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THEOLOGY, NEWS AND NOTES

FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OCTOBER 1997



The Growing Edge of Evangelicalism

Seek ye first

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The Growing Edge of Evangelicalism

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

BY RICHARD J. MOUW

The late 1940s, the time of the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary, was a time of great expectations for many evangelicals. Harold John Ockenga was calling for a "new evangelicalism." Carl Henry and Edward Carnell were signaling the appearance of a "new apologetic." Billy Graham's appearance on the national scene was being heralded as the introduction of a "new evangelism."

This emphasis on newness reflected the zeal of that generation of leaders for the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The parables of Jesus point to the fact that the Kingdom of God has about it a certain *growingness* that can't be contained. And the search for "new wineskins" is one sign of the vitality of the gospel itself. So the call in the 1940s was in part an expression of dissatisfaction with some of the old habits and attitudes of conservative Protestantism. The title of Carl Henry's manifesto, published in the year of Fuller's birth, captured this mood: *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*.

Elements in evangelicalism's self-understanding had kept it from fulfilling certain obligations—in particular, a resistance to enter into dialogue with theological scholarship, a cultural defensiveness that tended to divide communities rather than transform them, and a separatism that bred isolation from established church bodies. Something new was needed so that the full challenge of the evangelical

message could be felt in relation to the world of the intellect, to the culture at large, and to the international Body of Christ.

Early correspondence between Charles Fuller and Harold Ockenga demonstrates that the seminary founded in Pasadena was meant to be both an embodiment and an agent of this much-needed innovation. It would pursue theological educa-

The parables of Jesus point to the fact that the Kingdom of God has about it a certain growingness that can't be contained.

tion at the "growing edge" of an evangelicalism that was solidly anchored in biblical truth, while attempting new projects in the three important areas of intellectual, cultural, and ecclesiastical renewal.

As Fuller celebrates its fiftieth anniversary as a seminary, we suggest that a good way to honor the past is to take a careful look at the directions evangelicalism has taken in this half-century, and at Fuller's role in that development. In particular, it

is instructive to ask what has been accomplished and what remains to be accomplished in the three areas of intellectual renewal, ecclesial renewal, and cultural renewal. The evangelical innovators of the 1940s, while very critical of the evangelicalism of their day, could often be quite triumphalistic about what they thought the evangelical movement was capable of accomplishing. In our own time we have good reasons to be pleased with what has been accomplished; but we have good reasons too to assess the record with a good measure of modesty.

The perspectives offered on those topics in these pages represent a wide range of opinions, including contributions from some who wouldn't orient themselves primarily to Fuller, or even to evangelicalism. We hope that the diversity of this approach can help foster the kind of critical self-perspective that inspired some innovative projects 50 years ago. The *growingness* of the Kingdom is served by nothing less. ■

RICHARD J. MOUW, Ph.D., president of Fuller Theological Seminary, is the integrator of this issue of *Theology, News and Notes* that celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of Fuller. Dr. Mouw is also a highly sought lecturer and participant in various consortia on social issues and higher education. Among his widely read books are *Pluralisms and Horizons* (Eerdmans, 1993); *Uncommon Decency* (InterVarsity, 1992); and *The God Who Commands* (Notre Dame, 1990).



"It's Way Okay"

EVANGELICALISM 50 YEARS LATER

BY GEORGE M. MARSDEN

Imagine a time when no one you knew had a television. And you were far more likely to know someone who lived on a farm than in a mass-produced suburb. Travel by train was much more common than by plane. Interstate highways were two lanes and most cars were black. The South was solidly Democratic, not quite sure it wanted to be in the Union, and not air-conditioned. Most Americans took racial segregation for granted and enjoyed laughing together at "Amos 'n Andy." The "better" neighborhoods and country clubs banned Jews as a matter of course. Asian-Americans were considered exotic. A woman in a leading profession was a novelty.

If it is difficult to imagine when all these things were taken for granted, it may be just as difficult for evangelical Christians to imagine what they, or their forebears, were like in 1947 when Fuller Theological Seminary was founded. In addition to sharing all the above attitudes, they would have found themselves still very much shaped by the culture of nineteenth-century revivalism. They were set apart by prohibitions of the classic vices of the barroom and the city: drinking, smoking, dancing, card playing, and theater or movie attendance. They had built their own subculture of revival, where they sang the gospel songs of Ira Sankey or Fanny J. Crosby, and learned of their preeminent duty to witness. They had also been shaped by fundamentalism. They knew their dispensational charts, and they opposed Protestant "modernists." They had an intense distrust of Catholics. Like most Americans, they feared communism and valued American freedoms. They worried about the bomb, but were glad that only "we" had it. They

viewed America as sin-ridden and, if revival did not come, condemned; yet they were enthusiastic patriots.

In the wider American culture, the agenda shaped by

One of the most difficult things for evangelicals today to understand about 1947 is that "fundamentalism" and "evangelicalism" were not yet differentiated.

World War II dominated public debate. Forsaking traditional isolationism, Americans suddenly found themselves at the center of world affairs. How should they lead? What basis did the Free World have for rebuilding civilization? What answers did it have to communism? Was there a moral basis for rebuilding Western civilization and reshaping the world in its image? Or was secular science the best hope?

In these debates, so far as the mainstream culture was concerned, the heirs to revivalist fundamentalism did not exist. Mainstream Protestants or ex-Protestants controlled American culture. Catholics were too large a block to be ignored, but after the

war mainline Protestant hostility to Catholicism reached a peak. The shapers of a unified America deeply opposed sectarianism, large or small. They saw sectarian Protestants as leftovers from the past. As education and science brought the rural enclaves into the cultural mainstream, their primitive religious styles would disappear.

So fundamentalists, despite their numbers, could be dismissed or ignored. Charles and Grace Fuller maintained an audience of some 15 to 20 million in this golden age of radio and were among the best-known people in America. Yet they seldom received major coverage from the secular press or were treated as "stars" outside of evangelical Christian circles. Dean Willard L. Sperry of Harvard Divinity School explained in his 1946 publication, *Religion in America*, "the passing of the religious revival from the American scene," and that Billy Sunday, who flourished in the World War I era, represented "the final degeneration of what had been one of our major religious institutions." Even today, the mid-twentieth-century invisibility of revivalist evangelicals in the mainstream lens has not been entirely overcome. Martin Marty, who points out Dean Sperry's quaint assessments, nonetheless in his own admirably comprehensive history, *Modern American Religion, Vol. III: Under God, Indivisible, 1941-1960*, mentions Charles Fuller only in a subordinate clause as cofounder of Fuller Theological Seminary.

Heirs to fundamentalism, despite their invisibility in the cultural mainstream, still had grand ambitions. Harold Ockenga, the other cofounder of Fuller Seminary, published an article the same year asking "Can Fundamentalists Win America?" This was Ockenga's response to a series of anti-Catholic publications in the *Christian Century* titled "Can Catholicism Win America?" Ockenga's audience, however, was fellow "fundamentalists" whom he scolded for being too

divisive. Only with a broader unity, such as represented by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) founded in 1942, was there hope for a fundamentalist comeback. Ockenga held out the fantastic hope that evangelicals could once again become a major force in American life. At the Fuller Seminary opening, he preached on "The Challenge to the Christian Culture of the West," calling for the rebuilding of Western civilization on evangelical Protestant principles.

Such rhetoric seemed farfetched because the heirs to fundamentalism had neither political power nor cultural influence. Most of the coalition had given up on politics. Dispensational premillennialism was at the height of its influence. World affairs were interesting primarily as they pointed to fulfillments of prophecies that pointed toward Jesus' imminent return. Carl McIntire, a rival of Ockenga and antagonist of Fuller Seminary, preached politics on the radio, but as an alarmist warning to "come out and be separate," not as the basis for political organization. Carl F. H. Henry, of the original Fuller faculty, published his *Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* in 1948, calling for evangelical social transformation. Later it was recognized as a landmark; but at the time few paid attention or bought the book.

One of the most difficult things for evangelicals today to understand about 1947 is that "fundamentalism" and "evangelicalism" were not yet differentiated. Although Ockenga preferred the term "evangelical," that term was still used as a self-description by some liberal Protestants and was not in wide use as a synonym for "conservative." "Fundamentalist," though having pejorative overtones in the wider culture, was the better-recognized term for the broad coalition of conservative revivalist Protestants who emerged from the controversies of the 1920s. True,

Ockenga had been feuding with the bombastic McIntire for a number of years, but other lines were not yet clearly drawn. Bob Jones, Sr., had been an officer in the NAE. During Fuller Seminary's first year, Carl Henry invited Bob Jones to speak in the chapel. The evangelist came and delivered a fiery warning against intellectual pride. The break was impending, and soon separatism would be a test for most fundamentalists. Nonetheless, in 1947 Henry and Jones thought of themselves as in the same camp.

The fundamentalist coalition had always had two sides. All fundamentalists opposed modernist theology and various "worldly"

All fundamentalists opposed modernist theology and various "worldly" trends they associated with modernity.

trends they associated with modernity. For some the warfare against such enemies became their most conspicuous identifier. But fundamentalists also insisted on preaching the gospel. Revivalism was the best hope for iniquitous America, and missions were the only hope for the world. Many in the antimodernist coalition, such as Harold Ockenga and Charles Fuller, felt that fundamentalist contentiousness was hurting their witness. While they kept their doctrinal guard up higher than most evangelicals would be comfortable with today, they still accentuated the positive. They did not want to lose touch

with the American culture they wanted to reclaim.

While the prospects for this little-known movement looked bleak in 1947, there were some reasons for visionaries to hold out hope. Joel Carpenter's fine new study *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* describes a post-World War II movement that, despite its endemic contentiousness, was brimming with vitality. During the war, youth rallies, notably those associated with Youth for Christ, had been an immense success. The war opened up unprecedented opportunities for American missions and provided a new world consciousness. National revival, the one resource left to the movement, was at least imaginable. The times were ripe. Ockenga and his associates prayed for a new Jonathan Edwards who could combine revival with intellect. Lacking that, they hoped at least that their seminary could provide some intellectual backbone for popular evangelism. Charles Fuller already gave them national visibility. Two years later when Billy Graham emerged from the Youth for Christ movement, they found a youthful prophet who could engage the American Ninevah.

So much has changed in evangelicalism since those pretelevision, pre-Graham days, that we can only highlight the major differences:

Visibility and influence

First, the most striking is the astonishing success of the renewed evangelicalism that grew out of the old fundamentalist coalition. Today's evangelical coalition is better known and more influential than the inclusivist old-line ecumenical Protestantism. When is the last time you heard about the National Council of Churches? The older denomina-

tional allegiances have faded, and even within the old-line churches evangelical voices are gaining strength. Wheaton College faculty writers are increasingly featured in the *Christian Century*. Liberal Protestant leadership has done poorly in convincing the younger generation that church is necessary if religion is defined essentially as liberal morality. Evangelicalism, in the meantime, has become increasingly visible. Today one is not surprised to learn of evangelical prayer in a Congressional caucus or in an NFL pregame huddle. "It's way okay."

Complementary ministries
Second, this success was not planned at any central evangelical headquarters. It was not the result of plans by Harold Ockenga, Carl Henry, or even Billy Graham, although these all made contributions. Rather, it has been the result of thousands of leaders, often with conflicting but complementary visions, who built myriad of ministries. It was a remarkable work of God, but also a triumph of American free enterprise. In ecclesiastical terms, it was the triumph of the parachurch and local churches over the old denominations. A parachurch institution such as Fuller Seminary was in an excellent position to catch this wave. While institutional wave catching requires skilled leadership, which Fuller Seminary got from David Hubbard, it should not be mistaken for creating the wave.

Positive spirituality
Next, this success has been marked by the triumph of the positive revivalist dimensions of the old fundamentalism over its defensive sectarian tendencies. Joel Carpenter points out that fundamentalism was by far the most influential evangelical movement of the 1925 to 1950

era. Few evangelicals escaped the influences of the embattled sensibilities which the contests with modernism brought. While something of that heritage remains within evangelicalism today, the recent decades, says Carpenter, are better characterized by the charismatic-Pentecostal style. In 1947 Pentecostalism was still on the obscure cultural margins, even among most evangelicals. The charismatic movement had not yet been born. Today, not only have these movements experienced vast

Evangelicals today have remarkably renegotiated their relationship to mainstream American culture.

growth, but their successes have inspired comparable styles even among many who do not share charismatic doctrines. One can see that in the styles of worship, the ubiquitous praise songs, and the overhead projectors. Preaching is still in a revival mode, but has turned toward upbeat emphasis on the believer's experience and its life-changing benefits in everyday relationships.

Cultural relevance
Finally, evangelicals today have remarkably renegotiated their relationship to mainstream American culture. Carpenter observes that mid-century fundamentalists maintained a "finely tuned sense of alienation from the cultural mainstream." They did not reject the economic system and its rewards and they were most loyal patriots, but they had a strong sense of being cultural outsiders. Their strict behavioral codes, their dispensationalism,

their strict doctrinalism, all reinforced their sense of difference.

Today there is still a well-orchestrated sense of alienation from the cultural mainstream, but the tuning is in a much different key. On this point, we will be best helped by a study by sociologist Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, forthcoming next year. Based on in-depth interviews of self-identified American evangelicals, Smith finds that evangelicals still define themselves as different from the cultural mainstream. While they are notably orthodox in their affirmations of fundamental evangelical doctrines, they are seldom doctrinally militant. Concern over the inerrancy of Scripture, for instance, which played such an important role in intra-evangelical and fundamentalist battles during the first 30 years of Fuller Seminary's history, is seldom offered as a group boundary marker. Most of the old behavior prohibitions no longer define group identity. Instead, political concerns focused on issues of family and sexuality have arisen dramatically as group identifiers. Of course there are

—Please turn to page 26.

GEORGE M. MARSDEN, Ph.D., renowned historian and educator, is considered a leading authority on American evangelicalism. Formerly a professor at The Divinity School of Duke University, Dr. Marsden is currently the Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. His book on Fuller's first decades, *Reforming Fundamentalism* (Eerdmans, 1987) is now available in paperback (Eerdmans, 1995) with a new preface. Other recent related works include *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (Oxford, 1997) and *The Soul of the American University* (Oxford, 1994).



Reforming the Reformers

AN EVANGELICAL VIEW

BY DONALD ARGUE

The Christian vision of the future now seems increasingly to belong to evangelicalism, which is coming more and more to constitute the mainstream of American Protestant Christianity. —Alister McGrath, in *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*

Not so very long ago, we stood aloof, ecclesially separatistic and worriedly evangelical. Stranded somewhere between a strident fundamentalism and an insipid liberalism, our evangelical "elite" either battled for the Bible or, as in the case of Fuller Theological Seminary, battled those battling for the Bible. Similarly, our "mid-brow" evangelicals struggled to understand who they were—to feel the meaning of "evangelicalness." As the in-between people, these ordinary evangelicals knew that they were neither theological liberals nor simply fundamentalists. But what they were, that is, their positive evangelical identity, wasn't easily put into words.

Evangelicals carved their understanding of *evangelicalness* out of the larger notion of Protestantism, using the outer limits of the theological orthodoxy as its delineation. Since, to many evangelicals, the boundary between evangelicalism and nonevangelicalism was also the boundary between theological truth and error, a rapprochement between evangelicals and any other religious group was considered suspect, if not morally wrong. In practice, then, evangelical separatism paralleled evangelical self-understanding, which, in its early stages, was determined more by what evangelicals were not than by what they were. If

fundamentalists were guilty of bibliolatry, evangelicals weren't. If liberals were relativists, evangelicals weren't. This harsh assessment of others had the ill effect of exaggerating the differ-

To many evangelicals, the boundary between evangelicalism and nonevangelicalism was also the boundary between theological truth and error.

ences between evangelicals and other Protestants. In this manner, evangelicals walled themselves off from the larger Body of Christ.

Robert Johnston, in "Fuller's Third Generation" (*Theology, News and Notes*, March 1994), outlined three generations of development in evangelical self-understanding. To borrow Johnston's terminology, this was the condition of the "first generation" of evangelicals, a generation convinced that ecclesial separation was necessary to ensure a distinctively evangelical (read "Christian") identity. In

this historical context, separatism made sense. Evangelicals were in the unenviable position of having to prove to the minions and power brokers of the broader culture that they were emphatically not fundamentalists and not liberals. But it was more difficult to convey what they were, even to themselves. Were fundamentalists and evangelicals differentiated by an attitude or style of worship or by some far weightier theological distinctive? Were liberal Protestants and evangelicals differentiated by a biblical hermeneutic based on a doctrine of inerrancy, however construed, or by something deeper and wider and more difficult to articulate—a worldview? Although there was never a crippling identity crisis, the nagging and troubling suspicion that the evangelical self-definition substantially overlapped other Protestant identities never quite disappeared.

The unease over their self-definition only fed the desire to separate. This unease had two contradictory expressions. On the one hand, there was the triumphalist declaration—We are the last, the true, the remnant of theological orthodoxy. On the other hand, there was a despairing fear that evangelicals would inevitably be acculturated into liberalism or radicalized into fundamentalism. Ecclesial separatism, then, was the logical outcome of that fear. It was a means of dealing, on one hand, with a fundamentalism that remained attractive because of its cut-and-dry moralism and, on the other, with a Protestant liberalism that had the upper hand, both culturally and intellectually.

In particular, evangelicals were rightly worried about defining themselves "over-against" Protestant modernism—especially the waxy, slippery sort of liberalism that discounted scriptural truths in favor of sociologically derived political insights. Modernism had shunned the notion of an authoritative Bible in favor of the

culturally and intellectually trendy idea that all truths (if one could speak of truths) were subjective, temporal, individualistic, and relative. American evangelicals shuddered at the prospect of Protestantism without an objective moral referent. They spoke of a "crisis of authority" and a "lack of a moral consensus." They thought that Christians (as well as communities and nations) would flounder aimlessly without some guiding principles or external written document to which all deliberating parties could refer.

But, to continue Johnston's schema, these second-generation evangelicals were also awed by the intellectual seriousness and cultural engagement of liberal Protestants. Compared to that of liberal academics, evangelical scholarship was often considered second-rate, perhaps tainted by the populist origins of the evangelical movement. The standards of liberal Protestantism became their own: *Christianity Today* strove to be as well-regarded as the liberal *Christian Century*; the National Association of Evangelicals worked in the shadows of the National Council of Churches; the prestige of Harvard's or Yale's divinity school was not to be matched by Trinity, Gordon, or Fuller. When evangelicals grasped the impact that liberalism was having on the wider culture, and realized that they too had moral claims that were profoundly public in character, the thirst to meet or beat the accomplishments of Protestant liberalism was hard to quench. Frankly put, evangelicals wanted to be in the game.

But being in the game meant lowering the boundaries. Evangelical scholars had to answer the challenges posed by liberal academia and defend the evangelical identity from their well-aimed criticisms. Their evangelical self-understanding was honed in the process, a subtle shift in mentality that filtered through evangelical churches. Fear of what could happen to a curious evangelical who wan-

dered too far from his or her safe, churchly enclave gradually subsided, but never disappeared. Stories of hapless evangelical seminarians being sucked into liberalism at some Ivy-league divinity school persisted. But there was increasing evidence that the evangelical identity was sturdy and capable of withstanding whatever the culture and other expressions of Christian faith could deal out.

And so some occasional daring evangelicals toed the boundary lines and then tenta-

There was increasing evidence that the evangelical identity was sturdy and capable of withstanding whatever the culture and other expressions of Christian faith could deal out.

tively explored the spiritual world beyond. There were the "Jesus freaks," intentional communities (which others called "communes"), "Explos," and small-town marches for Jesus. There were liturgical evangelicals, those who found home in the "higher" churches. There were a few evangelicals who flirted with political theologies—"one-worldism" and other single-issue agendas. There were campus crusades for Christ, cowboys for Christ, bikers for Christ, Christian capitalists, and crusades against

pornography. There was Women Aglow and, later, the equally radiant Promise Keepers.

Ecclesial separation, the fruit of an insecure self-understanding within a hostile environment, gave way to cooperative ventures. The National Association of Evangelicals was one of the organizations that fronted evangelicalism to the larger public and actualized the nascent cooperation within evangelism. For the individuals, churches, and denominations who were its members, not only was it a vehicle for a shared identity or ideological consensus but also, and perhaps more importantly, the NAE gave evangelicals a public face and apology to the cultural, media, and political elites who seemed unable or unwilling to comprehend evangelicalness. It was a tangible reminder of how deep and wide the movement had become.

In my estimation, two external happenings forced evangelicals to broaden, rather than sharpen, their defining boundaries. In the sixties, as the charismatic movement crossed ecclesial and theological boundaries, evangelicals who were swept into a "deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit" were disinclined to the rational, carefully calibrated boundaries that characterized earlier generations. The horizons were broadened to include other Protestant—and Catholic—identities. Somehow the differences between these groups seemed less important than the spiritual commonalities that a "fuller" or "second" experience with the Spirit afforded them.

And in the seventies and eighties, as the impact of a general moral declension—as well as *Roe vs. Wade*, and the Supreme Court decisions affecting religious education in schools—became apparent to ordinary evangelicals, they reacted by mobilizing politically. Grassroots, *ad hoc*-turned-professional communica-

tion networks brought traditional religionists into closer, and revealing, working relationships. Will Herberg's classic vision of a nation of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews (*Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, Anchor, 1960) was actualized in these ecumenical but traditionalist collectivities of angered citizens. Significantly, it was external events—the tyranny of the urgent—and not carefully orchestrated theological conversations or nuanced statements of reconciliation crafted by academic theologians that started the ecclesial-unity ball rolling.

But frictional forces, such as the cultural and theological forces that led to boundary drawing in the first place, would have slowed and eventually stopped that rolling ecclesial-unity ball if there wasn't a countervailing force, one that could effectively counter the divisiveness that theological differences often engender. This force was the Bible. Granted, the Bible was always there, prior to reformation divisions, prior to the modernist-fundamentalist controversies, prior to the snubs from fundamentalist confreres. But among those who regarded the Bible as authoritative (that is, religious traditionalists) the vision of the Bible as an external authority eventually proved to be binding.

Religious traditionalists in the Christian tradition—fundamentalists, evangelicals, charismatics and Pentecostals, conservatives in the historic Protestant denominations, traditionalist Roman Catholics, and the orthodox Orthodox—approach the Bible humbly and expectantly. Traditionalists expect to hear God's voice and submit to his message. The difference between traditionalists and liberals is, at bottom, a difference in attitude toward Scripture. The words of the Bible, its actual text, is revered by Christian traditionalists. The idea that a Christian is to be shaped by the biblical text and

the indwelling Holy Spirit—and is not to impose a contemporary ideology on the biblical text—is profoundly traditionalist. And it is this attitude, this sense that the Bible is authoritative, this hermeneutic of trust, not suspicion, that truly engenders unity among otherwise disparate Christian identities.

Commitment to the Bible is clearly articulated in a 1997

Among those who regarded the Bible as authoritative . . . the vision of the Bible as an external authority eventually proved to be binding.

resolution of the National Association of Evangelicals:

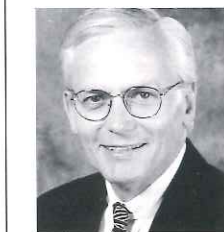
We affirm that God, who has chosen to act through mighty deeds such as creation, and supremely in the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, communicates His truth through the Scriptures. These words, however mediated by human beings, are finally reliable because they are God's words, the words of a personal, sovereign, omniscient God. The original text of holy Scripture preserves these words, which God, accommodating Himself to our limitations, has graciously given us for His glory and for His people's good.

Though we may not hope to understand the sacred text exhaustively, we can understand much of it truly.

By relying on the illumination of the Holy Spirit which will aid us in our reading and re-reading, in our careful study, in our self-consciously committing ourselves to strive against all domestication of Scripture that springs from much alleged or thoughtless biases, we can grasp and grow in the truth of what it says, and in our obedient conformity to it. All true Christian unity is grounded in unqualified and hearty submission to Scripture in its total context. ("Does God Speak to Our Time?" <http://www.nae.net/resolutions/godspk.html>, 1997)

The attitude shaped by this strong commitment to the Bible is epitomized in Billy Graham's admonition to the National Association of Evangelicals' gathered church leaders: "We need to rededicate ourselves to the primary task of winning and making disciples of Jesus Christ in our generation. Today's world waits to see our response to questions and challenges such as these. Evangelicalism has a future to the extent that we evangelicals ourselves are drawn by the gospel, are defined by the gospel, and are declaring and demonstrating the gospel of our Lord and Savior, —Please turn to page 27.

DONALD ARGUE, Ed.D., has served as president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) since 1995. Composed of approximately 43,500 nationwide congregations from 49 member denominations, more than 300 parachurch ministries, and several hundred independent churches, the NAE represents over 27 million people. Dr. Argue is the former president of North Central Bible College in Minneapolis, which grew from an enrollment of 401 to 1,500 under his 15-year administration.



Evangelicals in the Wider Family of Christ's Followers

A ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW

BY JEFFREY GROS

When Harold John Ockenga gathered in the variety of Christian churches in 1942, little did he know that the somewhat marginal Pentecostal and Holiness bodies would become significant leaders in the National Association of Evangelicals, and foremost in the spreading of the gospel across the twentieth-century world.¹ The National Association of Evangelicals, like the Billy Graham Crusade and a variety of parachurch institutions, from Fuller Seminary to World Vision, have created an ecumenical dynamic among evangelicals that has brought the reconciling imperative of the gospel, without compromise and committed to the mission of the churches, that sowed the seeds for an evangelical renewal and an openness that today can serve all who confess Jesus Christ and are loyal to his biblical revelation.

The pledge of the Roman Catholics and evangelicals who engaged in seven years of dialogue between 1977 to 1984 could well have been a foundation for the evangelical movement in its mid-twentieth century collaborative witness, "as a sign of their conviction that fidelity to Jesus Christ today requires that we take his will for his followers with a new seriousness. He prayed for the truth, holiness, mission and unity of his people. We believe that

these dimensions of the church's renewal belong together. It is with this understanding that we echo

As evangelicals of the 1940s formative generation were able to reach out to those who were quite different . . . so today evangelicals are able to find fellow Christians in Orthodox, Catholic, and classical Protestant churches.

his prayer for ourselves and each other:

'Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. I pray . . . that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe' (John 17:17-21).²

As evangelicals of the 1940s formative generation were able to

reach out to those who were quite different, within their orthodox biblical commitments, so today evangelicals are able to find fellow Christians in Orthodox, Catholic, and classical Protestant churches with whom there is a common gospel commitment. Fuller has embodied this conviction in its *Mission Beyond the Mission*. All evangelicals, and indeed all Christians, are challenged by this gospel openness.

When Russell Spittler and his colleagues founded the Society for Pentecostal Studies over a quarter of a century ago, the decision to include believing Christians beyond the circle of the classical Pentecostal denominations created another dynamic in which serious theological dialogue could take place. The dialogue of conversion to a deeper understanding of the gospel and of Christian history, and an opportunity to work through the stereotypes of Christians one for another, became possible for Pentecostals and others in the context of the society. Theological fora for believing Christians, like the Society for Pentecostal Studies, create a space where the gospel value of reconciliation and a deeper understanding of biblical truth can be pursued together without compromise. It was ironically appropriate that the first public dialogue sponsored by the National Council of Churches with members of the Pentecostal churches occurred when David du Plessis was still alive and on the Fuller Seminary campus.³

Of all the Christian communities often grouped under the umbrella of American evangelical culture, the Pentecostals have contributed significantly in the ecumenical dialogue, with active churches in the World Council of Churches,⁴ a serious dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church,⁵ and a persistent and effective witness in evangelical agencies such as

the NAE. The leadership of Cecil M. Robeck in the present generation, following Russell Spittler's and David du Plessis' pioneering leadership, as cochair of the international dialogue with the Catholic Church and possible member of the Board of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council, demonstrates the discrete openness if not the enthusiastic support of church leadership.

Of course the substantive contribution of evangelical scholarship, following in the pioneering leadership of Carl F. H. Henry, has its own appropriate contribution to be recorded. It has provided a reconciling basis among evangelicals and a prophetic call to others to follow after and provide for richer and even more comprehensive scholarly resources than were possible in the early days of evangelical intellectual renewal. However, the development of deeper theological commitment and scholarship inevitably increases the quality of the debates, if not their acrimony, as George Marsden documents so well. In the present context, evangelical scholarship contributes to and relies on the resources of the larger common tradition of biblical, historical, and missionary research among the full range of Christian communities.⁶

This scholarship has led some evangelicals in ironic directions, whether it be disciples of Bill Bright or Francis Schaeffer who have found themselves in Eastern Orthodoxy, or members of the Gordon-Conwell community who have become Catholics. These moves toward a more historical foundation may have jarred the evangelical world. However, a more significant move for the ecumenical future of evangelicals is the rediscovery of historic worship forms, the patristic tradition, and the doctrine of the church. To the extent that these biblical, historical, and ecclesiological insights are grounded in the Scripture and Christianity's fidelity to the Apostolic faith, they are part of a common heritage and not

another moment for division among Christians. As evangelical scholars have noted in one context:

From the beginning, the community of God's people was marked by a devotion to the apostolic teaching, to the fellowship (a sharing which extended to practical loving care), to the breaking of bread (the Lord's Supper), and to the prayers of public worship (Acts 2:42). To this believing, worshiping, caring and witnessing community, "the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

To talk openly with other Christians and to seek to clarify honest differences . . . was seen by some as an affront to evangelical purity and separatism.

Evangelicals on the whole have tended to emphasize personal salvation almost to the point of losing sight of the central place of the Church. The multiplication of evangelistic organizations and agencies which are not church-based has contributed to this distortion. There is however a growing desire to correct it. For wherever the gospel goes, it bears fruit in the spread and growth of the Church.⁷

The development of the theology of the church, rooted in the biblical principles of evangelism and its particular

soteriological concerns, may be the most important development in evangelical identity and its ecumenical contribution as we move toward the twenty-first century.

When David Hubbard and John Stott, with Thomas Stransky and other Catholics, began the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission in 1977, it was to be a very quiet, if not secretive, conversation—from the evangelical side. In those days evangelical leaders felt threatened, in some sectors, from the prejudices of their constituencies. To talk openly with other Christians and to seek to clarify honest differences before the truth of the gospel was seen by some as an affront to evangelical purity and separatism. The text is, of course, very clear that none of the evangelical representatives had any authorization from their institutions or churches. It was not a dialogue with any goal other than removing stereotypes, clarifying differences, and possibly making way for a prospect of common witness.

The discussions were very fruitful and covered key issues, such as the nature of true dialogue, revelation, and authority; the nature of mission; the gospel of salvation (including differences over the role of Mary); the human response in the Holy Spirit to the gospel; the church; the gospel and culture; and the possibilities of common witness. This text remains a foundational resource and outline for dialogues in which evangelicals can be engaged with fellow Christians, Catholics, and others. The text provides a biblically founded, carefully worded resource for identifying the real differences behind prejudices, polemics, and caricatures:

There is, therefore, between us an initial if incomplete unity. Nevertheless, divisions continue, even in some doctrines of importance, as we have made clear in earlier chapters of our report. Our faith has developed in us

strong convictions (as it should), some uniting us, others dividing us. The very strength of our convictions has not only drawn us together in mutual respect, but has also been a source of painful tension. This has been the price of our encounter; attempts to conceal or dilute our differences would not have been authentic dialogue, but a travesty of it. So would have been any attempt to magnify or distort our difference. We confess that in the past, members of both our constituencies have been guilty of misrepresenting each other, on account of either laziness in study, unwillingness to listen, superficial judgments or pure prejudice. Whenever we have done this, we have borne false witness against our neighbor.⁸

This text, like the results of the National and World Council of Churches' work on the Apostolic faith, the core of our biblical witness;⁹ the Pentecostal-Catholic dialogue; and study materials on the creed provided by the National and World Council,¹⁰ with full evangelical involvement, make useful resources for local study groups who want to deepen their faith and provide a solid biblical basis for their common witness in the world.

Relationships with the World Evangelical Fellowship and the Catholic Church have been interesting, with an initial critical assessment of Catholicism, in response to concerns from evangelical associations in southern Europe in 1984.¹¹ This critical judgment precipitated a dialogue in 1993, with some significant essays¹² and plans for a second round of discussions to take place in 1997.

More recently, the United States evangelical community has become more open to contacts with other Christians, as a result of the experience in parachurch institutions, independent academic institutions, and the formal relationships among themselves in the National Association of

Evangelicals. In 1996 the president of the National Association of Evangelicals was able to address the National Council of Churches and preside over a prayer for the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Chicago, Joseph Bernardin.

An informal group of prominent evangelicals and Catholics,¹³ building on long-term formal relationships with the Baptist World Alliance and the

The gospel imperative toward reconciliation and the world's need for common witness continues to create an inescapable mandate before all serious Christians.

Vatican, and cognizant of the work of *Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission*, produced a text that gained a good deal of media attention and surfaced some of the uninformed, polemical evangelical separatist attacks, both within the churches of some of the evangelical signers and in the theological community.

This evangelical dissent can produce a very fruitful dialogue, especially within the serious evangelical theological community among those who have not participated in these discussions before. With competent, orthodox evangelical scholars on both sides of the analysis of Catholic, Orthodox, and ecumenically crafted theological affirmations, there is a possibility to deepen evangelical understanding and even contribute to our common clarity about the revealed truth embodied in Scripture.

A current project among Lutheran and Catholic churches will come to maturity, possibly in 1998, that will affirm together:

Our entire hope of justification and salvation rests on Christ Jesus and on the gospel whereby the good news of God's merciful action in Christ is made known; we do not place our ultimate trust in anything other than God's promise and saving work of Christ

in the context of a *Joint Declaration on Justification by Faith*. There will undoubtedly be serious discussion in the evangelical theological community, since this affirmation will redefine the terms of the Reformation and the implications of its central doctrine, and of the condemnations of Catholics and those Protestant churches that can sign the *Joint Declaration*. Ulster notes about the earlier, United States contribution to this work: "Anyone who wishes to deal with the dialogue between Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians on justification will have to make this document his [or her] point of departure."¹⁴ The brief text is based on three decades of formal dialogue and over a century of theological research.¹⁵

However, care will need to be taken in the evangelical community that discussion of this affirmation take place in the light of honesty, the best evangelical scholarship available, and direct interaction with those with whom one is in theological debate. Of course, there will be polemics in the evangelical community, as in the Catholic and other communities, which will be an embarrassment to the gospel and will diminish the credibility of the church.

While there does not seem to be energy for serious dialogue among many of the classical Protestant churches and their evangelical counterparts, the gospel imperative toward reconciliation and the world's need for common witness continue to create an inescapable mandate

before all serious Christians. There is significant energy in many local situations for collaboration and for outreach by both streams of American Protestantism for dialogue and common witness with Roman Catholics, though often out of different ecclesiological principles and missionary imperatives. These reconciling impulses must be strengthened, in fidelity to the Lord's Prayer. Care must be taken that relationships in Christ do not become competitive or that a demographic or political triumphalism not tempt Christians away from the reconciling challenge of gospel fidelity.

The leadership of the National Association of Evangelicals and the leadership of its member churches have not yet seen it opportune to establish formal dialogues with the classical Protestant churches or the Catholic Church in the United States. However, relationships are increasingly cordial and even, on occasion, public in their common witness. Undoubtedly, the time will come when a Pentecostal-Catholic, or an Evangelical-Catholic dialogue may be possible with representatives of the churches involved. Likewise, active evangelical participation in the discussions of the Christian faith in the Faith and Order Commissions of the World and National Councils have contributed to the deepening of our common commitments to Christian orthodoxy on fundamentally biblical grounds, though many of the evangelical church leaders hesitate to move over the path which their scholars have prepared for them.

Finally, all Christians stand before the gospel in an attitude of trust, repentance, and openness to reform, knowing that as they are converted more deeply into Christ's communion, their communion is deepened with fellow Christians:

Yet we all agree that the Church needs to be reformed, and that its reformation comes from God. The one truth is in

God himself. He is the reformer by the power of his Spirit according to the Scriptures. In order to discern what he may be saying, Christian individuals and communities need each other. Individual believers must keep their eyes on the wider community of faith, and churches must be listening to the Spirit, who may bring them correction or insight through an individual believer.¹⁶

The dialogue of truth is preceded by a dialogue of conversion, since it is only by the power of the Holy

Care must be taken that relationships in Christ do not become competitive.

Spirit that we may discern together God's will for us and for the Church.

One can only pray that the pilgrimage of reconciliation signaled by the leadership of such giants as Harold Okenga, David du Plessis, and David Hubbard may bear even richer fruit in our own day, with deepened commitment to theological integrity, ecumenical outreach, and common witness on behalf of the gospel of Jesus Christ in our divided and suffering world. ■

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Boycotts, Baptists, and NYPD Blue

EVANGELICALS AND THE POPULAR ARTS

BY WILLIAM D. ROMANOWSKI

It is hard to evaluate the impact evangelicals have on the effort to reform the entertainment media, the popular arts. Debates about artistic quality and moral concerns, free expression and free market, consumer boycott and cultural authority seem paradoxical at times. In part, this is because the popular arts (that is, "entertainment") are both art and popular, both cultural artifacts and commercial products. The church and the broader society have yet to come to terms with the complex character of the entertainment media. Consider the following examples:

In 1993, a new TV drama called *NYPD Blue* elicited a recurring national controversy over sex, violence, and profanity in the arts. The pilot episode won its time slot, at least in part, because of the high-profile publicity campaigns waged by both ABC and, ironically, Donald Wildmon's American Family Association. AFA branches pressured local ABC affiliates with letters and phone calls and threatened advertisers with boycotts. But *NYPD Blue* soared in the ratings, received a record 26 Emmy nominations, won high critical praise, and by its second season was airing in 99 percent of the country as well as generating nearly market rates for advertising.

Under pressure from the AFA chapter in Michigan, my local ABC affiliate became one of 57 stations nationwide that initially refused to broadcast the cop drama. Instead, the station aired one of the most popular shows in syndication around the world—*Baywatch*, an inane program

featuring bikini-clad women. Thanks to the local AFA boycott, Christians in Michigan could now watch "Babewatch." The station added *NYPD Blue* to its weekly lineup the following season.

In June 1997 the Southern Baptist Convention joined the

Today's media reform movement is a confusing entanglement of social, cultural, economic, and religious forces.

AFA in a boycott of the Walt Disney Company for promoting "immoral ideologies." Determined to "plumb the depths of what it means to be *salt and light*," denominational leaders opposed Disney's "anti-Christian" policies—hosting gay emphasis days at its theme parks and extending health and insurance benefits to same-sex partners of employees. The SBC's resolution criticized Disney for "producing, through its subsidiary corporations, objectionable material such as the film *Priest* which disparages Christian values and depicts Christian leaders as morally defective." Ironically, Ted Baehr of the Christian Film and Television Commission had called *Priest* a "profound film theologically," and gave it the highest rating in his *Movieguide* publication.¹ "Will a Southern Baptist boycott change the Disney Company? I don't

know," one church member said, "but it will change us. It will show that we love Jesus more than our entertainment."²

Also in June, News Corporation chairman Rupert Murdoch outbid Disney in order to acquire M. G. "Pat" Robertson's International Family Entertainment (IFE) for \$1.9 billion. Had Disney won, the Southern Baptists would have been boycotting Robertson's Family Channel. Murdoch's controversial Fox Network has built its ratings with shows that push the TV boundaries of sex, risqué or ill-mannered humor, and graphic violence. Robertson once even called for a boycott of companies that advertised on Fox programs, such as *Married...With Children*. Not surprisingly, the merger had media analysts scratching their heads. "The strangest of bedfellows were suddenly sharing the same quilt," a *Variety* reporter remarked.³ Robertson says the sale "will permit the ministry to move forward with our desire to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with billions of people around the globe—an enormously expensive undertaking."

These three ironic examples show that today's media reform movement is a confusing entanglement of social, cultural, economic, and religious forces. Also, it is evident that evangelicals concerned about the impact of the popular arts lack a clear and reasonable approach to reform. As I suggest, they need a greater understanding of the historical development and nature of the entertainment media: how the industry operates, the composition of its audience, the effect of earlier reform efforts, and especially how the popular arts established the roles they have in our society today. This essay briefly addresses that need.

Beginning around the turn of this century, the division between high and low culture as

distinctive categories fragmented American life into elite and popular realms with different institutions for production, distribution, consumption, and evaluation. This "cultural hierarchy," Lawrence Levine shows, established the cultural forms and practices of Anglo-European high culture as superior in value to the commercial popular culture that was becoming the dominant expression of the urban industrial masses.⁴ The "legitimate" theater, opera, and symphony, were supported by wealthy patrons to present and preserve the best of the Anglo-European tradition. Vaudeville and the new silent motion pictures competed in the commercial marketplace, but still provided different though valid artistic experiences for people.

The arts acquire their status by the way they function and are used, and one way of understanding them is by analyzing these roles. The arts not only fulfill human needs for pleasure and entertainment, but are also a means of transmitting culture, doing social criticism, providing social cohesion, and contributing to the collective memory. Both high and popular forms of art contribute to the improvement of our quality of life by serving these roles.

Over the course of this century, entertainment has become a significant social institution centering on human needs for leisure and artistic interpretation of our lives and times. The entertainment media are among our most active and vital communication processes and, therefore, crucial in today's struggle for control over culture. Media and traditional institutions, such as the church, battle to maintain cultural consensus or to express diversity. The popular arts often represent new ideas and perspectives about life. They can also symbolize the culture of marginal and less powerful groups, such as gays and African-Americans. Increasing global awareness and cultural pluralism

present a challenge to traditional Anglo-American culture. The entertainment media, with their blurring of moods, stances, and forms, represent a kind of popular postmodernism, creating and recreating new cultures and social fads without much respect for any one group's point of view. The clear cultural lines between high and popular art are gone.

Most important of all for this analysis, mass culture and the entertainment media have become a cultural force comparable in many ways to organized religion. It is not surprising that religious leaders have perceived

Mass culture and the entertainment media have become a cultural force comparable in many ways to organized religion.

entertainment as a competing religious order and have launched crusades against the popular entertainment of the day: nineteenth-century women's novels and the dance crazes around the turn of the century, movies and jazz of the 1920s, rock'n'roll beginning in the 1950s.

Some conservative Protestant groups link popular culture with evil and condemn the popular arts as "worldly amusements," demanding complete abstinence. More than one writer, for example, has thought that classical music is "inspired by the Spirit of God," and that popular music "in its crazy rhythm, its sensual swing, and hideous tunes, reflects the spirit of hell."⁵ History shows there is much more to this simplistic approach, for infusing the high and low divide with spirituality entangles religious convictions with distinctly un-Christian cultural and sociologi-

cal categories. Allegations that popular music styles, such as swing, jazz, and rock, were demon-inspired revealed Anglo fears of the influence of African-American culture and were racist. The campaign against the "menace of the movies" in the 1930s and 1940s during the Hollywood studio era was motivated in part by anti-Semitism. The "family values" rhetoric of today's reformers sometimes covers ideological agendas or class and racial antagonisms.

Also, sequestering believers from the popular arts prohibits them from distinguishing redemptive aspects and determining appropriate Christian participation. This approach limits the scope of the lordship of Christ, delineating created life into aspects worthy of redemptive activity and others to be abandoned to the forces of secularism. And the deepest problems with the media result from secularization, which has marginalized religious and other perspectives in the media, and a materialism that makes profit the highest purpose in life and converts everything into a consumer product.

Some evangelicals try to separate themselves from "secular" popular culture by promoting sanitized versions for evangelical purposes. The contemporary Christian music industry is a supreme example. This utilitarian view of culture, however, severely limits acceptable content and depreciates art, relying on evangelical imitation of secular trends, styles, and formats.

Evangelical views of popular art are also marked by a misplaced nostalgia. As Roger Lundin observed, "Lacking a sensible theory of culture, [the evangelical church] has often responded to innovations with fear—and then waited for the bizarre to become, through time, domesticated."⁶ And so violent TV shows, such as *The Rifleman*, that first prompted

research on the effects of television violence in the 1950s and 1960s, are now among the regular offerings on the Family Channel, along with *The Three Stooges*, *The Waltons*, and *Hawaii Five-O*. Perhaps someday soon *NYPD Blue* will air on the Family Channel, a business created largely through the donations of Christians.

Among evangelicals, spirituality and morality are often the primary means of evaluating popular art, diminishing the importance of aesthetic and other considerations. Evangelical criticism is usually limited to presentations of religion and morality in the entertainment media. Secular assumptions, motivations, and goals, like the drive to maximize profits and exploit larger markets, seem immune to evangelical critique, even though they have a great impact on media content. This is all evidence of secularization insofar as evangelicals draw spiritual distinctions between religious and nonreligious subjects, cultural forms, or aspects of life.

If evangelical critics recognize the artistic role of the popular arts, they do not regard them as art, preferring instead mere imitation and consumer tactics based on moralistic and disciplinary concerns. Evangelical critics employ the same market-driven premise as Hollywood apologists—"give the audience what it wants"—acquiescing to the pursuit of profits as the paramount force in the entertainment industry. This approach leaves them susceptible to the misleading analyses of critics such as Michael Medved, who, though not an evangelical himself, is probably the most influential media critic among evangelicals.

While Medved was in the political Left working as an organizer for the Vietnam Moratorium, he learned the very interesting rhetorical trick of couching a political agenda in a moral and humanitarian context. President Ronald Reagan's success con-

vinced Medved, a conservative convert now, that it was possible to appropriate the Left's reputation and "to associate the cause of the Right with idealism, with selflessness, with noble goals. It is extraordinarily important that we do just that," wrote Medved.⁷ In his book *Hollywood vs. America*, Medved exploited the rhetoric of "family values" to present a decisively ideological analysis and agenda that in many ways

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paralleled the conservative evangelical posture on entertainment. Medved demonized the entertainment industry, calling it an "all-powerful enemy, an alien force that assaults our most cherished values and corrupts our children." He also argued superficially that the source of Hollywood's corruption and assault on "traditional" values could be traced to the "counterculture's comprehensive conquest of Hollywood" in the late 1960s. Medved simplistically named the enemy and helped politicize the debate about entertainment by casting it along the lines of the culture wars.⁸

Medved's proposals for "marketplace guerrilla warfare" are short-term strategies that do not necessarily call for a more responsible industry, but only a more profitable one.⁹ Like some evangelical critics, he makes it seem more a matter of market perception than an ideological contest. Consider their proposal that Hollywood make more

"family" movies as a solution to problems in the media.

Contrary to the contention of Medved and other media critics, the major Hollywood studios continued to make movies for the general or "family" audience until around 1970. The studios then reoriented their production and marketing strategies around the youth market. Most movies were made for adolescents during the 1970s and 1980s; the family market reemerged in the late 1980s, composed of baby boomer families.

According to Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) research, however, the most avid moviegoers are not families, but the under-30 age group. Ninety-five percent of teenagers are "frequent" or "occasional" moviegoers, compared with only 56 percent of married adults. The most frequent moviegoers are the 16- to 24-year-olds, who represent about 15 percent of the U.S. population but account for 27 percent of admissions. Hollywood's bread-and-butter audience straddles the 17-year-old mark that divides adults and minors. Consequently, filmmaking gravitates toward the middle ratings in pursuit of larger audiences and greater profits. A Gallup survey conducted for *Variety* refutes the assertion that the most ardent moviegoers prefer G- and PG-rated films, and the family market has not turned out to be the consumer force that some predicted.¹⁰

All this does not mean that Hollywood studios should not make G- and PG-rated films. Nor does it excuse the gratuitous inclusion of profanity, sex, and violence in pictures aimed at young moviegoers. It does suggest, however, that Hollywood is reaching its routine audience, the under-30 group. More importantly, it shows that evangelicals are promoting a marketplace strategy that does not reflect the realities of the marketplace.

Rather than argue that Hollywood simply redirect its

commercial resources, evangelicals should promote the industry's responsibility to fulfill its role as a producer of contemporary art. Evangelicals should join others in proposing greater product differentiation, for example. By this I mean films produced and marketed to specific and varied audiences, not only in terms of age, but also with respect to race, gender, and life perspectives. The possibilities of independent filmmaking and the video market make this a viable course that could lead to greater diversity and pluralism in the entertainment media.

An alternative to putting our faith in the dynamics of the market is to emphasize the public sphere as a place for dialogue and action. Social science research shows that the effects of the media are not universal, but particular to individuals, mediated by a host of variables, including the force of other institutions such as family, faith community, and school. A viable avenue for reform, then, is to influence the audience through institutional involvement instead of defaulting to matters of personal taste and consumption. As early as 1930, a writer in *The Christian Century* expressed concern that the movies were "influencing our young people today far more than the church, and seriously counteracting the combined stabilizing influence of the school and the home."¹¹ These institutions can serve as important mitigating influences by helping people learn to think critically about the media. Models for media education were pioneered in Canada, Britain, and Australia during the 1980s, but the inclusion of media studies in schools in the United States is just beginning. I am aware of some Protestant schools in North America that have begun media studies, but Catholic organizations spearheaded curriculum development with *Catholic Connections to Media Literacy*.

In conclusion, I have no desire to exonerate the entertainment industry from any abuse of

its artistic freedom, for its careless exploitation of markets, or for its often blatant disregard for anything other than appeasing stockholders. The industry rightly deserves criticism on these matters. Nor am I trying to dismiss the efforts of social reformers.

My analysis begins with the knowledge that the earth and everything in it belongs to God—

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even the popular arts. We must understand the place of entertainment in all human affairs: how it serves people, the social and cultural roles it fulfills, and its relation to other social institutions. The media, for example, have redefined the roles of family, faith community, and school. We will have to address problems in these social institutions along with problems in the entertainment industry. But as long as we think about the popular arts primarily in terms of marketing and consumption, we will continue to allow people to venture alone into a marketplace that offers individuals an endless array of choices, but limited perspectives on matters that concern us most. Instead, we must see the popular arts, and all the arts, as part of God's call to take care of and cultivate the creation. Only then can evangelicals truly profit as they confront the complex challenges the entertainment media present in our contemporary world. ■

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Fuller and Evangelicalism Today

FACULTY FORUM

A CONVERSATION LED BY PRESIDENT RICHARD J. MOUW WITH FACULTY MEMBERS JAMES E. BRADLEY, ROBERT K. JOHNSTON, DAVID M. SCHOLER, MARGUERITE SHUSTER, AND JOHN C. THOMPSON

Mouw: In contrast to the situation 50 years ago, today evangelicalism is a fairly potent cultural presence. Is that a true statement? How do you see the contemporary presence of evangelicalism in North America and the world?

SCHOLER: I think evangelicalism is now more potent, if by potent we mean able to command public attention and influence public policy. But I think in some sense it is also more fragmented. Maybe the fragmentation started 50 years ago. But the potency of evangelicalism today depends on the type of evangelicalism and the sector in which it operates—politics, or media, or something else.

THOMPSON: Certainly, evangelicalism has a more visible face. It has spread more widely over American culture—but it hasn't necessarily deepened. Some of its potency seems incidental to its proclamation, insofar as people both inside and outside the movement have realized its potential for political power, as well as the buying power of evangelical consumers.

BRADLEY: We're talking about the potency of evangelicalism from the standpoint of public policy or the marketplace. But in the area of scholarship, too, evangelicalism is far more potent now than it was 50 years ago. For

instance, there are now evangelical scholars in many of the major universities in this country. So even in terms of scholarly presence, evangelicalism is, without question, clearly more potent.

JOHNSTON: Perhaps in terms of ecclesiology, or perhaps in terms of the influence on denominations, evangelicalism is also more potent. When we think of the evangelical influence in the Episcopal, or the Methodist, or the Presbyterian Church, there's no doubt that the concern for a Bible-based faith that's personally held and passionately communicated is more central to those denominations as a result of evangelical influence.

SCHOLER: Wouldn't it be true to say that two things happened? One was breaking that fundamentalist social isolationism and going public with evangelical concern. Social concern was always an issue, but somehow there came a point when the desire of evangelicals to exercise influence was legitimated. The other thing was the rise of the public prestige of Billy Graham, especially in the New York crusade of 1957. It's incalculable how much his prestige changed the face of evangelicalism, and his call to engage in what he called "cooperative evangelism." Robert Ferm's book defending *Cooperative Evangelism* was a major factor, it seems to me, in evangelicalism's move into new horizons of work.

SHUSTER: The example of Billy Graham is an interesting one. A key factor in his widespread acceptance is his absolutely unimpugned moral character—whereas for evangelicalism as a

whole, an impressionistic survey might lead one to believe that any potency we're talking about hasn't extended as deep as one would wish into the personal lives of evangelical people.

JOHNSTON: I think that's absolutely correct. For the last 20 years or more it hasn't been so much the fractured state of evangelicalism as the shallowness that's been addressed in magazines such as *Christianity Today*. Ken Kantzer, concerned about evangelicalism's decline back in 1980, asked how a movement that had such appeal could have so little affect on the nation or even on the churches.

MOUW: The founding generation of Fuller Seminary had a three-fold critique of evangelicalism: It was intellectually marginal, it was culturally irrelevant, and it was ecclesiastically divided. For instance, Carl Henry, in *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, notes that in the 1940s you could not find an evangelical seminary or Bible school that offered a course in ethics. But on the other hand, it is clear that those evangelicals were very sensitive to ethics. There was a profound concern that we not be worldly.

Mouw: If we have now achieved a certain cultural potency, intellectually, culturally, and ecclesiastically, have we lost something in the process? Are there evangelical virtues embodied in the experience of minority and marginalization that are left behind when we become smarter and more culturally active?

JOHNSTON: In co-teaching a course on evangelicalism this quarter, Jim Bradley and I noticed that evangelicalism has so often

been defined "over against"—the Protestant reformers *over against* Rome, the pietists *over against* a dead orthodoxy, the fundamentalists *over against* liberalism, and evangelicalism in the forties and fifties *over against* anti-intellectualism, separatism, and cultural irrelevancy. It raises the question whether the passion can be there in the same way when we move from protesting to simply proclaiming the center.

JOHNSTON: David Hubbard's *What We Evangelicals Believe* is a wonderful example of a statement not *over against* but "for"—for evangelicalism's commitment to God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

MOUW: It is interesting, too, that Hubbard came to a point of opposing the use of the word "new" in "new evangelicalism." He said, "Beware of any movement that calls themselves *new* something or other." But in the early correspondence between Ockenga and Carnell in the first years of Fuller, there was no such hesitation: They wrote about a new apologetic, a new approach to theological education, new relationships with the larger church.

Mouw: Was there a new evangelicalism? And do we still see ourselves as representing it?

SCHOLER: I think it was new. It was certainly new historically, at least in the sense of renewal. My own connections were with the Gordon Divinity School tradition, and the general impression there was probably that what Fuller was doing wasn't new, that it had already happened in the Gordon tradition in New England. But I think there was a difference. The "Gordon/New England" approach was something quiet that didn't incite much comment. What made Fuller different was that they went public with what they were doing: "This is going to be

an explicit critique." And in a sense that made it new. It seems to me, however, the term *new* doesn't have the same kind of significance today.

BRADLEY: I would say that the students in our course understood what "new evangelicalism" might mean. It's their history. But should the term be retained today? It probably has to do with the extent to which we as evangelicals are apt to define ourselves in contrast to fundamentalists. I think, in the 1950s, it was clearly an "over against." But now, many would define "evangelicalism" from other perspectives and commitments. That might be one way to determine whether or not to retain the term *new*.

JOHNSTON: Part of an answer, too, is in the benefit our students found in learning something of the scope of evangelicalism. As a broad term, "neo-evangelicalism" has often been used in an attempt to narrow evangelicalism within the movement. For instance, it has sometimes been seen as a category of Reformed theology that fits better with those who come out of traditional fundamentalism, but is perhaps less helpful for those with Pentecostal or Holiness backgrounds. I suspect David Hubbard preferred *evangelicalism* because the wider term could represent a broader tradition.

MOUW: Let's talk about the acceptance of evangelical scholars and scholarship. Harvard Divinity School, for example, has just appointed Mark Noll in a newly endowed chair: the "Alonzo L. McDonald Family Professor of Evangelical Theological Studies." That's a long dream of many evangelicals—to have a place at Harvard that we could call our own.

Mouw: Can we really describe what is happening as the fulfillment of a dream? Or have we made our impact intellectually in ways that the leadership of the forties and early fifties would not have imagined?

SHUSTER: It seems to me that the way we have gained status is very different from the way anticipated by the original vision. Then the original personalities, strong though they were, held a kind of corporate vision for making a broader impact on society. The route we've followed is rather that the stronger members of our faculty, in making an impact, have done it basically as individuals.

BRADLEY: I agree that the evangelical scholarship that we see today is very much guided by the diversity in the scholarly disciplines. Mark Noll's book *The Scandal of the Evangeli-*



Author of *Religion, Revolution, and English Radicalism* (Cambridge, 1990), he is currently completing a book on religion during the English Enlightenment period.

cal Mind points out that evangelical scholars have made much more of an impact in the humanities broadly speaking than in science, for instance. He connects it with scholarly interplay with popular evangelicalism's distrust of the discipline of science. Thus the scholarship operates, as Marguerite was observing, at a kind of individual level within a discipline. But it doesn't have the larger cultural impact that the early Fuller founders had hoped for.

SCHOLER: I think that those early Fuller faculty and scholars were very prophetic and that their vision was very true to the evangelical movement. George Ladd, for instance, significantly influenced the development of evangelical biblical scholarship in the post World War II era (and still needs to be read). But he had almost no impact on the larger scholarly world at that time because there was no social context for his insights to be received. They were looked upon as intellectual curiosities. It took another generation for evangelical scholars to begin to participate in the larger intellectual life. Today it's taken for granted that I can participate and dialogue as a partner in scholarly societies, and that my theological commitment doesn't exclude me. It means that when I say something of an academic nature, I have a scholarly audience. I may not say anything as important as George Ladd said, but I have a better audience, who will listen.

JOHNSTON: I think what you're saying is important. George Ladd and that first generation of faculty might have hoped to influence the larger academy. But their first task, really, was reforming fundamentalism. Their primary influence was within neo-evangelicalism, more than within the larger academy. When I was a graduate student and started to attend the AAR/SBL meetings, I saw Fuller faculty only occasionally. Only with David Hubbard did evangelicals begin to move into the wider academic discussion, as you point out, David.

THOMPSON: David mentioned the *fragmentation* of evangelicalism. In fact you could argue that the apparent success of evangelicals in the academy is partly due to the academy's own splintering. Our presence there is

often treated with indifference, insofar as we represent just one more special-interest group among some 8,000 attendees.

MOUW: George Marsden, both in *The Soul of the American University*



ROBERT K. JOHNSTON, Ph.D., professor of theology and culture in Fuller's School of Theology, an ordained minister and former James B. Duke Fellow at Duke

University, is the author of *Christians at Play* (Eerdmans, 1983); and coeditor, with Donald Dayton, of *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (InterVarsity, 1991).

He argues that if feminists and Freudians and deconstructionists can present their points of view on their own terms, evangelicals ought to be granted the same consideration. Is that a good framework for being present?

BRADLEY: I agree with Marsden's strategy given the environment, but the argument troubles me. It almost inevitably sounds relativistic, despite the fact that I know it is not. It doesn't take sufficiently into consideration the fact that evangelicals explicitly claim to know the truth. And a relativistic view is diametrically opposed to the vision of the Fuller founders, which was hegemonic and triumphalistic.

SHUSTER: There might be a temptation, once having gained a place at the table under those circumstances, to hesitate to make the very kinds of claims that we might consider our duty, lest we be considered impolite, or be banished from the table.

MOUW: Let's explore that a little bit, because it's a very important point.

Mouw: In having become acceptable, do we lose a uniquely evangelical voice in scholarship? What price do we pay to get to the table?

BRADLEY: James Hunter makes that argument over and over again. He sees many of the distinctive ideas in evangelicalism being adjusted to fit the cultural context. Take toleration as an example: Hunter claims that it's not so much that evangelicals are championing tolerance today because of their own beliefs; rather, their motivation is to appear as good citizens in a tolerant world. The world's scrutiny of us is what has prompted us to change. It's a tantalizing argument. Is our focus on diversity or on women in ministry just a concession to political correctness, and to a culture's own trackless wandering?

But this is where history helps me. Timothy Smith's and Don Dayton's work concerning the diversity of the nineteenth-century evangelical mosaic shows us that we are not merely accommodators, but have in our roots the traditions of liberty of conscience and toleration, the celebration of diversity, and the encouragement of women in ministry.

JOHNSTON: There seem to be two issues here. One is making sure that we don't have too narrow a definition of evangelicalism, as I think James Hunter does. What is actually the reaffirming of an evangelical tradition he sees as a weakening of the tradition. The other issue is the degree to which our theology and faith need to be incarnated. It is a good thing to be able to say that we are sensitive to the culture. It's central to who we are as followers of Jesus Christ.

SCHOLER: You asked also, Rich, what we have lost by being at the table. Some of that, at least, depends on perspective. If an evangelical is at the table with other scholars, the evangelical has allowed *them* in turn to be at the table. For some that could only mean compromise. You've all heard how the evangelical says to the traditional scholar, "I'll call you a Christian if you call me a scholar." But others will see the opportunity. Certain liberal scholars will never be persuaded by us—though some may—but at least those who listen to them will now hear another point of view.

SHUSTER: I'm concerned that as we find success, we be tempted to avoid doing anything to lose that market share. We may be tempted to say, "Well, we had better not come down too hard on this, or we'll lose this part of our constituency." It's one thing if the issue is a peripheral one, but often the issue is one of substance.

Mouw: Have we changed, in 50 years, our sense of what the central issues are, and what are peripheral issues?

As I read the early scholars, they could become weary of debates over Bible prophecy, infant versus adult baptism, election versus free will. They said, and we say now, "Let's come together." But have the central issues changed? I'm sure we discuss the rapture and baptism and election in our classrooms, but these are not the issues that we as scholars are publishing on and arguing. What does that mean?

SCHOLER: I think our perception is that the founders didn't want to talk about the rapture and all that, but they had to talk a lot

about it. As Rob said earlier, they were trying to reform fundamentalism. I think they understood that discussions of the tribulation and the millennium were not the most important ones. We may have swung the pendulum in the other direction. We tend not to dialogue with other people in the evangelical movement who approach these questions differently. But maybe the time has come to be willing to take up some of those issues, not in the old way, but in a new way.

THOMPSON: Maybe I'm going out on a limb, but I think that the issues that are of greater concern to the faculty and the students these days are questions such as, What is the life of the worshiping church? Splitting hairs over inerrancy or infallibility seems less germane when we're surrounded by so many dying churches, and by so many other kinds of churches springing to life.

SHUSTER: I want to dangle from the end of that limb, though, if you're going to go out on it! Because it seems to me that we may have fallen into an unfortunate kind of subjectivism with regard to the life of the church, focusing for instance on whether I happen to feel worshipful when I'm in church, and so forth. The relative lack of content in our worship life, in our preaching, in our ability to carry on a discussion, is in my view a part of the reason the church is dying. Our people are unprepared to talk in a substantive way about those matters that call us together as the Body of Christ. Instead, they invoke their religious experience and tend to view almost anything else as irrelevant.

THOMPSON: I perceive a swing toward a new sacramentalism among some evangelicals that would seem to substitute for the failure of the proclamation of the Word. The preaching office, I think, is widely perceived as failing. As a result, many evangelicals have substituted something else that's more subjectivistic, more feeling oriented, often either cultivating some kind of neo-Catholic spirituality or drifting toward a new sacramentalism.

JOHNSTON: Another way of unpacking what you said, John, is to look at the audience that Fuller is attempting to reach. In the call to reform fundamentalism, there were certain issues that were important to discuss. In the call to make an impact on the wider culture and the larger mainstream church, a different set of issues

emerges. A discussion of amillennialism or premillennialism won't help as much as some other kinds of discussion. Once Fuller moved beyond simply reforming fundamentalism and actively pursued an evangelical presence in the larger Christian churches as well, it meant a change in those issues at the forefront of the seminary's life and thought.

SCHOLER: I think your analysis is excellent. But I must say I regularly encounter students who remind me that they belong to churches where these questions continue to be live questions. It indicates that we still have a role



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ship, his publications include *Women in Ministry* (Covenant, 1984, 1989, 1990); and the two-volume *Nag Hammadi Bibliography 1948-1969* (Brill, 1971); and *1970-1994* (Brill, 1997).

in reforming fundamentalism, in reforming evangelicalism, in encouraging people to preach the gospel with confidence and joy, and to learn how to cope with aspects of the evangelical tradition that they sense are hurtful or problematic. It's a reminder that our theology needs to remain in clear continuity with solid evangelical thinking, while being as holistic and winsome as possible.

BRADLEY: A lot of the things that we've been hinting at for the last ten minutes or so touch on the complexity of our ecclesial traditions. I think that the great challenge we face today is what it means to be the church. It's not just that individualism tends to be overemphasized—although that is certainly true, both in our churches and in our culture. There is simply a great need to hear the diversity that exists in evangelicalism. We are committed at Fuller to representing, for example, both the Arminian and the Reformed traditions in such a way that we don't disenfranchise any of our students, but rather leave them with a conviction of the truth of their own traditions. This is an enormous task!

MOUW: Do you see your students from these various evangelical traditions being aware of their own ecclesiologies? Are Nazarenes or Wesleyans still Nazarene or Wesleyan in their ecclesiology?

JOHNSTON: I think many of the students are not aware of those aspects of their tradition. But having been put into a situation in which there are plural traditions, they know they need to find out. So part of the exercise of theological study at Fuller is exploring their own roots and exploring their own understanding, from a safe, that is, evangelical, biblically affirming, Christological center. Fuller is safe—and yet it's challenging because it's diverse.

SCHOLER: I think it varies. Some students are fully aware of their tradition. But often students who

come from those traditions are on the edge of their own movements. Just coming to Fuller for some is already a daring and risky thing to do. They're under some criticism for doing that. It means they have a kind of openness of thinking that isn't necessarily characteristic of everyone in their movement. When they leave Fuller, in some cases, they have to work hard to preserve their own clear identity in their movement.

JOHNSTON: Our society itself is moving in an increasingly tribal direction, which will have a fragmenting impact on the church's thinking too. Fuller's contribution will be to help students see the variety and fullness of evangelicalism, in effect, offering a counterforce to the splintering of common commitments that's going on in our wider society. That could become a much more central issue for Fuller's theological agenda than eschatology or inerrancy as such. What is the common Christian center that we can affirm, even within the plurality of our traditions?

Mouw: Inerrancy has come up a number of times in our discussion. Are we referring to a live issue at Fuller Seminary, or are we implying that the conversation is over?

SCHOLER: At Fuller? I would risk saying the debate is over. I don't experience it as a debate with faculty and colleagues, and I experience it only rarely with a student.

JOHNSTON: If the debate is with our larger culture as to whether "If the Bible says so, I believe it," then it is still a live issue, central to Fuller and to the life of the students here. Within popular evangelicalism, inerrancy has rarely taken on the technical trappings that it has in some of the academic discussions. It has simply been a way of saying, "I



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believe the Bible and I want to live under the Bible's teaching." That still is a very central position that Fuller affirms, and our students

grapple with it as they follow their call to ministry.

THOMPSON: It is a matter of how we live with Scripture and under Scripture, rather than seeing the doctrine as simply an end in itself. I think that's why the word itself has been less important among the faculty.

BRADLEY: I think I agree with David that the debate as a technical debate is probably behind us. But the issues surrounding biblical authority are far from behind us. In particular, how we understand Scripture, and the way interpretation occurs in different historical and social settings, is very relevant to the issue of evangelical unity. In fact, it needs to be worked over in much greater depth than we've done so far.

SCHOLER: Definitely, definitely. You see it in those issues where students are struggling personally. Their affirmation that "I'm under the authority of Scripture" becomes agonizing when it comes to certain issues—women's participation in ministry, for some, or the idea of eternal punishment,

and many other kinds of issues, homosexuality included. It becomes an agonizing question as to how to understand what is biblically authoritative, and how biblical authority actually works.

Mouw: Jerry Walls wrote in *Christianity Today* that evangelicals tend to ignore the theme of eternal punishment. To what extent does this endanger our explicit connection to the preaching of the gospel for the sake of reaching people who face a Christless eternity unless they hear and believe?

SHUSTER: This goes back to some opening remarks about our passion for souls. Culturally, it goes against the grain to discourse much about souls today. Yet apart from that passion, it really becomes rather hard to discern why we should be quite so energized about what we're doing. If there is no eternal consequence, aren't there a lot of other ways to achieve certain worthy ends?

JOHNSTON: Fuller's challenge is to keep that three-fold evangelical agenda vibrant: a passion for souls; personal spirituality and faith; and academic, biblical inquiry. Those three all have to be on the table if we're to fulfill our vision and our mission. Maybe it's true that in any given age one of them tends to be muted. Today that passion for souls is less prominent than spirituality or scholarship, and that's unfortunate.

SCHOLER: Two or three months ago, on our students' "Board of Declaration," there was a spurt of attention to the passion for souls. Some students were even listing which professors they perceived to have a passion for souls. I was

reminded of a classic student evaluation: "Dr. Scholer loves exegesis more than he loves Christ." It is a real issue within the context of Fuller Seminary and the kind of institution we are. It can be very difficult to sort out what graduate seminary education accomplishes, for a church and for personal spiritual life.

BRADLEY: But the difficulty doesn't make it a less urgent question, whether for the student or the faculty. The scholarly temperament has always been able to communicate its message in all different shades and varieties of tone. We do need particularly to be concerned with people's eternal salvation. I think we would all agree that there is a need today for more concern and greater passion for souls.

Mouw: What are the crucial challenges today? If we were to take new inspiration from the founding vision of a seminary that's out to change things, what should we be trying to change?

SHUSTER: Well, thinking about the cultural mandate, I wonder whether evangelicals, even at Fuller, have a unified vision of what would constitute desirable reform in society. Do we agree on policy regarding the welfare system? the environment and how Christians ought to be related to it? abortion? war and preparation for war? censorship in the arts? It seems to me that we have

evangelicals on every conceivable side of all of these issues.

MOUW: Is that bad? Or is there a sense in which we're simply embodying the diversity of nineteenth-century evangelical traditions, as well as the diversity of evangelicalism in our own day?

JOHNSTON: I remember that, in the seventies, the Christian Reformed Church and the *Sojourners* community, two very different strands within evangelicalism, sat down together to dialogue, and something like a common set of beliefs or shared convictions began to emerge. I believe that under the common authority of the Word, a place like

Fuller can help diverse traditions to inform one another, and advance the common agenda, rather than simply remain fragmented.

THOMPSON: One of the best things our students bring to Fuller is their high level of Christian passion. But sometimes that Christian passion can vent sideways. Rather than propelling a person along in the faith, it attacks those who do not agree. The message becomes, "Not only am I passionate about Christ, but I also know that you're all wrong about Christ." So in my classes I seek to give students an appreciation of a much bigger church and much bigger Savior, so that their passion, rather than being siphoned off, will propel them forward.

SCHOLER: That makes me think of J. B. Phillips' *Your God Is Too Small*. You're saying, "Your church is too small!" I agree that the thing that needs reformation is the church—as indeed Carnell



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1995 and was awarded a Lilly Research Grant in 1997-1998 to write on the "marginalized women of the Old Testament" (a work currently in progress).

expressed in one of those exchanges with Ockenga: "We need to work on the doctrine of the church. That's going to be one of the books that I'm going to write someday." We've talked a lot about our diversity, about our oneness in Christ. But I don't know that we've done enough work on what makes us one. It is something that Fuller ought to be capable of doing. In terms of ecclesial traditions, Fuller's faculty is diversified and qualified in a way that has never before been the case. A good starting place might well be to look at those three dimensions that you mentioned, Rob: a passion for souls; personal and corporate spirituality; and academic, biblically grounded inquiry.

MOUW: There is certainly a lot of ecclesial experimentation happening today that we might see as a parallel to our theological searching. For instance, take the Reformation distinctions between the folk-church idea on the one hand, that everyone belongs in church, and the model of the gathering of the believers on the other. Surely there would be an insightful application to the megachurch phenomenon, and the proliferation of the small-group movement.

BRADLEY: I applaud the ideal of an evangelical ecclesiology. And yet we are always going to have a variety of ecclesiologies within evangelicalism. I think of Robert Beard's very influential work published in 1844, which categorized as evangelical churches all of the main Protestant denominations. It's reflected too in Alistair McGrath's analysis of evangelicalism today. What's needed in an evangelical ecclesiology is a very broad understanding of a worldwide movement.

JOHNSTON: Another place where Fuller can make a contribution is in the evangelical church's understanding of the wider cultures. There are a number of our faculty who are centrally working in that field. I think of Nancey Murphy's work with regard to science; Miroslav Volf's with the social sciences; Chuck

Van Engen's and Newt Maloney's contributions in missions and psychology; Bill Dyrness and Rob Banks and myself on Christianity in the arts. And we need to explore Rich's suggestion that we be thinking about the "cultures" rather than just "culture." We would be amiss if we simply talked about science, the social sciences, and the arts, but didn't also talk about the ethnic and cultural plurality that is so much a part of life and study at Fuller.

SHUSTER: It's not only a matter of church or of the culture, but of scriptural understandings of the person. It ties in with how we understand the shaping factors of our culture and how we value one another, and gets strong challenges where scientific and social scientific understandings of the person impinge in very significant ways. I think we do need to deal more deeply with our theology of personhood.

Mouw: As we draw to a close, let me give each of you the opportunity to offer a final perspective on these issues.

THOMPSON: An editorial of Martin Marty's in the last year pointed out the fact that so many of the grand causes of the evangelicalism of 30 and 40 years ago, such as drinking, or divorce, have ceased to be grand causes because they've now become things that evangelicals have grown to live with. Much as we would like to think that our concerns are always God's concerns, the church can never simply presume that it has been faithful in what it's been entrusted with. Looking back on the founders of the seminary, we would probably say that in some respects they were naive. But the question they sought to address remains just as acute for us, namely, how can we evangelicals remain faithful to the gospel, not just in our own sight but in the eyes of God as well?

SHUSTER: My hope is that Fuller will never cease being a school with a passion for souls, where Christians learn to love God with the mind, where we are known as a community with a concern for spirituality that is not ungrounded, but is clearly called to bear fruit in character and sanctification.

JOHNSTON: The questions of diversity and unity will continue to be central for us. How can Fuller Seminary help the various theological traditions represented within evangelicalism to have a real voice at the table? How do we explore the theological movement from Spirit to Word as well as from Word to Spirit? Timothy Smith talked about the evangelical mosaic. How do we bring all the players at the table into that vibrant interaction that will nurture and further Christ's Church? That should be a central agenda for us.

BRADLEY: The issue of culture on the one hand and the question of ecclesiology on the other are corporate responses to the twenty-first century that we must face. We ought also to build on Marguerite's observation about a theology of personhood. We still face the question of the individual in evangelicalism. That means we need a theology of personhood that is connected to spirituality, character development, and the like. In considering these corporate matters of high importance, we cannot neglect the question of spiritual growth and the nurture of individuals, and their eternal destiny.

SCHOLER: The founders of Fuller, who had the task of reforming fundamentalism in terms of intellectual life, culture, and ecclesiology, really have set an agenda that needs to be continued into the twenty-first century: intellectual life rooted in Scripture; the theology of culture and cultures; what the church is and how it actually functions. The terms are not the same, nor are the audiences, but those are still three critical areas that a graduate theological seminary must address. ■

Evangelicalism and Fuller Seminary

FURTHER READING

BY ROBERT K. JOHNSTON

From its inception, Fuller Seminary has been an important voice in the shaping of American evangelicalism. Of particular note have been the following works:

HENRY, CARL F. H.
The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism
(Eerdmans, 1947)

Published several months before Henry began at Fuller, this volume set evangelicalism's agenda by speaking out against fundamentalism's anti-intellectualism, separatism, and quietism.

CARNELL, EDWARD JOHN
The Case for Orthodox Theology
(Westminster, 1959)

Part of a series of three volumes on Protestant theology, this book argued for orthodoxy in a new key, one that would move evangelicalism beyond its persistent negativity.

LADD, GEORGE ELTON
The New Testament and Criticism
(Eerdmans, 1967)

Although Ladd is better known for his book *Jesus and the Kingdom* (1964), this textbook influenced a generation of younger evangelical biblical scholars by arguing for the value of faithful, biblical criticism.

KRAFT, CHARLES H.
Christianity in Culture
(Orbis, 1979).

Kraft provides a groundbreaking look from the perspectives of anthropology and linguistics at the cultural embeddedness of Christianity.

HUBBARD, DAVID ALLAN
What We Evangelicals Believe
(Fuller, 1979, 1991)

Seeking to move beyond the controversies that have plagued the evangelical movement, this slim volume uses Fuller's Statement of Faith to expound what evangelicals consider central to the gospel.

MOUW, RICHARD J.
Consulting the Faithful
(Eerdmans, 1994)

This brief volume argues for a "hermeneutic of charity" as the relationship between popular religion (e.g., the managerial and the therapeutic) and the gospel is explored.

Several secondary discussions should also be noted as helpful in describing Fuller's role in shaping evangelicalism:

MARSDEN, GEORGE M.
Reforming Fundamentalism
(Eerdmans, 1987; paperback, Eerdmans, 1995)

This highly regarded volume uses the history of Fuller's first 20 years as a context for discussing the rise of postwar American evangelicalism. The 1995 edition features a preface titled "The Contested History of Fuller Seminary." [The *Christian Scholar's Review* 23:1 (September 1993) focuses its whole issue on a discussion of the validity of Marsden's thesis.]

QUEBEDEAUX, RICHARD
The Young Evangelicals
(Harper & Row, 1974)

The author locates much of the intellectual roots of the new evangelicalism in the development of Fuller, and his discussion of Scripture, evangelism, and social witness captures Fuller's ethos in the late sixties and early seventies.

JOHNSTON, ROBERT K.
Evangelicals at an Impasse
(John Knox, 1978)

The book discusses the variety of ways in which evangelicals do theology, referencing many of the Fuller faculty as they discuss Scripture, the role of women, social ethics, and homosexuality.

NOLL, MARK A.
Between Faith and Criticism
(Harper & Row, 1986)

Commissioned by the Society of Biblical Literature, this volume is an excellent survey of twentieth-century evangelical thought with reference to scholarship and the Bible. It evaluates the role of two dozen Fuller faculty and alumni/ae in the process. (Of note as well is Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Eerdmans, 1994.)

HUNTER, JAMES DAVISON
Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation
(University of Chicago, 1987)

Based on a national survey of students and faculty at 16 evangelical colleges and seminaries (including Fuller), Hunter uses an overly narrow definition of evangelicalism to conclude that the younger generation of evangelicals are changing the definition of orthodoxy.

In addition to the above volumes which reference Fuller directly, there are a host of excellent resources on the broader history and theology of American evangelicalism, many written by evangelicals themselves and all pertinent to the growth and influence of Fuller:

WELLS, DAVID F. AND JOHN D. WOODBRIDGE, eds.

The Evangelicals
(Abingdon, 1975)

An interesting collection of essays both by those within the movement (Kenneth Kantzer's, George Marsden's, and David Moberg's essays are especially helpful, while John Gerstner's exclusively reformed definition of evangelicalism is often used as an example of what not to do) and by those outside (Paul Holmer, Martin Marty, and Sydney Ahlstrom). The first of a genre.

DAYTON, DONALD

Discovering an Evangelical Heritage
(Harper & Row, 1976)

Dayton documents the involvement of nineteenth-century evangelicals in the reform movements of abolitionism, feminism, and social welfare. In the process, he both encourages greater evangelical involvement today and suggests another paradigm besides that of fundamentalism for the understanding of evangelicalism.

WEBER, TIMOTHY

Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming
(Zondervan, 1983)

Weber, a Fuller graduate, has written the definitive study of dispensational premillennialism, focusing in particular on the behavioral consequences of its beliefs.

SWEET, LEONARD, ed.

The Evangelical Tradition in America
(Mercer University, 1984)

A selection of historical essays on American evangelicalism by such distinguished historians as Nathan Hatch, Garth Rosell, Albert Raboteau, Joel Carpenter, and Grant Wacker. Interesting reading.

DAYTON, DONALD AND ROBERT K. JOHNSTON, eds.

The Variety of American Evangelicalism
(InterVarsity, 1991)

Under the "evangelical" umbrella, 12 distinct theological traditions are discussed by leading scholars within those movements, with the editors then disagreeing as to the continuing relevance of the term (Johnston, *yes*; Dayton, *no*).

MARSDEN, GEORGE M.

Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism
(Eerdmans, 1991)

Generally regarded as the leading interpreter of American fundamentalism, Marsden relates this movement both to the evangelicalism that preceded it and to the evangelicalism that has developed to encompass it.

ELWELL, WALTER, ed.

Handbook of Evangelical Theologians
(Baker, 1993)

The theological contributions of 33 evangelical theologians are discussed and their influence for modern evangelicalism noted. (Henry and Carnell are included.)

MC GRATH, ALISTER

Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity
(InterVarsity, 1995)

Writing from a reformed perspective and believing evangelicalism to be a postfundamentalist phenomenon, McGrath explores both its strengths (chiefly, a solid core of doctrine) and weaknesses (a crisis of identity, a weakening of spiritual discipline, dogmatism, the personality cult). ■

"It's Way Okay"

From page 6

many exceptions and variations on these themes. Yet, in astonishing contrast to 50 years ago, evangelicals are considerably more likely to see politics as an important expression of faith than are more liberal Protestants.

Evangelicals today still wrestle with the question of what makes them different; but they do so increasingly as cultural insiders. Their newfound political influence is related to their rising economic status. Many of them are affluent, college-educated suburbanites,

We can see that Christians in every age make huge tradeoffs with their cultures.

hardly distinguishable from the average Americans. They are much more likely to talk about relationships and self-fulfillment than about sin and self-denial. Aside from politics, they typically have difficulty saying what makes them different, other than that they aspire to be honest, decent, caring, and patriotic Americans. On many such issues, they seem to espouse about the same sort of values that might be expressed in the chit-chat on the local news.

For Christians, success is fraught with dangers, especially the danger of transforming Christianity into a self-affirming humanism. Much of the message of evangelicalism today is oriented toward success: success in relationships, success in marriage, success in business, success in living the good life, success in political action, success in physical healing (which is almost exclusively the subject of requested prayers). "Nothing is more valuable than human life" seems a self-evident principle. As good as all these things may be, we may need to stop and ask, How much are we

being shaped by a version of late-twentieth-century American humanistic values, and how much is this powerful Christian movement contributing to a genuine reformation of our priorities in the light of God's Word?

It may well be that evangelicals today are no more compromised by their culture than were their forebears in the fundamentalist era. In retrospect we can see that Christians in every age make huge tradeoffs with their cultures and, as often as not, have gone over the edge of letting the culture define the gospel rather than the gospel reshape the culture. If true Christianity is found only among radical followers of Jesus' teachings who have turned away from every cultural idol, then Christianity is a vastly smaller movement than most of us imagine. Radical Christianity is also, thank God, a revelation of God's grace for the undeserving. That gives us hope, but it still does not let us off the hook regarding Jesus' commands for discipleship. So in every era, as in every life, we must take stock to see where we really are and what reformation may be demanded of us.

In doing so, one thing we need to be reminded of is that if church history shows us anything, it shows that the church is often most healthy when it is a church of outsiders by the culture's standards. That does not mean that we have to renounce the evangelical successes of the past 50 years. But it does mean that we should read our history as much to learn from it as to celebrate. ■

Reforming the Reformers

From page 9

Jesus Christ, in word and deed." ("An Evangelical Manifesto," <http://www.nae.net/naemanifesto.html>, 1996)

As contemporary third-generation evangelicals looking back on our own history, we recall the excesses of the first generation — boundaries that were too high and a separatism that was too

harsh. But we also appreciate the rigor and determination of those who sought to defend a worldview and biblical hermeneutic that seemed to the watching world, even then, quaint and outdated. Our forebears were right on the basics. They sensed the importance of an authoritative Bible. And they knew, perhaps instinctively, that there were people and institutions and ideas that were harmful to Christian spiritual formation. Perhaps their decision to retreat rather than capitulate was, for that time, smart.

As we look back on the reactions of the second generation, we relish in the daring-do of these reformers of reformers. But we also cringe at the excesses. We learned that Christians cannot go into the broader culture and take its most chic aspects and hyphenate the word "Christian" onto it.

The difference between traditionalists and liberals is, at bottom, a difference in attitude toward Scripture.

There shouldn't be Christian grunge rock music, Christian horror flicks, and a Christian political party. There are ideas and ideologies, habits and collectivities, that defy "Christianizing." For this reason alone, the wisdom of boundary-setting has to be retained.

The advantage of living at the time of the third generation (obviously these "generations" are less chronological than epochs in evangelical intellectual history) is the ability to recall the mistakes and excesses as well as wisdom of earlier evangelicals. We acknowledge the wisdom in boundary-

setting, but want to see clearly over the walls we erect. We see the wisdom in ecclesial purity, but want fellowship with other believers who share our basic commitment to an authoritative Bible. We recognize the need for leadership and organizations, but fear the development of what sociologist Max Weber termed "the routinization of charisma" (*Economy and Society*, 1968). Our boundaries are wider and lower, yet more secure.

Third-generation evangelicals could be called "hesitant reformers." Unlike the strident first generation or the brazen second generation, our third generation seeks ecclesial unity within a context of biblically permitted liberty. Our self-understanding, albeit never clear, remains perceptually fuzzy at the edges but firm at its biblical core. And it is the familiar motif, "In essentials unity, in distinctives liberty, in all things charity," that makes evangelicalism so very attractive. Chastened by failure and encouraged by progress, our reforming of the reformers can only continue. ■

Evangelicals in the Wider Family of Christ's Followers

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on Roman Catholicism," *The Evangelical Review of Theology*, 10:4, 11:1 (1986).

¹² "A WEF-Roman Catholic Church Dialogue: Justification, Scripture and Tradition," *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 21:2 (April, 1997).

¹³ Charles Colson, Richard John Neuhaus, eds., *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission* (Word Publishing, 1995).

¹⁴ "Justification: The New Ecumenical Debate," *Themelios* 13 (1988), 43.

¹⁵ H. George Anderson, T. Austin Murphy, Joseph A. Burgess, eds., *Justification by Faith* (Augsburg, 1985).

¹⁶ Meeking, Stott, op.cit., 25.

Upcoming Events

OCTOBER

- 21-22** **"LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF INTERGENERATIONAL TENSION,"** with President Richard J. Mouw, Oak Brook, Illinois
- 29** **ANNUAL DAY OF PRAYER,** Fuller Seminary campus

NOVEMBER

- 7-9** **CITY OF THE ANGELS FILM FESTIVAL,** Directors Guild of America Theater Complex, Los Angeles, California
- 14** **"RENEWING YOUR CALL AND REVITALIZING YOUR MINISTRY,"** with Eddie Gibbs, Ph.D., Rolando United Methodist Church, San Diego, California
- 14-15** **"ENJOYING THE GIFT OF SEX,"** with Cliff and Joyce Penner, Fuller Seminary campus
- 17-19** **"CURRENT ISSUES IN THEOLOGY,"** School of Theology International Conference, Fuller Seminary campus
- 23** **ALUMNI/AE AND FRIENDS BREAKFAST** with President Richard J. Mouw, American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Conference, San Francisco, California

JANUARY

- 10** **"BRINGING THE CHURCH HOME,"** Church Leader's Workshop, with Rob and Julia Banks, Jonathan Campbell, Seattle, Washington
- 16-17** **COLORADO EXTENSION 50TH CELEBRATION,** Colorado Springs and Denver
- 21-23** **"BECOMING ADULT, BECOMING CHRISTIAN,"** School of Psychology Integration Symposium, with James Fowler, Ph.D., Fuller Seminary campus

