guide the reader through the maze of modern approaches to the study of the Pentateuch" (p. xvii). Unquestionably, Alexander succeeds in achieving these objectives. The question stands, though, as to what changes, specifically, have been implemented in this edition?

Prior to elaborating on these particulars, however, a brief overview of the text, as a whole, is in order. *From Paradise to the Promised Land* is comprised of two parts: (1) The Main Themes of the Pentateuch (eighteen chapters). This section covers (for example) the royal lineage in Genesis, why Israel?, the covenant at Sinai, and other related things, (2) Pentateuchal Criticism (six chapters) focuses on the Documentary Hypothesis and the future of Pentateuchal studies. A recommended reading section is also included which is comprised of a seven page overview of different Pentateuchal commentaries and a (select) twenty-five page bibliography of different articles. Three thorough indices (author/Scripture/subject) round out the text. One particularly nice touch for all serious students is that many key Hebrew words (in transliteration) also appear within the subject index, thus making for easy reference tracking (more on this later).

As in the previous three editions of *Paradise to Promised Land*, the text itself is very user-friendly. Writing-wise, Alexander pitches his style just right for this readership. There is also an effective use of bold face type, special shading, good use of white space, ample headings sub-headings, etc., and multiple charts, diagrams, tables, and figures. Each graphic is crisp and clear. One new-to-this-edition illustration is 'Mount Sinai as Archetype of the Tabernacle' wherein Alexander delineates the boundary lines of the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, and the Courtyard of the Tabernacle as they relate to and compare with Mt. Sinai (p. 101). Such stimulating visual content throughout the text is not only a treat to the eyes but also the mind as the images duly convey much that is of great theological import in a highly compressed yet relatable way.

The "New Testament Connections" at the end of every chapter (section one) do a great job of helping students connect the dots to the Pentateuch and the biblical metanarrative (cf. pp. 222–26). The 'set off' text for chapter summaries (section one)

are also beneficial to students. If only the author had included some type of end-of-chapter questions as this provision would have been an especial boon for busy ministers, pastors, and church leaders, to help accommodate the volume to a group Bible study or the like. Perhaps future edition(s) might make this change.

With respect to the primary differences between the fourth and the first, second, and third edition(s), one notes that Alexander's review and critique of modern critical approaches to the composition of the Pentateuch, i.e., part two (see above) is placed at the end of the book—rather than at the beginning, as in the previous three editions. As Richard E. Averbeck states in his endorsement (see the back cover), this is a "good move. Alexander's discussion in this section sorts out the current plurality of critical positions in a readable way and offers sound, reasonable response to them." Alexander's shift of having this material at the end of the text also allows for a clearer exposé ('show' vs. 'tell') of how "the Pentateuch cannot be understood solely by reconstructing the process by which it was composed; the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts" (pp. 231–32). Would, though, that the author had thoroughly engaged with the discipline of rhetorical-criticism (rhetoric as persuasion) as it receives only the briefest mention in his overarching discussion of literary criticism (p. 232). Arguably, rhetorical criticism is the true "future of Pentateuchal studies" (cf. pp. 331–59) as it leverages the crème de crème of the literary-critical discipline but also moves beyond it, effectively 'filling the void' between various diachronic and synchronic approaches. It is most regrettable Alexander missed this opportunity.

One minor critique is the lack of any sort of commentary in the "recommended further reading" (pp. 361–92). Surely some annotations would have helped fledging student(s). Could not have this section, perhaps, have been replaced by a complete bibliography of the text at hand (thus negating the need for such details in the footnotes) and then some select reference(s) be made to specialized books offering further assistance? One thinks, for instance, of Kenton L. Sparks' *The Pentateuch: An Annotated Bibliography* (Wipf and Stock, 2019) or John F. Evan's volume, *A Guide to Biblical Commentaries and Reference Works* 10th ed. (Zondervan, 2016).

A more significant criticism, though, is the lack of sustained interaction with Hebrew-language resources. To be clear, while it is certainly most welcome (and appreciated) to have special reference(s) made to *'abad*, *gôy*, *ḥāram*/*ḥērem*, *qādaš*, *śādeh*, *ṭāhôr*, *ṭāmē'* and the like within the text itself, would not students benefit from having had some reference(s) to the standard, user-friendly (read English speaking) lexicons, such as NIDOTTE and the like?

To conclude, despite these infelicities, I heartily recommend T. Desmond Alexander's *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch* without hesitation.Its primary users are most likely to include Bible college/Christian university college and seminary students along with Christian educators and, one hopes, invested pastors/laypeople.

Dustin Burlet
Millar College of the Bible

Snodgrass, Klyne R. *You Need A Better Gospel: Reclaiming the Good News of Participation with Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022, pp. 174, $24, paperback.

The author is professor emeritus of New Testament studies at North Park Theological Seminary. He posits two chief problems facing ministers in today's America: "our society has little interest in a gospel, and the church has failed miserably to do justice to its own message" (p. 2). Snodgrass maintains that the church desperately needs to recover its own gospel, what he calls "a better gospel," a gospel better than simply a ticket to heaven when you die. Here is the author's short explanation of the gospel:

> God is *for* us and loves us, and God intends to have a people, a "family." Even when people ignore God, go their own way, and do what is wrong, God will still have a people. God grieves over the world, filled as it is with suffering, sin, and evil. That God is for us is demonstrated—revealed—powerfully through Jesus, the promised Deliverer. In Jesus, God identified with human suffering and evil, confronted sin, demonstrated how humans should live, in his own being took on our sin and dealt with it, and gave his life for us, demonstrating just how much God is for us. God is the God who creates life in the midst of death. Jesus's resurrection *is* the good news. With Jesus's death and resurrection God has defeated both death and evil, offers forgiveness, and engages us with meaningful action. God gives his transforming, life-creating Spirit to us to give life and purpose now, to create a community of Spirit-endowed people who reflect God's character and purposes in the world, and to give hope of ongoing life with God in a new earth and a new heaven. In a real sense the gospel calls us into being and into life engaged with God. This is a *gospel of participation* and power, good news indeed. (p. 6)

His goal is to show that this gospel of participation pervades the Scriptures, through both God's participation with us as seen in his love for us, the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the giving of his Spirit, and our "*participating in the life of Christ and of God through the Spirit and being transformed by the participation*" (p. 20, italics original). By our "participation" he does not mean "becoming God." The distinction between Creator and creature remains. Rather it is expressed by terms such as being "bound with/ attached to/united with/incorporated into" Christ and his body the Church.

Snodgrass wonders why this focus has been lost, since it was stressed throughout church history by Christian thinkers. He points out Old Testament texts that speak of "clinging to the Lord" and "being attached to the Lord" as well as the texts' emphasis on being bound to God in covenant and participating in God's mission. He highlights the Synoptic emphases of the kingly reign of God for and with his people through the ministry of Jesus, and Jesus' call to discipleship to renounce an ego-centered life and be attached to Jesus. Participation language fills John's Gospel and First John.

The author notes the importance of John's repeated verb "to remain/abide in" and the theological stress on our participation in the life of the Trinity. Snodgrass argues that Acts reveals participation by its stress on the interplay of God's actions and human response.

Over two chapters the author discusses Paul's letters with the twofold question: How does salvation work and for what purpose? Focusing on four texts, 2 Corinthians 5:14-6:4; Ephesians 2:4-10; Romans 6:1-14; and 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, he shows how Paul repeatedly stresses the two-way participation, God's participation in Christ by the Spirit with us and our participating by faith and life with him. The author especially points to the Pauline language that we died and were raised with Christ. What happened to Christ happened to us. "How does salvation work? By participation, both the participation of God in Christ with us and our participation with Christ in baptism and life" (p. 141). Because we are "in Christ," caught up into the force-field of Christ, there can be no separation of salvation from ethics. The Christian life flows from participation. Snodgrass also draws attention to Hebrews 3:14; 1 Peter 2:4-5, 24; 4:13; and especially 2 Peter 1:3-4, "partakers of divine nature" which he understands as focusing on the present moral life. He affirms the traditional saying that "He became what we are that we might become what he is" (p. 162). Snodgrass concludes by stressing how churches today desperately need to reclaim the gospel of participation.

By way of evaluation, I thoroughly enjoyed the vibrant writing of Snodgrass. I found the volume quite moving and inspiring. Where is it decreed that biblical studies must be written in a boring way? He does a good job of bringing together into one discussion the many biblical texts that speak of participation and rightly stresses that the participation moves in both directions, God through Christ in the Spirit toward us and we attached to him by faith. In this respect I thought he could have emphasized more that both directions of the participation are maintained not in a direct fashion but mediated by the Word, as Jesus says in John 15:4-7, "Remain in me, and I in you . . . . If you remain in me, and *my words* remain in you."

The author's survey of texts raised for me some questions for further pursuit. Given the frequency of participation language in Pauline texts, when does Paul speak of Christ dying outside of us and for us and when does he say that we died with Christ? The former strikes me as non-participatory on our part. Is there any internal logic with each type of discourse?[1] Snodgrass properly stresses throughout the Christian's active living with God. While that is true, there are also many texts that

1. For an attempt to address this question, see Paul R. Raabe, "Who Died on the Cross? A Study in Romans and Galatians," *Concordia Journal* 23 (1997): 201-212.

speak of "faith" as passive receiving of God's gracious gift such as the forgiveness of sin. How do these two types of discourse relate?

Snodgrass has written a superb study that highlights the prominent biblical emphasis on participation, both the Lord with us and we with the Lord. Christians need to reclaim the biblical gospel in all its richness, good news from God that is much "better" than merely a ticket to heaven when you die. I highly recommend his edifying and enriching book.

Paul R. Raabe
Grand Canyon University

King, Jacki C. *The Calling of Eve: How the Women of the Bible Inspire the Women of the Church*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2022, pp. 176, $16.99, hardcover.

Jacki C. King holds a master's degree in theological studies from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and serves as a Bible teacher. Despite juggling life as an author, blogger, podcast host, pastor's wife, and mother of three, Jacki King thinks of herself as "just a normal girl." While such achievements exceed what society or even the church considers normal, King's standard of reference does not come from society or the church but from the women of Scripture.

King begins her book by describing how her understanding of the importance of women's roles in the kingdom was formed in the context of the local church but subsequently shaken in the church. Lacking the stereotypical qualities the church emphasized as most important among women, the young King questioned whether following and serving Christ meant being someone other than, well, *her*. Her leadership gifting and devotion to Christ and his church seemed undeniable. Nevertheless, King felt little connection to the demure image the church expected women to portray. King describes her younger self as loud, extroverted, energetic, and clumsy. Finding herself vastly at odds with the superwoman depicted in Proverbs 31 (which King would later come to recognize as a personification of wisdom), King turned to the rest of Scripture to uncover a more accurate understanding of biblical womanhood.

Drawing from the first two chapters of Genesis, King presents a theological anthropology of women in a simplified manner that is easily accessible to a lay audience. Having already extracted the "fear of the Lord" from Proverbs 31 as foundational to biblical womanhood, the author explores with readers how Scripture defines their identity as image bearers and establishes their purpose. While acknowledging the commonalities men and women share in these areas, King also recognizes distinct differences, such as the woman's role of "ezer," a term markedly misunderstood and underestimated in the contemporary church. King endeavors to help women understand God's intention for them to, along with men, reflect his image, exercise dominion over his creation, and commit their lives to his glory,

Beginning with the third chapter, King pivots her focus to how women can flourish and carry out their divinely appointed purpose within whatever sphere or circumstance God may place them. She explores what it means for women to flourish as image bearers and submit to God's purposes in (1) singleness, (2) marriage, (3) motherhood, (4) work, (5) mission, (6) church, (7) justice for the vulnerable, and/or (8) leadership. King highlights female exemplars from Scripture and modern-day women who stand out in fulfilling God's purposes in each of these categories. For example, in her chapter on justice for the vulnerable, King spotlights Rachael Denhollander, whose courageous stand against Larry Nassar ended his decades-long spree of sexually abusing girls and young women. The author then explores women of Scripture who exemplified the same courage, such as the Hebrew midwives of Exodus who risked their own lives by refusing to kill infant boys. No matter what their circumstance, King notes that God has placed a calling and commission on every redeemed woman's life.

With this book, King aims to help women catch a vision for flourishing as image bearers and fulfilling the cultural mandate—and the Great Commission—according to their design and God's purposes. King has a gift for conveying critical theological truths in easy-to-understand language. Such skillful writing lends toward accomplishing her goal.

King's eighth chapter, "Women in the Church," provides substance for contemporary ecclesiological debate. Writing from a complementarian perspective, the author nonetheless laments the disturbing tendency of church leaders to accent limitations on women's roles rather than freedoms. Juxtaposing such restrictive attitudes against Romans 16, King highlights women who worked hard, sacrificed, became imprisoned, and risked their lives alongside Paul for the gospel's sake—each of whom Paul esteemed and honored by name in his letter. Consequently, King asserts that outside of the office of elder/bishop/pastor, "women are able to lead, teach, serve, and love in the same way the faithful sisters in Romans 16 lived out their giftedness in the early church" (p. 106). Likely, King will garner pushback on this statement from those who embrace a more restrictive view of complementarianism. Considering her exposition of the text, however, critics will face a challenging task in arguing with her.

One weakness of King's work is her over-reliance upon the created identity found in Genesis 1 and 2 in her discussion of identity. While created identity is crucial to an accurate understanding of self, it is shared by all image bearers—all human beings—regardless of whether they are spiritually dead or alive in Christ. Believers wishing to flourish in the kingdom must also live in light of their redemptive identity received through union with Christ upon salvation. Not only do believers bear God's image, but they also bear, in increasing degrees, Christ's image. Adam and Eve were naked before the fall, but believers are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. Whereas the Old Testament focuses on created identity,

the New Testament shifts its gaze toward redemptive identity--which is given only to God's elect. I believe King applies this perspective, but it does not appear in chapter two's discussion on identity.

While King writes *The Calling of Eve* to inspire women of the church, her book could and should be used also to *inform* the church. Women wrestling with how they can fit into and serve God's kingdom should indeed read the book. However, pastors, ministry leaders, and seminary faculty and students who do or will shepherd or teach women should also read it to equip themselves for encouraging, empowering, and promoting the flourishing of the women they serve.

Angelia Dittmeier
PhD Candidate, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Dixon, Rob. *Together in Ministry: Women and Men in Flourishing Partnerships*. Downers Grover, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021, 176, $22, paperback.

Rob Dixon is an associate regional ministry director with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA and senior fellow for gender partnership with the InterVarsity Institute. He is an adjunct professor at Fresno Pacific University and Fuller Theological Seminary and provides training on flourishing mixed-gender ministry partnerships for numerous organizations around the country.

Together In Ministry is the culmination of Dixon's twenty-seven years of ministry experience and four years of focused doctoral research in mixed-gender ministry partnerships. Dixon's book "rests on the premise that women and men are designed to partner together in the work of fulfilling God's mission on earth," as laid out in the first two chapters of Genesis (p. 2). His thesis states that it is necessary and possible to embrace this Genesis picture in order to have flourishing mixed-gender ministry partnerships. Drawing on years of hands-on experience, research interviews, focus groups, and a survey of theology and church history, Dixon lays out a model for ministry partners that helps each person find a profound sense of personal satisfaction and accomplish their ministry goals (p. 17).

His research has led him to focus on ten attributes that need to be present for a mixed-gender ministry partnership to flourish. Dixon divides these attributes into three domains (p. 22). First, the inner life domain is comprised of the attributes of an authentic learner's posture, a shared theological conviction of gender equality, and an awareness of gender brokenness. Next, the domain of community culture is populated with attributes including a vision for freely shared power, difference for the sake of mission, a value for holistic friendships, and a corporate sensitivity to adverse gender dynamics. The final domain is intentional practices, containing the last three attributes of abundant communication, contextualized boundaries, and public affirmation and modeling.

The bulk of the book is spent fleshing out each of the three domains, with individual chapters devoted to each of the ten attributes. Dixon begins each chapter with a survey of examples from Scripture and pertinent testimony from interviewees and focus groups that helped him develop and define each attribute. He then describes the benefits of exhibiting each of these attributes and the barriers that keep these attributes from being present in ministry partnerships between men and women. He rounds out each chapter with tactics for how to cultivate these attributes, leading to a well-rounded, flourishing mixed-gender ministry partnership.

Dixon anchors his organizational model in the context of church history and theology, resting on the premise that men and women are designed to partner together to fulfill God's mission, as seen in Genesis 1. Dixon spends a good portion of each chapter explaining the principles of each attribute based on what he has learned from Scripture. While his interpretation of Scripture is unapologetically egalitarian, the purpose of this book is not strictly to convince the reader to adopt an egalitarian posture. It is to provide well-researched, practical guidance for creating a healthy staff culture in ministries and churches, one that focuses less on what women cannot do and more on what men and women can accomplish together to advance the Gospel.

Dixon approaches each attribute with humility and care, neither berating men for their perceived slights nor coddling women for their perceived inabilities. He also does not take a genderless approach. Many of his attributes focus on embracing the differences between men and women and encouraging the difficult work of inspecting some of the sinful behaviors that arise from how we think about these differences. Where Dixon does promote commonality is in areas involving the convictions that we hold and the power that we wield, with attributes like a *shared theological conviction of gender equality* and a *vision for freely shared power.*

Attributes with titles like *awareness of gender brokenness* and *corporate sensitivity to adverse gender dynamics* can initially be challenging for some readers, but behind the modern jargon is the conventional wisdom found in the process of sanctification. It has merely been applied to the specific context of men and women working together in ministry, from the examination of one's own brokenness and how it leads men and women to sin against each other to how we learn to live and work with one another in the unity of fellowship through discipleship and spiritual formation within a community of believers. Even if some of the terms seem new or unwieldy to the reader, the underlying concepts can still be beneficial.

Admittedly, much of what Dixon teaches in these chapters can be summed up, as he puts it, in the pursuit of courageous intentionality (p. 151). That is also where the difficulty lies. It requires setting aside time to do things like debriefing during a staff meeting and putting in the effort to learn from the other person. It requires courage to be honest with one another when something is not working in the partnership and set appropriate boundaries and expectations. Regardless of the setting, if men and women are working together in a ministry context, applying these

attributes can lead to personal satisfaction in their God-given calling and joyfully advancing the mission.

Christine Ellis
First Baptist Starkville, Starkville, MS

BOOK REVIEW INDEX