1988

A persuasive God and human freedom an evangelical view.

Gene Kenneth. Tempelmeyer
University of Windsor

NOTICE

AVIS

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30.

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, tests publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30.

Canada

A PERSUASIVE GOD AND HUMAN FREEDOM:

AN EVANGELICAL VIEW

by

Gene Kenneth Tempelmeyer

A Thesis
submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of
Religious Studies in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at
the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1984

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The modern Evangelical movement has become a powerful force in popular Christianity in North America and in the Third World. This thesis explores Evangelical theology with respect to God's causal activity in creation. An obvious corollary to this theme is the theme of creaturely freedom.

Evangelicals rely heavily on reformation theology for a historical understanding of the Christian faith. Evangelicals also distinguish themselves by three commonly shared commitments: (1) biblicism; (2) a very personal soteriology; and (3) a powerful commitment to share that soteriology with the world through the activity of evangelism.

Herein lies a crucial dilemma for the modern Evangelical. The systematic theologians of the movement, by and large, have retained a very Calvinistic view of God and humanity. In this view, God is perceived as working in the world, in a quite determinative fashion while humans are bound by both the principle of sin and the decrees of God. The Evangelical evangelist, meanwhile, proclaims a gospel that requires a personal free decision of faith to apply divine forgiveness to sin, which is also a personal free decision or event. The evangelists of Evangelicalism, thus, are explicit in their description of God as persuasive and humans as free.

To resolve this dilemma, a minority of Evangelical

theologians have attempted to describe God in less
deterministic tones. This thesis argues that the evangelists
and this minority of theologians are correct in their view.
The deterministic theology of the majority is rejected as
being internally incoherent. Divine determinism is rejected
further as violating the basic conceptual unity of the
Evangelical movement. Finally, divine determinism is
rejected as being pastorally irrelevant. Some directions
that a new Evangelical theology, firmly rooted in the
concepts of a persuasive God and a free humanity, must now
take are established.

The thesis concludes with an appendix which deals
with the subject of theodicy. Divine persuasiveness is
demonstrated to be a particularly applicable underlying
principle to bring to a possible solution to the problem of
theodicy: the seeming contradiction between a good, just and
loving God and a suffering world.

To my daughter,
BRONWYN.
Her death forced me out of my
comfortable theology and
into some new thoughts about God.
In those questions
this thesis was born.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

of Ontario and Quebec.   Both organizations have subsidized my
studies at the University of Windsor in the last several
years.

INTRODUCTION

In 1947 Harold Ockenga gave a name to an infant movement he and and others saw growing in the post-war years within conservative protestantism as a reaction to fundamentalism. Ockenga called this movement "the new evangelicalism."[1] Since that time, what has been known as "the new evangelicalism", "neo-evangelicalism" and finally simply "Evangelicalism"[2] has become a significant force in modern Christianity. While many mainline Protestant denominations have experienced declining membership, Evangelical Churches often have been on the growing edge of the Christian community.[3] George Gallup Jr., on the basis of a Gallup poll taken the same year, called 1976 "The Year of the Evangelical."[4] Other writers have described an "evangelical renaissance", an "evangelical resurgence", and even a "new evangelical majority."[5] Through zealous missionary efforts, Evangelical Christianity has been carried from its North American homeland around the world, particularly to the Third World.[6]

Obviously, since this movement first emerged shortly after World War II, the thought of what Ockenga called "the new evangelicalism" has shaped the vision of God held by significant numbers of people. But who or what is the Evangelical God? We might ask, in particular, how God acts as a causal force in creation. As we shall see, there is

1

some tension in the Evangelical response to this question.

On the one hand, Evangelicals, by and large, have been theologically true to their Puritan roots, which in turn were strongly influenced by the original "evangelicals" of the continental European reformation.[7] Particularly, we shall see that modern Evangelical thinkers generally have maintained a view of God consistent with Calvinistic Christian tradition which has emphasized God's "sovereignty" over all the events of the universe. A frequent corollary of this apparently deterministic view of God has been a very limited view of human freedom.

However, not only have modern Evangelicals been true to traditional reformation theology, they have also been true to a deep sense of mission to declare their faith to those still outside the fold. According to the Evangelicals, all people urgently need a personal conversion to Christ. This conversion results in an experience of "rebirth". Consequently, Evangelicals have been fervent in the task of evangelism: that is, the proclamation of their faith with the goal of "winning converts to Christ".[8] It might be argued that this sense of mission provides more unity to the diverse movement of Evangelicals than does any theological position.[9] However, it is in this mission that the tension in the Evangelical vision of God becomes apparent. While the formal theologians[10] of Evangelicalism seem to portray God in a deterministic fashion, we shall see that the evangelists of Evangelicalism have placed a strong emphasis on the theme of

divine persuasion. While the formal theologians describe humans as bound by sin and the decrees of God, the evangelists emphasize human responsibility and accountability for sin and the need for a personal and experiential choice to accept the gift of salvation, all of which would seem to imply human freedom.

It would appear that there is a strong tension, if not a logical incoherence, between the seemingly deterministic theology held by the majority of Evangelical theologians and the practise of evangelism which is inherent in Evangelical thought and life. There are, however, a minority of Evangelical writers who have recently begun to question this deterministic view of God in favour of a more persuasive God who has sovereignly chosen to relinquish some divine decision-making power in order to share it with His[11] creatures. This persuasive God acts as a causal force in creation by inviting, luring and motivating creatures toward the divine agenda. This persuasion never becomes so strong, however, that it is in fact determinism in disguise.

In this thesis I will explore this tension between the position held by the majority of Evangelical theologians and the Evangelical practice of evangelism. In the first chapter I will define more clearly the Evangelical movement by examining its modern history and its self-identity as found in the unifying concepts that bind it together. The second chapter will describe the theological debate. In this fairly lengthy exposition of the relevant theological

arguments I will examine: the majority position in favour of
divine sovereignty and the predestination of human acts and
decisions; some logical problems I find with this view; and,
finally, a minority position which suggests that God has
placed a self-limitation upon divine power. In the third
chapter I will explore the subject of Evangelical evangelism,
examining the theological assumptions that underlie both the
message and methods of the Evangelical evangelist.
Particularly these assumptions will relate to the issues of
divine sovereignty and human freedom. These two chapters
will describe two horns of a dilemma upon which the modern
Evangelical movement finds itself. Finally, in the fourth
chapter I will suggest a resolution to this dilemma. I will
argue that a view of God as persuasive rather than
determinitive is the only real option for the Evangelical
wishing to remain true to the concepts that bind the
Evangelical movement together. It is in this final chapter
that my argument will become clear, as material from the
first three chapters is brought together into contrast. My
intent throughout is not to evaluate Evangelical theology on
this question from the standpoint of other Christian streams
of thought. Rather, I will provide an internal critique of
the Evangelical understanding of God.

    While I am convinced that a scholarly treatment of
this question is essential for the Evangelical movement, it
is not only academic interest that motivates me to write this
particular thesis. I approach this subject as a pastor

within the Evangelical movement regularly called upon to
articulate an Evangelical vision of God as that vision
touches upon the challenges, crises, joys and problems of
daily life. Consequently, I am not only concerned with the
esoteric theological ramifications of this vision of God, I
am convinced that this question-profoundly effects an
Evangelical response to a number of urgent pastoral issues.
One of the major pastoral concerns effected by this vision of
God is the problem of theodicy: the difficulty of reconciling
a good, just and loving God with a suffering world.
Following the main body of my argument, therefore, I shall
add an appendix dealing with the issue of theodicy. I will
demonstrate how a vision of God as persuasive rather than as
determinitive can help the Evangelical solve this thorny
problem.

NOTES

1. Harold John Ockenga, *Christianity Today*, 29 (March 15, 1985), p.34 cited in Donald K. McKim, <u>What Christian Believe About the Bible</u> (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985), 82.
In an essay entitled "From Fundamentalism, Through New Evangelicalism, To Evangelicalism" Ockenga presents his reasons for selecting this term, and the need for such a term to describe the movement he observed. <u>Evangelical Roots</u>, ed. Kenneth Kantzer (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978), 35-46.

2. Throughout this thesis I will be using the terms "Evangelical", "Evangelicalism", and "the Evangelical movement" to describe this contemporary movement in conservative protestantism rather than to describe the Lutheran wing of the European reformation or the material of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John contained in the New Testament. I will more clearly define the place of this movement in the wider Christian community and the concepts that unify the movement in Chapter 1.

3. See Donald G. Bloesch, <u>the Evangelical Renaissance</u> (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), 14

4. See "Half of U.S. Protestants are 'Born Again' Christians", <u>The Gallup Poll</u> (September 26, 1976), 1-7 cited in Richard Quebedeaux, <u>The Worldly Evangelicals</u> (San Fransico: Harper & Row, 1980), 4.

5. See Donald G. Bloesch, <u>The Evangelical Renaissance</u>; Bloesch, <u>The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity Among Diversity</u> (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 9; and Quebedeaux, <u>The Worldly Evangelicals</u>, 4.

6. See Donald A. McGavran, <u>Understanding Church Growth</u> (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), especially 41-56. This is an excellent exhaustive and practical study of Christian mission from an Evangelical point of view, which utilizes numerous illustrations of (Evangelical) Church growth in the Third World.

7. See Donald K. McKim, <u>What Christians Believe About the Bible</u>, 83; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "From Puritanism to Evangelicalism: A Critical Perspective", <u>The Evangelicals</u>, eds. David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House, 1975), 289ff; Donald G. Bloesch, <u>The Evangelical Renaissance</u>, 32.

8. The word "evangelism" obviously has the same

etymological root as the word "evangelical". The root is the Greek *euangelion* meaning "good news; gospel". Thus, the "evangelist" is one who proclaims the good news of Christ, and "evangelism" is the activity of proclaiming this gospel. Certainly, the practise of "evangelism" is not restricted to the movement called "Evangelicalism". It is also the case that Christians in different streams of thought, having a variety of ways to understand the Gospel, also define what evangelism actually is in a variety of ways. To the liberation theologian, for example, the evangel might well be revolution, and evangelism might well be understood to be the promotion of radical social change in light of the liberation theologian|s understanding of the Christian Gospel. Consequently, I will refer to "Evangelical evangelism" to describe evangelism as it is understood and practised within the context and theology of the Evangelical movement as opposed to other Christian understandings of the message of the Christian faith. I will more clearly define the content of "Evangelical evangelism" in Chapter 3.

See William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 317,318; and Baker's Dictionary of Theology, eds., E.F. Harrison, Geoffrey Bromiley & Carl F. Henry, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1982) 200,201.

9.   See George Marsden, "The Evangelical Denomination", ed., George Marsden, Evangelicalism and Modern America (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984) xii; George W. Peters, Saturation Evangelism (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970) 25,26; 42-44.

10.   In describing Evangelical theologians, I will be using a number of terms that are probably clumsy, but I cannot find a simple description of the group I am trying to describe. When I refer to "formal theologians", "academic theologians" or "systematic theologians" or other similar terms, I am refering to what might be thought of as Evangelicalism's theological "establishment". These are the Evangelical theologians who are professional teachers, thinkers and/or writers who define Evangelicalism's theology. These are the theologians who teach in seminaries, and write in such a technical manner that their books are read by students, and perhaps by some pastors, but very seldom by the Evangelical laity.

The way in which I describe these theologians is not meant to be pejorative. The Christian Church needs professional thinkers given the time to sysematically define Christian belief while pushing forward the frontier of Christian understanding. These terms are meant to clarify, however, that there are different ways of doing theology. The layperson might not have the technical language or tools to reflect on the Being of God in this manner, but popular

theology is no less profound for this.   Both types of
theology are necessary in the Church.

I have used these terms to simply try to identify who I
am talking about and how they go about their theological
inquiry.

11.   When I use the pronoun "Him" to refer to God, I do
not mean to imply that God is male as opposed to female. I
would be equally comfortable using the pronoun "Her", but I
feel that not only would many readers find this confusing,
but the pronoun "Her" still only describes half of the
reality.   I do not use the neuter pronoun "It" because this
pronoun would seem to deny the personality of God.   It is
clumsy to say "Her/Him", though this would be a more accurate
reflection of my own understanding of God as both male and
female, though even in this approach one pronoun must come
before the other, thus leaving room for the misinterpretation
that one gender is dominant over the other in the being of
God.   I find that the simplest course of action is to simply
use the traditional "Him", being careful to explain that this
pronoun is by no means meant to reduce or ignore the female
facet of God's being.

I find myself, nevertheless, uncomfortable with what
seems to be a complete lack of any effort on the part of
Evangelical writers to use inclusive language.   This is an
issue that Evangelicals will have to deal with more seriously
in the future.

Chapter One: A DEFINITION OF EVANGELICALISM

A serious exploration of any facet of Evangelical thought requires at the outset some kind of definition of Evangelicalism itself. This is true, in part, because despite the large and growing numbers of people influenced by the Evangelical Churches, the movement has not been taken seriously and therefore not studied seriously by those outside the movement. Morris Inch (an evangelical author)[1] observes that: "...evangelical progress must seem puzzling to those accustomed to thinking of evangelicalism in terms of the sawdust trail - a chapter from the American past, the Methodist circuit rider, the Baptist revival - rather than a movement at the cutting edge of religious life today."[2] Bernard Ramm makes a similar observation: "Rather than being a small handful of crank holdouts from the nineteenth century, evangelicals number in the tens of millions. This very fact must be reckoned with by American Churchmen."[3]

It would seem that one of reasons "American Churchmen" have not seriously reckoned with Evangelicalism is that they have apparently often been too willing to live with a stereo-type of the Evangelical as an archaic holdout from the last century. Evangelical beliefs and attitudes that may or may not be accurate have been assumed. James Davison Hunter (in a book unsympathetic to Evangelicalism in many respects) claims that due to such stereo-typing

"Evangelicalism has far too long failed to receive open-minded treatment."[4] Hunter suggests that despite the size and power of the movement, "the stereo-types are comfortable and ostensibly reliable"[5] and consequently Evangelicalism has received little serious academic study. Citing a sociological study that would confirm this problem of stereo-typing, Hunter provides some specific reasons why this takes place:

> Among the reasons cited for this lack of research are the political and social class biases of many researchers against what they consider intrinsiclly lower class, politically conservative, and historically non-progressive (Warner, 1979).[6]

It must be recognised, however, that the problem of stereo-typing is not the only difficulty in defining Evangelicalism. The movement is so diverse that it defies any concise definition. George Marsden suggests that it is appropriate to think of Evangelicalism as "a religious grouping", but it is a dangerous mistake to consider it "a single, more or less unified phenomena. ... Most of the parts are not only disconnected, they are srikingly diverse."[7] Because of this great diversity, Evangelicals themselves are inclined to define themselves in different ways. Woodridge, Nell and Hatch acknowledge this problem:

> Admittedly, if we concentrate on the issue of what evangelical should mean, it would be difficult to come up with a definition that would satisfy all of those in the country who call themselves Evangelicals or whom others refer to commonly by that name.[8]

There are a number of reasons for this diversity. Bernard Ramm suggests, for example, that the diversity was

born in the controversial roots of Evangelicalism. Arising
out of nearly a century of debate between orthodox and
liberal theology, Ramm suggests that those particular
doctrines which were controversial received major attention
to the neglect of equally important but less controversial
doctrines. The result of this imbalance "...has been to
shape evangelical theology into the form of haphazardly
related doctrines."[9] Another reason for the diversity might
be found in Richard Quebedeaux's rather loose description of
Evangelicals: "Evangelicalism ... can well be termed an
ideologically conservative *movement* rather than a Church or
denomination."[10] The key word here is "movement"; there is
no single organization that represents all Evangelicals[11]
that can provide a creed to define Evangelicalism or a
structure that can impose unity on the movement. Precisely
because it is a *movement*, the people who describe themselves
as Evangelical are committed not so much to the movement *per*
se, but to an ideology growing out of some historical roots
that bind the movement together.

There are two ways that we can try to define
Evangelicalism. The first is an historical approach. The
strength of this approach to defining the movement is that it
clarifies the relationship of Evangelicalism to other
theological movements in modern Christianity. A historical
definition also demonstrates the source of the deterministic
vision of God held by many Evangelicals which is one of the
major themes running throughout this thesis. Calvinism is

influential in modern Evangelicalism via the strong influence
of Puritanism.

The second approach to defining Evangelicalism is
conceptual. This approach examines the concepts that all
Evangelicals share. This approach is also important to the
matter at hand. If it can be demonstrated that the concepts
that unify Evangelicalism would themselves seem to deny
deterministic theology, then this will certainly present
Evangelicals with a difficult dilemma. By the time we reach
the conclusion of the third chapter, we will discover that
this precise dilemma does, indeed, exist for the Evangelical.

We will now turn our attention to these two different
approaches to defining Evangelicalism.

A. A Historical Approach to Defining Evangelicalism

One of the ways Evangelicals define themselves is by
examining their historical roots.[12] In broad terms, the
historical roots of contemporary Evangelicalism go back to
the European Reformation. The reformation commitment to
biblicism By which I mean the high view of Scripture and
consequent heavy reliance upon Scripture that will become
evident in the following section) and the soteriology of the
reformers especially find their place in today's Evangelical
movement.[13] Many other influences, however, can be found in
contemporary Evangelicalism. A number of writers, for
example, also see the strong influence of German pietism and
Puritanism.[14] George Marsden provides a long, but still only
partial, list of historical movements that have helped to

shape contemporary Evangelicalism: "Puritans, Pietists, Methodists, Baptists, nineteenth-century restorationists, revivalists, black Christians, holiness groups, Pentecostals and others."[15] Donald G. Bloesch summarizes the diversity of contemporary Evangelicalism's roots:

> The new evangelicals look not only to the Protestant Reformation for their spiritual and theological illumination, but also to the spiritual movements of purification subsequent to the Reformation: Pietism, Puritanism, and Evangelicalism. A Calvinistic strain is very much present in neo-evangelicalism, but this is only one of several theological currents. The Wesleyan note can be heard, and even Catholic mysticism is represented.[16]

The "very much present" Calvinistic strain is, of course, the source of the doctrine of divine determinism that we will find present in the thought of many Evangelical systematic theologians. Some of the other currents (such as "the Wesleyan note") would lead to a less deterministic view of God. In these conflicting historical streams, we see the root of the present theological dilemma in Evangelicalism which will be the theme of this thesis.

While this examination of historical roots helps us to understand the tone of Evangelicalism, these roots are themselves so diverse that they still do not provide us with a consise definition of modern Evangelicalism. These roots have grown into four major branches of Evangelicalism today: (1) the Baptist tradition; (2) the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition; (3) the Anabaptist tradition; and (4) the Reform-Confessional tradition.[17]

More recent Evangelical history might help us better

to clarify who the Evangelicals are and what they stand for. In the Fall of 1941, a group of Fundamentalists founded the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC) as a reaction to the Federal Council of Churches (FCC) which had been established in 1908 as an early-expression of ecumenism in the United States. Uncomfortable with the tone of the ACCC, in the Spring of 1942 a group of more moderate doctrinally orthodox Christians formed the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). While being similar in doctrine to the ACCC the NAE was determined to be "...no dog-in-the-manger, reactionary, negative or destructive type of organization".[18]

The years 1946-1948 saw a discernable "outburst of literary production" by the Evangelicals which was "critical of aspects of fundamentalism and called for a conservative reconstruction".[19] In particular, these "new Evangelicals" called for a more profound social application of the Gospel than was practised by the Fundamentalists; a more scholarly approach to Biblicism; and a willingness to engage in dialogue and cooperation with other, more liberal Christians.[20]

As the Fundamentalists battled communism and theological liberalism throughout the 1950s, the new Evangelicals were busy winning converts. Radio broadcasts like "Back to the Bible Hour" and "Old Fashioned Revival Hour"; student organizations such as "Youth for Christ" and "Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship" and the crusades of such preachers as Billy Graham all added to the swelling numbers

of Evangelicals.[21] In the late 1950s and early 1960s the break between the new Evangelicals and the Fundamentalists from whence they had come was complete as Billy Graham included more liberal Churches in his crusades and Fuller Theological Seminary began to re-examine its Statement of Faith regarding the Bible. Both events became the target of harsh rhetoric from the Fundamentalists.[22] As their popularity and numbers increased, those who called themselves "new evangelicals" or "neo-evangelicals" became simply "Evangelicals."[23]

But what were these early modern Evangelicals trying to do? They were trying to steer a middle course between classical Christian Liberalism and Neo-orthodoxy on the one hand and Fundamentalism on the other. While they wanted to remain true to "the historical faith", they also wanted to reject the obscurantism and cultural excesses of Fundamentalism.[24] It is not simply that they wanted to synthesize Liberalism and Fundamentalism; it is rather that they wanted to go beyond both to something new. Bloesch reports that those originally known as neo-evangelicals

> ...were seeking to eschew the excesses of
> fundamentalism but at the same time remain solidly
> Biblical. Carl Henry voiced the prevailing issue at
> the time: "May not evangelical Christianity,
> dissatisfied with both fundamentalism and modernism,
> transcend the alternatives of the
> modernist-fundamentalist controversy?"[25]

Given this initial purpose, it might be helpful to define Evangelicalism as standing between Fundamentalism and Neo-othodoxy on the theological spectrum, and exploring how

it differs from the two theological positions on either side of it).

It is clear that Neo-orthodox thinkers such as Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Reinhold Neibuhr were helpful to the new Evangelicals.[26] Woodridge, Noll and Hatch report that although the Evangelicals "...lost no time in pointing out serious deficiencies, yet the service of these neo-orthodox thinkers in clearing away the weeds of modernistic humanism was a valuable one in preparing the American theological soil for more expressly evangelical plantings."[27] There were three areas in which the Evangelicals could not agree with Neo-orthodoxy. First, they felt that the Neo-orthodox view of the Bible granted to Scripture an inadequate authority. Secondly, they felt that Neo-orthodox thinkers, particularly Barth, side-stepped the need for personal conversion by advocating universal salvation. Thirdly, with the loss of an urgent, experiential need for personal conversion, the Evangelicals questioned whether or not there was any room or need for evangelism in Neo-orthodoxy.[28] As a postscript to this discussion of Evangelicalism vis-a-vis Neo-orthodoxy, it is interesting to note that as Quebedeaux describes Neo-orthodoxy as passing out of existence "as a viable school of Christian thought with the advent in the mid-1960s of a new radical Liberalism or secular Christianity",[29] Bloesch suggests that Evangelicalism might well become the spiritual successor to Neo-orthodoxy.[30]

Perhaps even more important than understanding what
distinguishes Evangelicalism from Neo-orthodoxy is
understanding what distinguishes it from Fundamentalism.
This is the case because these terms are often used
synonomously by the popular press, thus creating the
inaccurate impression that they are one and the same.[31]
Evangelicalism is not Fundamentalism! This has been the case
since the beginning of the movement. Quebedeaux writes:

> After 1940, *Neo-Evangelicalism* became recognisable in
> the United States as a strong force within
> conservative Christianity - one which holds firm to
> what it believes is Biblical or historical orthodoxy
> but at the same time repudiates the theological and
> cultural excesses of fundamentalism.[32]

This is not to say that Evangelicalism has nothing in common
with Fundamentalism. Indeed, the difference is often more
one of attitude and spirit than of doctrinal content.[33] But
the difference is no less real for this. Bloesch writes:
"Evangelicals unashamedly stand for the fundamentals of the
Christian faith, but as a movement it transcends and corrects
the defensive, sectarian mentality commonly associated with
fundamentalism."[34] Inch reports that Evangelicalism agrees
with other modern theological movements in the view of
Fundamentalism "as clinging to archaic traditions rather than
defending the Scriptures."[35] Hunter identifies the most
profound difference between Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism
as being a philosophical approach to modernity: "From its
earliest times, Fundamentalism ... defined itself in
opposition to the world view of modernity", whereas

Evangelicals have maintained "a more positive and constructive, or perhaps conciliatory, approach to modernity."[36]

We may summarize the historical definition thus: Evangelicalism is a modern movement of Christian thought with historical roots in the European Reformation and subsequent movements of purification that seeks to maintain historic and Biblical orthodoxy in juxtaposition to Liberal and Neo-orthodox Christian thought while avoiding the reactionary bad manners, intolerance, shallow and unscholarly Biblicism, and lack of meaningful social involvement found in Fundamentalism.

B. A Conceptual Approach to Defining Evangelicalism

Alongside an examination of the historical roots of Evangelicalism, a number of writers have also sought to define this widely diverse movement by identifying what Marsden has termed "a conceptual unity"[37] (i.e.- the concepts that are shared by all Evangelicals regardless of other disagreements they might have). To the inquiry at hand (divine determinism or human free will), this approach to defining Evangelicalism might be more helpful.[38] A number of writers have attempted to clarify Evangelicalism's conceptual unity. To the extent that the following material is repetitive, this approach to defining Evangelicalism is validated.

Marsden identifies five elements to Evangelical conceptual unity:

(1) The reformation doctrine of the final authority of Scripture; (2) the real, historical character of God's saving work in Scripture; (3) eternal salvation only through personal trust in Christ; (4) the importance of evangelism and missions; and (5) the importance of a spiritually transformed life.[39]

Elsewhere Marsden summarizes his definition: "The key to Evangelical unity lies in a common commitment to Jesus Christ as the divine Saviour from sin, a common purpose to fulfill the great commission and, a common acknowledgement of the absolute normativeness of Holy Scripture."[40]

Woodbridge, Noll and Hatch identify

[t]he two beliefs that define the Evangelical most concisely are the following: (1) the conviction that people need to have a proper relationship with God, a relationship that can be brought about only when God forgives our offenses against himself and transforms us into people who can love him and do the things that please him, and (2) the conviction that the Bible has the last word on what man's responsibilities to God are and how God has provided a way for mankind to meet his demands and enjoy his friendship.[41]

Kenneth Kanzter speaks of "unifying factors"[42] rather than conceptual unity. He identifies the same two concepts as Woodridge, Noll and Hatch: (1) "Biblical authority";[43] and (2) "the good news how man can be rightly related to God."[44]

In The Evangelical Renaissance, Bloesch identifies five "salient notes" to modern Evangelicalism: (1) "the divine authority of Scripture"; (2) "[a] stress on the rationality of faith"; (3) insistence "on the need for personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation"; (4) "the realities of regeneration and sanctification"; the need to express faith in lifestyle; and (5) "the new conservatives tend to underscore the spiritual mission of the Church. The

primary aim of the Church is to preach the gospel and to make disciples of Jesus Christ".[45] In <u>The Future of Evangelical Christianity</u> Bloesch provides another briefer conceptual definition of Evangelicalism: "Holding firm to the doctrine taught by the prophets and apostles in Holy Scripture, evangelicals stress the need for personal experience of the reality of Christ's salvation as well as the need to carry out the great commission to teach all people to be his disciples and to call all nations to repentence."[46]

Quebedeaux refers to "theological principles":

> ...contemporary Evangelicalism is by no means unifyed in the fine points (and even some not-so-fine points) of doctrine. But it can now be characterized as a school of Christianity which attests to the truth of three major theological principles: (1) the complete reliability and final authority of Scripture in matters of faith and practise; (2) the necessity of *personal* faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour from sin and consequent commitment to Him as Lord; and (3) the urgency of seeking actively the conversion of sinners to Christ. Among different Evangelical scholars and groups, to be sure, these three points are variously interpreted, but their basic truth is always upheld.[47]

Inch speaks of a "doctrinal core":[48]

> ...contemporary Evangelicals can be identified by their adherence to (1) the belief that the Bible is the inerrant word of God, (2) the belief in the divinity of Christ, and (3) the belief in the efficacy of Christ's life, death, and physical resurrection for the salvation of the human soul. Behaviourally, Evangelicals are typically characterized by an individuated and experiential orientation toward spiritual salvation and religiousity in general, and by the conviction of the necessity of actively attempting to proselytize all nonbelievers to the tenents of the Evangelical belief system.[49]

Millard Erikson combines the historical approach to defining Evangelicalism with the conceptual approach,

observing that in the relatively short history of modern Evangelicalism the movement has been characterized: (1) a belief in the need for "personal regeneration ... a necessity for individual salvation" (which requires a social response to the Christian gospel),[50] (2) a rational defense of Biblical theism with an emphasis on apologetics and a scholarly approach to Biblical and theological studies,[51] and (3) evangelism.[52]

Finally, Bloesch provides us with a very concise summary of all of the above: "In Evangelical theology, Scripture is the source; the atonement or message of the cross is the central content."[53]

It would seem to me that the three words which would best describe the conceptual unity of Evangelicalism are all in this statement: *Scripture, atonement* and *message*. My own understanding of what it means to be Evangelical, consequently, includes these three points. I would define an Evangelical as one who believes: (1) that the Canon of the Bible as generally recognised by the Protestant Church is the final authority for all matters of Christian faith and life; (2) that humans, alienated from God by freely chosen sin, must accept the atonement made by Jesus Christ for salvation in a personal and experiential decision of faith; and (3) that having accepted and benefited by this message of divine/human reconciliation, the Christian has the obligation to share this message with all other people. These convictions, expressed in a variety of ways, can be found in some form in all the descriptions of Evangelical conceptual

unity. Two of these three convictions will be explored in much greater detail further in this study. At this point, I simply want to argue that these convictions are intrinsic to Evangelicalism; they are the watershed which determines whether or not a particular person, church, or organization can legitimately be labeled, either by themselves or by others, as Evangelical.

Let us now look at how strongly Evangelical thinkers are committed to each of these three concepts.

(1) Biblicism and Evangelical Self-Identity:

Woodbridge, Noll and Hatch trace the commitment to Biblicism among Evangelicals all the way back to the Puritan roots: "The New England Puritans, before all else, were a people of 'The Book'."[54] Evangelicals/continue to label themselves as "Bible believers."[55] It is no wonder that Ramm observes "the evangelical--must be thoroughly Biblical,"[56] an unbiblical Evangelical is a contradiction in terms. Inch states: "The mark of a true evangelical is the evangelical's advocacy of the gospel as set forth in the Scriptures" and "... the primacy of the Holy Writ in defining the character of faith and practise."[57] Kantzer considers "the formal principle of biblical authority" to be the "watershed" that distinguishes Evangelicalism from most other movements of modern Protestantism.[58] Whatever debate Evangelicals might have about how to interpret either the Bible or the divine inspiration of the Bible, they are united in the conviction that it carries divine and powerful authority.59

(2) Soteriology and Evangelical Self-Indentity:

The second concept that unifies Evangelicalism is the
Evangelical soteriology of a substitutionary atonement for
sinful humanity. Woodbridge, Noll and Hatch point out that
this commitment in modern Evangelicalism has historical
precedent. Throughout history (except for the earliest
reference to New Testament writers) the term "evangelical"
has refered to movements, whether in the European Reformation
or in the Church of England, that have shared a soteriology
involving faith in atonement and personal conversion
accompanied by Biblicism.[60] Inch provides a more
contemporary observation: "The evangelical vigourously
declares the death-resurrection of Jesus as God's solution to
man's dilemma, and thereby treats other theological concerns
as of secondary importance."[61]

In specific terms, what is involved in this atonement
soteriology? In the first place, there is the human
"dilemma" Inch refers to. The problem is simple: "... all
men and women are sinners who need a new birth through
personal commitment to Christ as Saviour" (Quebedeaux).[62]
This problem is serious, for, as Kantzer observes, the
Evangelical believes in "the final righteous judgement of all
mankind ... [and] the eternal punishment of the impenitent
and disbelieving wicked of this world."[63] Fortunately, the
death of Jesus of Nazareth on the cross provides a "...
substitutionary atonement in which God did all that was
needed to redeem man from sin."[64] However, as Bloesch

observes, this atonement is only efficacious when met with
the human response of accepting faith..

> Evangelical theology has always insisted that the
> atonement has two poles: the objective sacrifice on
> the cross, and the subjective appropriation of the
> benefits of this sacrifice in faith. The truth in
> the moral influence and mystical theories of the
> atonement is that man must make contact with the
> cross of Christ if he is to benefit from its saying
> power.[65]

Faith is further defined by Bloesch as "the commitment of the
whole man to the living Christ, but this involves knowledge
and assent."[66] Without this human response, despite the
wideness of its invitation, the cross is powerless to save:
"Christ died for all men, but His death is beneficial only to
those who believe."[67]

(3) Evangelism and Evangelical Self-Indentity:

Finally, the third commitment that defines the
Evangelical is stated by Bloesch directly and simply: "To be
evangelical means to be evangelistic;" that is, to "be fired
by a burning zeal to share this salvation with others."[68]
Inch makes an interesting argument that part of the
Evangelical milieu is a "remnant" mentality: a sense of being
a righteous minority in the face an imposing and opposing
majority. Inch suggests that this mentality is carried over
from periods in history when the antecedents of contemporary
Evangelicalism were, in fact, a persecuted minority:[69] This
mentality has led to two dynamics that relate to the theme of
Evangelical evangelism. First, this remnant mentality
"permits the evangelical to take an unconventional stand;"[70]

secondly, it motivates the Evangelical to attempt to share the distict vision and belief system with members of the majority which stand outside the remnant movement, Evangelicalism.[71]

These three commitments that define Evangelicalism will be very important to my argument regarding divine determinism and human freedom. If, for example, it can be demonstrated that the Evangelical soteriology in its understanding of human responsibility and accountability for sin and in its demand for a faith response to the atonement of Christ assumes or requires a view of human freedom, then the Evangelical will either have to take this into account in deciding the question of divine determinism or else reliquish something that is intrinsic to Evangelicalism. Or if, for example, it can be demonstrated that the Evangelical commitment to evangelism either assumes or requires a view of human freedom, again, this will have to be taken into account as the Evangelical defines the issue of divine sovereignty, or else there will be a loss of something that is intrinsic to Evangelicalism. These are the questions that will be addressed in the next two chapters. There we will see that there is, indeed, a conflict between the Calvinistic tradition found in some of the historical roots of Evangelicalism and the shared concepts of soteriology and evangelism.

NOTES

1. All of the writers cited in this chapter, unless otherwise identified in the text, are writing from an Evangelical perspective.

2. Morris A. Inch, <u>The Evangelical Challenge</u> (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1978), 9.

3. Bernard L. Ramm, <u>The Evangelical Heritage</u> (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1973), 12.

4. James Davison Hunter, <u>Amercian Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism</u> (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 3.

5. James Davison Hunter, <u>Amercian Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism</u>, 3.

6. James Davison Hunter, <u>Amercian Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism</u>, 3.

7. George Marsden, "The Evangelical Denomination", ed. George Marsden, <u>Evangelicalism and Modern America</u> (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), viii. See also Kenneth Kantzer, "Unity and Diversity in Evangelical Faith", eds. David F. Wells and John B. Woodbridge, <u>The Evangelicals</u> (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1975), 58.
Kantzer argues that the reformation itself was characterized by "the phenomena of unity in the midst of diversity", and that thus, twentieth century Evangelicalism is simply showing another facet of its reformation roots in its great diversity beyond a very basic conceptual unity.

8. John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, <u>The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of America's Evangelicals</u> (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), 13.

9. Bernard Ramm, <u>After Fundamentalism: the Future of Evangelical Theology</u> (San Fransico: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1983), 3.

10. Richard Quebedeaux, <u>The Young Evangelicals</u> (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1974), 4.

11. This is not to say that some organizations have not tried to put themselves into position to speak on behalf of all Evangelicals. The National Association of Evangelicals

in the United States, and the younger Canadian Evangelical
Fellowship of Canada undoubtedly speak for many Evangelicals,
yet many more remain independent of such organizations.
Further, these organizations speak out of perceived
Evangelical consensus on a given issue rather than trying to
shape Evangelical thought (though it might be argued that
such influence is present in the publications of both
organizations). These organizations seem to view themselves
as giving a voice to Evangelicals regarding issues upon which
they agree rather than determining or disciplining
Evangelical thought and/or practise.

12. See John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O.
Hatch, The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of
America's Evangelicals, 13.

13. See Bernard L. Ramm, The Evangelical Heritage,
23-48.

It is important to note that the reformer most
significant to contemporary Evangelicalism is John Calvin.
This is perhaps the case because Calvin gave the Reformation
an exhaustive systemized theology. Whatever the reason, when
we discuss Evangelicalism and Divine determinism, we will
discover (in Chapter Two) that Calvin's unapologetic argument
for divine determinism and human predestination will remain
the position of the majority of modern Evangelical
theologians.
See also James Davison Hunter, Amercian Evangelicalism:
Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism, 7.

14. See Donald G. Bloesch, The Future of Evangelical
Christianity: A Call for Unity Amid Diversity (Garden City,
N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 44f; and John D.
Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, The Gospel in
America: Themes in the Stories of America's Evangelicals, 15.

15. George Marsden, "The Evangelical Denomination", x.

16. Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance
(Grand Rapids, Mich.: William Eerdmans Publishing Company,
1973), 32; see also John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and
Nathan O. Hatch, The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories
of America's Evangelicals, 11.

17. See James Davison Hunter, Amercian Evangelicalism:
Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism, 7.

18. James Davison Hunter, Amercian Evangelicalism:
Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism, 41.

19. Millard Erickson, The New Evangelical Theology
(Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1968), 31.

20.   See Millard Erickson, <u>The New Evangelical Theology,</u>
31; James Davison Hunter, <u>Amercian Evangelicalism:</u>
<u>Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism,</u> 44; and
John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, <u>The</u>
<u>Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of America's</u>
<u>Evangelicals,</u> 127.

21.   James Davison Hunter, <u>Amercian Evangelicalism:</u>
<u>Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism,</u> 44.

22.   See John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O.
Hatch, <u>The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of</u>
<u>America's Evangelicals,</u> 127.

23.   See James Davison Hunter, <u>Amercian Evangelicalism:</u>
<u>Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism,</u> 45.

24.   For a good description of Evangelicalism between
Neo-othodoxy and Fundamentalism, see Millard Erickson, <u>The</u>
<u>New Evangelical Theology,</u> 44,45.
     For a more extensive study of the course the "new
Evangelicals" were trying to take between what they saw as
the excesses of both Liberalism and Fundamentalism, the two
following articles describe the relationship between
Evangelicalism and both of these poles: Joel A. Carpenter,
"From Fundamentalism to the New Evangelical Coalition", ed.
George Marsden, <u>Evangelicalism and Modern America;</u> and
Leonard I Sweet, "The 1960s: The Crises of Liberal
Christianity and the Public Emergence of Evangelicalism", ed.
George Marsden, <u>Evangelicalism and Modern America.</u>

25.   Donald G. Bloesch, <u>The Evangelical Renaissance,</u> 30.

26.   See John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O.
Hatch, <u>The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of</u>
<u>America's Evangelicals,</u> 81,82.
     It is interesting to note that Ramm has written an
entire book exploring Neo-orthodox theology as a way of
coming to a definition of his own Evangelical theology. In
this book, Ramm reports a significant and direct influence on
his own thinking by Karl Barth. Bernard Ramm, <u>After</u>
<u>Fundamentalism: the Future of Evangelical Theology,</u> 8.

27.   John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O.
Hatch, <u>The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of</u>
<u>America's Evangelicals,</u> 82.

28.   See Richard Quebedeaux, <u>The Young Evangelicals,</u>
13,14; see also John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan
O. Hatch, <u>The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of</u>
<u>America's Evangelicals,</u> 81.

29.   Richard Quebedeaux, <u>The Young Evangelicals,</u> 14.

30. Donald G. Bloesch, <u>The Evangelical Renaissance</u>, 44.

31. See Donald G. Bloesch, <u>The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity Amid Diversity</u>, 21.

32. Jerry Falwell, a well-known Fundamentalist, verfies this statement. In an interview he provides his definition of the distinction between an Evangelical and a Fundamentalist: "I always say a *fundamentalist is an evangelical who is mad about something - abortion or pornography or the moral direction of the nation.*" (emphasis added).
"A Candid Conversation With Jerry Falwell", <u>Charisma and Christian Life Magazine</u>, Vol. 13, No. 1 (August, 1987), 53.

33. Richard Quebedeaux, <u>The Young Evangelicals</u>, 3.

34. Donald G. Bloesch, <u>The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity Amid Diversity</u>, 22.

35. Morris Inch, <u>The Evangelical Challenge</u>, 13.

36. James Davison Hunter, <u>Amercian Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism</u>, 48.

37. George Marsden, "The Evangelical Denomination", ix.

38. A full understanding of Evangelicalism really requires both a historical appreciation of the roots of the movement as well as a grasp of a few major concepts that are shared. Different areas of study are nevertheless clearly assisted more by one than the other. A study of Evangelical social concern would probably find the historical approach more helpful in the long run. In this thesis, however, we will find that the conceptual unity involves issues at the very heart of the debate between divine determinism and human freedom.

39. George Marsden, "The Evangelical Denomination", ix,x.

40. Donald G. Bloesch, <u>The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity Amid Diversity</u>, 5.

41. John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, <u>The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of America's Evangelicals</u>, 14.

42. Kenneth Kantzer, "Unity and Diversity in Evangelical Faith", 59.

43. See Kenneth Kantzer, "Unity and Diversity in

Evangelical Faith", 59.

44. See Kenneth Kantzer, "Unity and Diversity in Evangelical Faith", 73.

45. Donald G. Bloesch, <u>The Evangelical Renaissance</u>, 33.

46. Donald G. Bloesch, <u>The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity Amid Diversity</u>, 17.

47. Richard Quebedeaux, <u>The Young Evangelicals</u>, 3,4.

48. James Davison Hunter, <u>Amercian Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism</u>, 7.

49. James Davison Hunter, <u>Amercian Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernism</u>, 7.

50. See Millard Erickson, <u>The New Evangelical Theology</u>, 32.

51. See Millard Erickson, <u>The New Evangelical Theology</u>, 33,34.

52. See Millard Erickson, <u>The New Evangelical Theology</u>, 35-37.

53. Donald G. Bloesch, <u>The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity Amid Diversity</u>, 16.

54. John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, <u>The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of America's Evangelicals</u>, 103.

55. John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, <u>The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of America's Evangelicals</u>, 124.

56. Bernard L. Ramm, <u>The Evangelical Heritage</u>, 152.

57. Morris Inch, <u>The Evangelical Challenge</u>, 11.

58. See Kenneth Kantzer, "Unity and Diversity in Evangelical Faith", 59.

59. See, as one example of Evangelical disagreement about the meaning of inspiration, but *not* about the authority of the Bible, a discussion of the debate which took place in 1962 regarding Fuller Seminary's Statement of Faith regarding the Bible reported by John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, <u>The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of America's Evangelicals</u>, 128.
For further agreement and disagreement among

Evangelicals regarding the nature of the Bible, see also John
D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, The Gospel
in America: Themes in the Stories of America's Evangelicals,
124.

60.   John D. Woodridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O.
Hatch, The Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of
America's Evangelicals, 14.

61.   Morris Inch, The Evangelical Challenge, 10.

62.   Richard Quebedeaux, The Young Evangelicals, 14.

63.   Kenneth Kantzer, "Unity and Diversity in
Evangelical Faith", 73.

64.   Kenneth Kantzer, "Unity and Diversity in
Evangelical Faith", 73.

65. .Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance,
60,61.

66.   Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance,
65,66.

67.   Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance, 36.

68.   Donald G. Bloesch, The Future of Evangelical
Christianity: A Call for Unity Amid Diversity, 17.
      See also Donald G. Bloesch, The Future of Evangelical
Christianity: A Call for Unity Amid Diversity, 16.

69.   See Morris Inch, The Evangelical Challenge,
101-111.

70.   Morris Inch, The Evangelical Challenge, 107.

71.   Morris Inch, The Evangelical Challenge, 108.

THE THEOLOGICAL DEBATE

How does the Evangelical God relate to creation?
From the previous chapter we can conclude that Evangelicals
believe God to be a self-revealing, gracious Being who
invites humans to salvation from sin. But is He also the
cause of all events; does He predetermine the events of the
universe? Or does He, rather, give the gift of freedom to
His creatures?

There is some debate as Evangelicals respond to these
questions. John H. Gerstner, for example, writing in an
article entitled "Theological Boundaries: The Reformed
Perspective", argues that to the degree that Evangelicalism
loses its Reformed doctine of God, particularly Calvin's
emphasis on divine intitiative, Evangelicalism moves beyond
the boundaries set by its historical roots. At risk are

> ...some significant aspects of [Evangelicalism's]
> Reformation heritage, especially as these relate to
> the doctrines of grace, the depth of human depravity,
> and the indispensible need of God's saving initiative
> not only in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to
> accomplish salvation but also *inclining sinners to
> accept it.*[1] (Emphasis added).

Gerstner describes Pelagianism (by which he seems to mean any
view of human freedom) as "the utter antithesis of
evangelicalism."[2]

Other Evangelical writers will question this view.
They wonder whether such a view of either God or humanity is
logically compatible[3] with the Evangelical view of divine

love and the Evangelical understanding of salvation. Synan

Vinson argues that just as there are unquestionably

Calvinistic roots of Evangelicalism, there has also always

been an Armenian wing (albeit a minority) in Evangelicalism

that affirms human freedom and responsibility.[4] The writers

that argue human freedom represent, however, clearly a small

minority of Evangelical scholars.

In this chapter I will examine the theological

arguments made by each side in this Evangelical debate over

the meaning of divine sovereignty. The largest part of the

chapter describes in detail the apparently quite

deterministic view of God which is held by the majority.

This section will begin with a brief summary of what Carl

Henry (one of the foundational scholars of Evangelicalism,

and still a dominant force in the movement) has written on

the subject. Following this exposition, I will discuss the

thought of a number of Evangelical scholars as they: (1)

define divine sovereignty; (2) apply divine sovereignty: (i)

in a general sense to creaturely acts and events; and (ii) in

a very specific sense to the doctrine of election to

salvation; (3) discuss divine sovereignty with reference to

human sin; and (4) observe the relationship between the

divine attributes of sovereignty and omniscience. This

section will conclude with a brief summary of the thought of

another significant Evangelical theologian, Donald G.

Bloesch, who seems to see the problems with such a view, but

nevertheless also seems to find himself unable to reject this

traditional Calvinistic view of God in favour of something else.

In the following section I will demonstrate what I believe to be a fatal logical incoherence within the Evangelical theology of divine determinism. I will then turn in the next section to report on a small minority of Evangelical writers who question the majority view, favouring instead a strong view of human freedom. Finally, I will point out that neither side in this debate wishes to completely reject the view of the other: those arguing determinism will argue that they are not, in fact, rejecting human freedom; while those arguing human freedom will also assert divine sovereignty.

(A) The Majority View

(1) Carl Henry: A Preview of the Majority Position:

As we saw in the last chapter, Carl Henry has been a leader of modern Evangelicalism, and a powerful shaper of Evangelical thought from the very beginning of this movement. It is for this reason that his writing on the issue of divine sovereignty is so important. Despite his rather voluminous material, however, Henry has not written much on the subject.[5] What he has written (in the final volume of his six-volume work, <u>God, Revelation and Authority</u>) does provide us with a good overview of an Evangelical doctrine of divine determinism.

Henry uses several words, depending upon the context,

to describe God's initiating activity. He refers to God's
sovereignty, providence and election. Henry describes
providence as the working out in minute detail God's
purposeful plan.

> The Biblical view of providence is dramatically
> specific; it unqualifiedly affirms particular divine
> providence, that is, God works out his purposes not
> merely in life's generalities but in the details and
> minutiae of life as well. The Bible relates to
> divine providence not only general and universal
> structures but also personal experiences; nothing
> falls outside God's will and concern. Not just the
> mass of humanity but each individual is significant
> to God as are life's particularities. Since all
> things fall within God's purview, even seemingly
> chance events should be considered divine
> providences.[6]

In other words, God goes far beyond defining general
boundaries for creaturely acts. Henry repeatedly asserts the
universality of God's providence, and its direct application
to every part of creation. Not only does providence effect
the predestination of the elect, it also extends to "the
divine purpose for the entire time-space universe and all
creatures and their destiny."[7]

This divine purpose is fulfilled by God "in creation
and redemption by ordering both nature's movements and human
affairs."[8] Nature itself "is suspended on the eternal plan
of the unchanging God who is free to decree as he pleases and
who in his 'good pleasure' decrees a space-time matrix that
by his willing becomes as necessary as God himself."[9] Were
God to cease to function as the omnipotent, omnipresent
"governer of all things" who "upholds and maintains the
created universe", the entire natural order would instantly

collapse, reverting to "the *nihil* or nothingness that prevailed before God's creation."[10]   Fortunately, God continues to uphold the universe "for the sovereign purpose and goal for which he intitially created it."[11]

Just as the divine initiative pervades and determines the natural universe, "God, moreover, implements his divine purpose throughout the course of human affairs and not just sporadically or in isolated events. All history reveals the certainty of events decreed by God."[12] Among the human events determined by God is when "...God in *determinate mercy* provides redemption for some fallen creatures" (emphasis added).[13] It is important to note that Henry retains the Calvinistic doctrine of election including both the notion that grace is unconditionally determined by God and the related notion that only some humans are the beneficiaries of that "determinate mercy". Henry identifies the heart of his doctrine of election as the freedom of God[14] who can do as He wills and save who He wills: "The free God of the Bible binds man to himself by divine choice."[15]

Henry leaves us with a world completely ordered by the sovereign determination of God:

> The Christian assesment of history is ... grounded in a worldview unshaken in its confidence in a supernatural creator of all who has revealed his almighty will and purpose, and is the providential constrainer and ruler of men and nations. '... [B]iblical theism insists on God's providential activity in universal history, an outworking of his sovereign purposes in history as a totality that includes the special redemptive events by which he achieves the divine salvation of penitent sinners.[16]

Finally, it needs to be observed that Henry's view of divine sovereignty is related to divine omniscience. The decrees of God implemented by divine providence indicate "divine forepreparation" and underline "the divine anticipation of all things that would harmoniously accomplish God's predetermined purpose."[17]

It is obvious that Carl Henry does not only imply a doctrine of divine determinism, he explicitly states such a doctrine. It is equally clear, particularly with reference to the doctrine of unconditional election, that Henry has a very restricted view of human freedom. These themes in Henry's thought will also be reflected by other Evangelical writers that represent the majority position of Evangelicalism on this issue.

(ii) A More Detailed Examination of the Majority Position:

In this section, I will treat the majority Evangelical position on divine sovereignty as a number of specific issues. I will describe the thought of Evangelical theologians on (a) a definition of divine sovereignty; (b) divine sovereignty practically applied to the world of events and decisions; (c) the relationship between divine sovereignty and sin; and (d) the related divine attributes of sovereignty and omniscience.

<u>(a) Divine Sovereignty Defined:</u>

A number of Evangelicals define divine sovereignty as the omnipotent ability of God not only to plan creaturely

events according to God's own purpose, but also to then implement those events in a determinative fashion. Arthur Pink,[18] for example, provides a lengthy definition of divine sovereignty.

> What do we mean by this expression [the sovereignty of God]? We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the Godhood of God. ... To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is Most High, doing according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth, so that none can stay His hand. ... To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in heaven and earth, so that none can defeat his Counsel, thwart His purpose, or resist His will. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is "The Governer among the nations" (Psm. 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleaseth Him best.[19]

It is evident that Pink means us to understand by the phrase "the sovereignty of God" that God not only has the ability to determine creaturely events, but that God in fact does determine these events. Kingdoms are established not because humans freely choose their rulers (or rulers freely choose to oppress their subjects) but because God has decreed that it shall be. God's purpose and pre-ordained plan can be neither thwarted nor resisted.

Andrew Rule emphasizes the scope of this determinative divine activity. He defines the action of sovereign providence as the divine ability

> ...to look ahead, to foresee, and thus to plan in advance. But as used here, it also means to carry out the plan. And since the agent of providence is the all-knowing, all-powerful God, literally everything is included.[20]

Augustus Strong appeals to God's omnipotence which he

defines as "the power of God to do all things which are objects of power, whether with or without the use of means".[21] There is an important qualification on divine ability here that needs to be noted: "Omnipotence does not imply power to do that which is not an object of power; as, for example, that which is self-contradictory, or contradictory to the nature of God."[22] God's power is thus limited by logical possibilties. It would be "self-contradictory", for example, for God to make a square circle. God's power is also limited by His own "nature" or character: "God has all the power that is consistent with infinite perfection – all power to do what is worthy of himself."[23] In other words, God is incapable of evil or sin. This, of course, raises a number of problems. If God is sovereign in all events and incapable of sin, how then did sin enter the world? If God is sovereign in all events and incapable of evil, why is there so much evil and suffering in the world?[24] Though Strong does not identify or respond to these problems, he argues that were there not such limitations on divine power, God would be held hostage to his own omnipotence:

> Omnipotence does not imply the exercise of all power on the part of God. He has power over His power; in other words, His power is under the control of a wise and holy will. *God can do all He will, but He will not do all He can.* Else His power is a mere force acting necessarily, and God is slave to His own omnipotence.[25]

This is a very fascinating statement in that it might suggest (though Strong would clearly deny such as a suggestion) that

God has the ability to share power with His creatures if it is consistent with His character and/or divine plan to do so.

A majority of Evangelicals view sovereignty as God's omnipotent ability to plan, determine and implement His will in every facet of creaturely existence. While these Evangelicals do place some limits on God's omnipotent sovereignty, those limits are imposed either by the logical structure of the universe (a structure that, to the Evangelical, has its origin in God) or by the character of God, Himself. To state it another way, God's sovereignty is not limited in any fashion by creaturely freedom. This heavy emphasis on omnipotent sovereignty clearly stresses divine determinism, and just as clearly limits human freedom as to make it almost a meaningless concept. This will become even more clear as we see how these Evangelicals apply the concept of the sovereignty of God.

b. Divine Sovereignty Applied:

A survey of the literature written by the the school of thought representing a majority of Evangelical theologians reveals an application of the sovereignty of God on two levels. The first level at which the issue of divine sovereign predetermination is outlined is on the general level of all creaturely acts and events. This predetermination becomes much more specific, however, as Evangelical writers turn their attention to the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election which holds to a view that God has predestined some to grace while predestining others

to wrath. These levels might be broken down into even more specific categories by some writers, but the two basic categories remain.

This distinction is made by William Childs Robinson in his defense of a doctrine he calls "triple predestination" which he traces back to Augustine. This doctrine distinguishes between a general predestination, a special predestination, and a preterition:

> ...general predestination or providence, which magnifies God's wisdom in governing all things; special predestination or election in which His free grace is seen, in the choice of His people; and preterition or reprobation by which He passes by and leaves other sinners to the due dessert of their guilt and manifestations of his power and justice.[26]

Arthur Pink similarly categorizes the application of divine sovereignty. He argues that God is sovereign in His exercise of power as evidenced by the fact that He helps some, but not others, with miracles and other manifestations of divine ability.[27] Pink argues that God is also sovereign in His exercise of grace and mercy, as evidenced by the fact that He saves some, and leaves others to judgement and condemnation.[27]

A definition of sovereignty provided by Peter Toon also contains the same two elements. He defines divine sovereignty as "... the activity of God in creating, upholding and guiding the universe, as well as guiding history and bringing salvation, [which] is the activity of the omnipotent Lord."[28]

J.I. Packer places a strong emphasis upon the

general application of God's sovereign will. In his

book, _Knowing God_, he argues that God exercises

"unlimited dominion over all his creatures."[30] Not only

is God, according to Packer, "Lord of all that He has

made", He has the ability to change or supercede the

order He has created.[31] If God wishes to violate a

natural law, for example, He has the ability to do so as

sovereign Lord of the created universe. All is subject

to His will. Further, divine direction or involvement is

not a matter of occassional isolated events. In the book

Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, Packer argues that

God "'worketh _all things_ after the counsel of his own

will' (Eph. 1:11), directing every process and ordering

every event for the fulfilling of His own eternal

plan."[32]

Lest we conclude that this general exercise of

determinative sovereignty excludes human acts or

decisions, Packer further argues that God exercises

sovereignty over the nations of the world and their

rulers:

> Do you suppose that it is really these great men who
> determine which way the world shall go? Think again;
> for God is greater than the world's greatest men. He
> is, as the Prayer Book says, "The only ruler of
> princes".[32]

According to Packer, God's determination of human events

never ceases. There is never a gap when humans function

apart from God's sovereignty, for "[i]t is not only at

isolated moments God takes control of events, either; all

history is under His sway."[34] Packer is not arguing that God merely influences history by prompting people, or presenting them with an ideal. God is controlling every event, act and decision played out on the human stage.

Arthur Pink also describes the general exercise of determinative sovereignty. God is not, argues Pink, "a far-distant Spectator taking no immediate hand in the affairs of earth". "[T]he material world is regulated by law" which is not only given, but administered by God.[35] Thus God exercises the ability as sovereign Lord to involve Himself in the affairs of creation, including the ability to violate natural law if such violation suits His purpose. This divine government is seen by Pink as necessary for the continued existence of the universe:

> [Observing that] there is an imperative need for God
> to rule over our world, let us now observe further
> the fact that God does rule, actually rule, and that
> His government extends to and is exercised over all
> things and all creatures.[36]

Pink claims this government of God extends to inanimate matter. For example, argues Pink, the weather is controlled by God.[37] God controls the acts of "irrational creatures;" He is the governing king of the animal kingdom.[38] God exercises determinative sovereignty over people.[39] All humans are, according to Pink, governed by God whether they know it or not; like it or not; accept it or not. "Though many are in ignorance of it, all men, good and bad, are under the jurisdiction of, and are absolutely subject to the administration of the Supreme Sovereign."[40]

If the determinitive nature of the exercise of God's sovereignty as understood by these Evangelicals were not already evident enough in the general exercise of divine sovereignty, it becomes even clearer as we examine their doctrine of salvific election. God is seen by them as irresitably drawing the elect into salvation. Salvation is a gift that depends solely upon God as the initiator of saving faith.

Gordon Girod appeals to the Canons of the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) for a definition of the doctrine of election:

> Election is the unchangable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath, out of mere grace, açcording to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will, chosen, from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault, from their primitve state of rectitude into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom he from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation.[41]

Augustus Strong provides us with a more recent definition of election that is no less deterministic:

> Election is that eternal act of God, by which in His sovereign pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, he chooses certain out of the number of sinful men to be the special recipients of the special grace of His Spirit and so to be made voluntary partakers of Christ's salvation.[42]

It completely eludes me how an individual can at one and the same time be "made" to be a partaker of Christ's salvation and be a "voluntary" partaker of Christ's salvation. Here in this contradiction we see the problem these writers are going to have with their doctrine of election - a problem I will

discuss further later.

In this doctrine of election (which is shared by the majority of Evangelical theologians), salvation is completely God's work and contains no element of human work. Girod writes, "...when God has chosen a man unto salvation, the Holy Spirit will bring conviction of sin to man's heart, and God Himself will put a saving faith within the heart of the man."[43] J. Norval Geldenhuys agrees. "Scripture teaches that the effectual calling is the sovereign, free and irresistable act of God in Christ, through His Spirit, by which guilty lost sinners without merit of their own are brought into living and saving fellowship with Jesus Christ."[44]

In this soteriology (in the words of Girod) "grace is prevenient; it comes first, before any response by the sinner."[45] The "evangel" (the proclaimed message of the Gospel leading to personal conversion), argues Gerstner, should be seen as "the divine application of grace" rather than a "divine offer of grace."[46] After all, an invitation requires a response: a freely chosen decision on the part of the one invited to either accept or reject the invitation. But, as Girod states, "... it is God Himself who makes the choice, and .. there is nought in us that leads Him to make that choice."[47]

It might then be asked of these Evangelicals, if only a select number of people are recepients of God's grace,

can divine grace be consistent with divine justice? M.

Eugene Osterhaven responds to this objection by

distinguishing between two kinds of grace. "[C]ommon grace"

which, being available to everyone, "enables a man to repent

and believe if only he will", while "special grace", given

only to the elect, "working with the will, constrains him to

do so."[48] It seems to me that this argument is specious

indeed! In Osterhaven's thought, one cannot "repent and

believe" apart from the special grace that constrains the

will to do so. Without special grace, man will not repent

and believe because he cannot will to do so. What kind of

divine grace is it that holds a promise across a chasm of

impossibility? There might be many words to describe such an

act, but "grace" is not among them!

Arthur Pink is more forthright in answering the

question raised regarding those not of the elect. He writes,

> The unsaved are lost because they refuse to believe;
> the others are saved because they believe. But *why*
> do these others believe? ... It is God Himself who
> makes the difference between the elect and the
> non-elect. ... Faith is God's *gift*, and "all men have
> not faith" (2 Thess. 3:2); therefore, we see that God
> does not bestow this gift on all.[49]

William Childs Robinson responds to the question of divine

justice with an affirmation of divine love in the face of

seeming injustice. "...[T]his God, who personally

predestines, acts in His love. In mercy, He chose for

adoption into His family of children even us rebellious

sinners."[50] The argument being made by Robinson is that if

God were just, all sinners would be condemned. That some,

even if only a few, are saved by the unconditional,

irresistible grace of God surely is evidence of God's love.

Let us turn our attention now to those who are elect.

It is clear that this majority of Evangelicals sees the

decision to receive grace as a decision made by God rather

than by the recepient of grace. This is necessary, argues

Geldenhuys, because

> [u]nredeemed man is spiritually blind and
> dead and unable to regenerate or truly convert
> himself. ...
> How, then, can we, who are in ourselves
> hopelessly lost sinners, ever be united to Christ in
> saving communion? ...
> [The New Testament] clearly and consistently
> teaches us that through the sovereign and omnipotent
> power and grace of God, we are effectually called to
> become the inheritors of the salvation wrought by God
> through Jesus Christ. ...
> [I]t is clear that by "calling" ... is meant
> not merely an invitation, but that mysterious,
> glorious and efficacious act of God through the Holy
> Spirit that brings man into true, dynamic fellowship
> with Jesus Christ. ... God is the all-sufficient
> cause, origin and executor of the calling.[51]

Packer argues that it might at times seem that the

conversion decision comes as the result of human effort and

struggle, but this is an illusion. To those who would argue

that they made a free choice to accept God's grace, Packer

would respond that it was God's work "that you saw your need

of Christ and came to trust Him as Saviour."[52] That an

individual came under Christian influence, attended Church,

heard the gospel or read the Bible, is all due to God who

caused these things to occur, according to Packer.[53] Girod

agrees:

... the spiritual egoists who boast of their

salvation forget that if they have heard the
evangelist preach, it was only because it was
foreordained that they should hear him, and because
the Spirit of God sent them to hear him. They forget
that if they were moved to make a decision, it was
only because God foreordained that they should, and
because the Spirit of God moved upon their hearts.[54]

God Himself is always found at the focus of salvific

election in the thought of these Evangelicals. Robinson

writes,

> The golden chain which ties together the acts of God,
> from their foundation in His eternal purpose to their
> consumation in His making us who are sinners like
> unto the image of His Son is nothing else than just
> *God Himself*. He loved us; He foreknew us; He
> predestined us; He called us...[55]

Reviewing the way this majority of Evangelicals

defines and applies divine sovereignty to creaturely

decisions, it is quite clear that God is, to them, a very

determinative Being. There is little room for creaturely

choice or freedom. It is God's purpose and plan that always'

triumphs, that must necessarily triumph. God's sovereignty

is, to these Evangelicals, synonomous with divine

determinism.

(c) Divine Sovereignty and Sin

I have already alluded to the problem of divine

sovereignty and sin. If sovereignty is to be understood (as

these Evangelicals understand it) as the activity of God in

determining all the events of the universe including human

acts and decisions, a question must be raised concerning

God's role in sin. This becomes more urgent when God's

sovereignty is limited by nothing other than His divine

character of perfection and holiness. Certainly, if God is omnipotent in His relationship with His creatures, He is capable of preventing sin. Certainly, if He is perfectly holy, it would be His desire to prevent sin. How then can holy sovereignty and sin be found in the same world view?

The school of thought representing the majority of Evangelicals makes two arguments in response to this problem. There is an argument made that God does, in fact, exercise a sovereign restraint upon sin. There is also an argument made that it is the depth of human sin that actually demands a doctrine of unconditional election and the partner doctrine of irresistable grace.

A number of Evangelical writers assert that God does exercise power over sin. It will be remembered that Strong asserted that God's omnipotence extends only to those things which are "objects of power". Since Strong considers the prevention of sin to be "an object of power", he concludes that God can prevent sin if and when He wills to do so.[56] Andrew Rule agrees that God exercises sovereign control over the sinful state of His creatures:

> God's providence embraces not only the whole, but its parts as well - "all His creatures and their actions". This includes "free" creatures, their "free" actions (even their evil ones), and their sinful state."[57]

J. Oliver Bushwell also argues that God exercises control over sin, but recognises "an inscrutable paradox" in such an argument.

The Christian determinist is usually driven to an

> inscrutable paradox. He might accept all that the
> Bible says about primeval sin as factually true, but
> the biblical statements afford no philosophical
> explanation. Satan sinned necessarily. God is
> rightly angry with sin. So be it! ...
> Calvin and Calvinists generally ... agree in denying
> that God is in any sense the author of sin.
> Nevertheless, we find that God "worketh all things
> after the counsel of His own will". We cannot deny
> that "whatever comes to pass" is within the eternal
> decrees of God. Sin must be within God's decrees in
> some sense in which He is not the author of it.[58]

Bushwell concludes that God must permit but not cause sin,

and that the reason He does so is good: He wishes to reveal

both the inevitability of His wrath and His ability to save.

> We must conclude, then, that within the
> decrees of God, there are decrees of permission of
> those things of which God Himself is not the author.
> This is not mere permission of the
> unavoidable. ... It is God's permissive decrees for
> His own purpose of revelation.[59]

A similar case is made by Osterhaven, who argues that

God does restrain sin, but that at times He also permits sin

as a means of revealing both human need for salvation, and

also the extent to which human life would be marred by sin

were God not restraining evil. He quotes Calvin:

> "God by His providence restrains the perverseness of
> our nature from breaking out into external acts, but
> does not purify it within" (Institutes, II,iii,3).
> In a variety of ways, internally and externally, God
> checks human sin. In some instances He ceases His
> restraining ability and gives men over to a reprobate
> mind in order that their sin may work itself out in
> utter godlessness and corruption. Even this,
> however, shows that previously He had prevented their
> sin from running its natural course and that He had
> held it in abeyance.[60]

While these writers are to be commended for

recognising and attempting to deal with a serious problem in

their position, it seems to me that this proposed resolution

of the difficulty is insufficient. In the first place, when
God is described in such absolutely determinative terms as we
have seen within this majority position, the question of
whether God causes or merely permits sin is irrelevant. In
permiting what could have been prevented, God must take some
responsibility for the reality of sin. Furthermore, to argue
revelation of either divine wrath or the extent of divine
mercy as the reason for the permission of sin begs the
questions of sin's origin. Were sin never permitted, there
would be no occassion for divine wrath and no need for divine
salvation from sin. These arguments are simply inadequate.

This majority of Evangelicals turn the issue of sin
around, however, to a defense for the doctrine of
unconditional election. They argue that it is the very depth
and immense reality of sin that requires God's saving
initiative. Accompanying Calvin's doctrine of unconditional
election is the Calvinistic anthropology that views humans as
totally depraved and unable to do good or turn to God.

Robinson reflects this pessimistic anthropology when
he writes that

> [t]here is no place here for human conceits. God did
> not bestow His electing love upon us before the
> foundation of the world because of any fanciful
> "infinite value of the human soul". We had no
> value...[61]

Pink maintains that since the fall, the human person has been
completely impotent to either choose Christ, or any other
undiluted good.[62] For Pink, the human being bound by sin,
has freedom to do wrong, but not to do right. "In and of

himself, the natural man has power to reject Christ; but in and of himself he has not the power to receive Christ ... because he has a mind that is 'enmity against' Him (Rom. 8:7)."[63].

Strong agrees that human depravity means that humans are prone to sin, and indeed have no choice but to sin. Consequently, argues Strong, any right acts achieved by humans (including the act of faith by which saving grace is appropriated) are attributable *only* to God.[64] The pervasiveness of sin is traced by Girod to an orthodox understanding of the fall (Genesis 3),[65] resulting in the "corruption of every facet of man's being", leaving humanity with a nature entirely corrupted.[66] This corruption is so deeply engrained and so complete that the only possible solution to the problem of sin is for God to grab the initiative and determine the faith and repentance that, although necesary to salvation, is beyond corrupt humanity. This is, in fact, what God does in confering a "new birth" upon His elect. "The new man owes his new nature entirely to God who made it possible by the operation of the Holy Spirit."[67] The pervasiveness of sin, therefore, requires a determinative God. In this anthropological argument, were election conditional, and were grace resistable, no human could ever possibly be saved.

(d) Sovereignty and Omniscience

In reviewing the majority Evangelical view of divine determinism, it is necessary to briefly observe that there is

a strong correlation between the notion of divine omnipotence
expressed in determinism and divine omniscience. This
relationship is described by Pink:

> Is it not self-evident that if God *foreknows* all
> things, He has also *fore-ordained* all things? Is it
> not clear that God foreknows what will be *because He*
> *has decreed what shall be?* God's foreknowledge is
> not the *cause* of events, rather are events the
> effects of His eternal purpose.[68]

Strong rejects the notion that God's election could be based
on mere divine foreknowledge of an individual's faith.
"[T]here can be no foreknowledge, unless there is something
fixed in the future, to be foreknown; and this fixity can be
due only to God's predetermination."[69]

This relationship between God's predetermination and
foreknowledge will present a telling argument against the
minority of Evangelicals who find themselves more comfortable
with Armenianism than with Calvinism. Traditionally,
Armenians have argued that election is conditional upon what
God foreknows of an individual's free response to the
proclamation of the Gospel.[70] It would seem reasonable to
assume, however, that if God knows what will be, then that
event must come to be. Otherwise, God's omniscience must be
less than perfect. By the same token, if one assumes
predetermination, then foreknowledge is a completely logical
outcome of that assumption, for presumably God must know of
His own plans.

(iii) Recognising the Problems: Donald Bloesch

One prominent Evangelical writer who has tried to understand God's sovereignty in a way less inhibiting to human freedom is Donald Bloesch. Bloesch carefully observes the concept of God's sovereignty. "If there is anything that characterizes the evangelical and Reformed tradition it is the stress upon the sovereignty of God. ... [T]he living God of the Bible ... is sovereign over heaven and earth - this is the God of evangelicalism."[71] Bloesch also seems to be aware, however, that the way Evangelicals have been prone to define God's sovereignty has resulted in a view that effectively denies human freedom. Bloesch would like to preserve human freedom in his theology.

> A sovereign God has a sovereign plan and purpose
> which he chooses to realize in the world. But
> predestination is a theological concept and must not
> be confused with the philosophical concept of fate or
> destiny. It means that God's election of men to
> salvation in Jesus Christ ... does not override the
> freedom of man but is realized in and through this
> freedom, though it is the new freedom given in Christ
> and not natural free will. Predestination is not a
> *dectetum absolutum* that tends to deny the free
> movement of history but a working out of the purposes
> of God in history.[72]

Bloesch leaves room in the world for events which are not the will of God. For example, God "sustains the world in its sin and misery" with an "overarching providence", but "is not the direct cause of its sin and misery."[73] All that happens, argues Bloesch, happens by the sanction of God, but not necessarily by the affirmation of God.

> We affirm the reality of God's foreknowledge and also
> his sovereignty over all events of time and space,

but we do not hold to a rigid foreordination that excludes the free movement of history. Nothing happens, to be sure, apart from God's sanction, but this is not to say that God expressly wills everything that happens. There are some things that happen that God does not will and that have their reality precisely in God's negation instead of his affirmation (Barth).[74]

Bloesch tries to bring together divine determinism and human freedom by arguing a predetermined plan of God that, rather than denying human freedom, uses human freedom for its ultimate accomplishment:

> The plan of God is predetermined, but the way in which He realizes it is dependent partly on the free cooperation of His subjects. This does not detract from His omnipotence, for it means that He is so powerful He is willing to attain His objectives by allowing a certain room for freedom of action on the part of man.[75]

Not only is humanity (at least somewhat) free in Bloesch's view, God is also free to change His mind regarding what He has foreordained:

> God has the freedom to change His mind or the ways in which He deals with His people, though He remains inflexible in His ultimate purpose for them. God is not immobile, but He is immutable at least in several basic senses: He is unchanging in His basic purposes; His being is indestructible; and His promises are inviolable.[76]

Perhaps the most promising element of Bloesch's thought is a redefinition of the term "omnipotence":

> God's omnipotence does not mean that he is the direct or sole cause of all that happens. It means that God is *omnicompetent*, capable of dealing with all circumstances, that nothing can ultimately defeat or thwart his plan for his people. (emphasis added).[77]

While pointing Evangelical thought in some promising directions, unfortunately Bloesch also seems unable to let go

of the traditional Calvinistic understanding of how God
applies His sovereign power to the general events of creation
and to the specific concept of election:

> We contend that if we are to remain true to the
> biblical heritage of our faith, as well as the
> consensus of the catholic tradition, we must maintain
> the idea of God as a sovereign power.[78]

As Bloesch describes this "sovereign power", it is clear that
he is talking about more than just "omnicompetence" to handle
any situation. He is talking about determination. God, for
example, is described by Bloesch as "a Supreme Intelligence
who plans and shapes man's destiny."[79] Like others, Bloesch
insists that God, as the "Power above all powers", determines
the actions and decisions of those who rule. He bestows
wealth and honour upon those who He chooses.[80] Thus, the
power to govern or the aquisition of wealth is not dependent
upon human effort or freedom, but upon the choice of God.

When he comes to the doctrine of election, Bloesch
returns to a more traditional determinism that seems to belie
his concern regarding human freedom. "The sovereignty of God
means that God's will is free not only to carry out the
decree of election, *but also to determine it*" (emphasis
added)[81]. Bloesch rejects the tendencies of modern popular
Evangelicalism which

> ... is sometimes inclined to place a limit on the
> sovereignty of God. It is said that God only offers
> man salavation, but does not effect salvation.
> Salvation is made dependent on man's free will rather
> than divine election. In popular evangelicalism God
> is portrayed as powerful, but not invincible. His
> loving mercy is exalted, but not his universal
> Lordship.[82]

Alongside others in this majority of Evangelicals who
write that an individual's coming to faith is really the act
of God, not of that individual, Bloesch writes:

> Although our salvation is to be attributed to the
> grace of God alone, it must be received by faith if
> it is to benefit us. Yet faith itself is a gift of
> God, for we cannot believe until the Holy Spirit
> grants us the power and motivation. Both the
> awakening to faith and the repentance that follows
> signify that we are already recipients of divine
> grace.[83]

It is not free will, according to Bloesch, that allows us to
receive the gospel. "Evangelical theology affirms against
all kinds of Pelagianism and synergism that we are saved not
by free will but by free grace."[84]

When we place all of these statements by Bloesch
side-by-side, it seems that Bloesch would like to have it
both ways. He would like to argue that divine sovereignty
does not intrude upon human freedom. At the same time, he
would like to argue that God governs over human affairs in
specific detail. In particular, he would like to argue in
favor of the doctrine of unconditional election which is
bound up with irresistable grace and total human depravity.
He would like to evade the pitfalls of Calvinistic
determinism without rejecting the foundational assumptions of
Calvinistic determinism. Thus Bloesch is left in a quandry
of self-contradictions. His thought is helpful to us,
however, in that he, as one prominent Evangelical in the
majority school of thought with regard to divine determinism,
recognizes the implicit denial of human freedom in this view

of divine sovereignty, and, if he could, would find a way not to make such a denial.

When we bring together the thought of Bloesch, Henry and the other Evangelical writers cited in the previous pages, we are left with a majority Evangelical interpretation of divine sovereignty that is quite deterministic. This is evident in the conviction that every minute detail of created life is found in the preordained purpose or decree of God. Determinism is even clearer in the doctrine of unconditional election: that without reference to anything else, God has simply choosen those who will be saved and those who will not be. Living in the shadows of this divine determination are humans, utterly depraved and thus utterly unable to choose to accept God, or any other good. We are free to sin, but we do not have sufficient moral freedom to seek to be saved unless God initiates and implements our salvation for us. God is completely powerful and completely free. We are powerless, and bound by both the principle of sin and the decrees of God.

(B) A Fatal Logical Problem with the Majority View

The understanding of divine sovereignty found in the writings of the majority of Evangelical theologians is flawed by a serious logical problem. There are three propositions that these thinkers hold to be true: (1) God sovereignly determines human events and decisions; (2) humans are responsible and accountable for their sinful decisions and

consequently will face divine wrath unless they repent and accept the gift of salvation offered by God in Christ; and (3) God is just and loving. In this section I will briefly demonstrate that all three of these propositions are, in fact, part of the theology of this majority of Evangelicals. I will then describe the logical difficulty I find with this view. Finally, I will describe and critique the efforts made by a few of these thinkers to defend their view in the face of this logical problem.

It has already been aptly demonstrated in the previous section that a significant number of Evangelicals maintain proposition (1) above. As one representative of this school of thought, Pink writes, "We read the Scriptures in vain if we fail to discover that the actions of men, evil men as well as good, are governed by the Lord God."[85] Again he writes, "...every action of the most lawless of His subjects is entirely beneath His control, ... the actor is, although unknown to himself, carrying out the secret decrees of the Most High."[86] Those that remain in their sinful state do so not because they have freely chosen to do so, but because "God ... *hardens* the hearts of wicked men *and blinds* their minds".[87]

It would seem that this should suggest a lack of human responsibility for sin. But these Evangelicals continue to argue human responsibility and accountablity. Carl Henry maintains that unconditional election does not "erode moral responsibility and significant human choice."[88]

Strong also defends human responsibility for moral decisions and acts.

> All sin ... is voluntary as springing either directly
> from will or indirectly from those perverse
> affections and desires which have themselves
> orginated in will.
> ...[W]hatever springs from will we are responsible
> for.[89]

Bloesch argues that if anyone is damned, they have damned themselves "by not acknowledging God's grace and glory."[90] Despite a very deterministic view of God, Girod also maintains human responsibility.

> [The reprobate] is lost, precisely because he
> does not want to be saved. ...
> And in the day of judgement this will be
> their condemnation, that they prefered darkness to
> the light, that they would not come into the light
> because their deeds were evil. ...
> Therefore, no soul shall ever say to God: "I
> would have come, but ye would not have me."[91]

These Evangelicals argue that sinful persons, being morally responsible for sin, will have to confront the judgement of a God moved to wrath by their sin. Julius R. Mantey warns that "[m]en need to know that their sins will bring the inescapable judgement of God upon themselves."[92] Divine retribution is viewed by Packer as the inevitable response of God to sin:

> ...[R]etribution appears as a natural and
> pre-determined expression of divine character. ...
> Retribution is the inescapable moral law of reaction;
> God will see that each man sooner or later receives
> what he deserves - if not here, then hereafter.[93]

The sinner faces the wrath of God, defined by Bloesch as "the searing reaction of God to continued violations of his law. It is his righteous indignation against wrong-doing."[94]

Lest we worry that God's condemnation of sinners is unfair, Packer reminds us (with the support of others)[95] that God is confined by His own character to being just.[96] We can conclude, therefore, "God is the judge, so justice will be done."[97]

It seems to me that these three propositions (God determines events and decisions; humans are responsible; God is just) are simply not compatible. Any two can be taken together without contradiction. It could be argued, for example, that a just God would hold humans responsible for their sinful acts. But this argument can only be logically made if those acts are not pre-determined by God. By the same token we could argue that God determines all human events and decisions and also retains His justice. But in this event we would be bound to accept that God does not hold humans responsible for their sin, nor punish the sin that He has determined. We might even argue that God determines human events and decisions while holding humans responsible for those events and decisions. But we would then have to reject any notion of divine justice. Any two of these propositions can be logically held together, but clearly all three are logically incompatible.

The writers that maintain this view recognize the problem, and a number have tried to address it. Pink simply contents himself with the unamplified statement, "Two things are beyond dispute: God is sovereign, man is responsible."[98]

We have already seen that Donald Bloesch attempts to

find a way to argue both human responsibility and divine determinism, but in the final analysis falls short of this goal.

Rule rejects as an artificial dualism the assumption "that if God rules in any action, then it is God's act *and not a free man's*, and if a man acts freely, then it is man's act *and not God's*."[99] He understands every event and decision as belonging to both a completely sovereign God and an entirely free, responsible human:

> The relations between man and God, in these free human actions, is simply not a voluntary cooperation of two independent actors. It is much more intimate than that. ... [W]e are to work out our own salvation, for it is God that worketh in us both the willing and the doing.[100]

This argument is quite similar to that offered by Bloesch, and fails on the same weaknesses. Rule does not explain how God, who he has described as carrying out His plan with all power and all foreknowledge[101] can simultaneously relinquish sufficient power and freedom to humans that such an intimate cooperation is possible. If God has all the power (the literal meaning of omnipotence), we clearly have no power of decision. It is interesting to observe that when Rule writes about "'free' creatures", he places the word "free" in quotation marks.[102] This is because our apparent freedom is held in the "embrace" of God's providence which determines "all His creatures and their actions."[103] Like Bloesch, Rule would like to have it both ways. But reason demands that he cannot.

Packer and Geldenhuys offer a different defense against the illogic of their position. Packer recognizes

> ... an apparent opposition between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, or (putting it more biblically) between what God does as King and what He does as Judge. Scripture teaches that, as King, He orders and controls all things, human actions among them, in accordance with His own eternal purpose. Scripture also teaches that, as Judge, He holds every man responsible for the choices he makes and the courses of action he pursues. Thus, hearers of the Gospel are responsible for their reaction; if they reject the good news, they are guilty of unbelief.[104]

Packer describes this "apparent opposition" as an "antinomy:"

> ... [A]n antinomy is neither dispensable nor comprehensible. It is not a figure of speech, but an observed relation between two statements of fact. It is not deliberately manufactured; it is forced upon us by the facts themselves. It is unavoidable, and it is insoluble. We do not invent it, and we cannot explain it.[105]

Packer confesses himself able to live with this logical incoherence, believing it to be a puzzle he simply cannot solve.

Geldenhuys agrees. "We cannot explain the mystery of divine calling and human responsibility."[106] Indeed, not only are we unable to unravel this mystery, "[i]t is futile and even misplaced to try to analyze or describe this divine act".[107]

This way of dealing with the problem seems to me to be not only intellectually irresponsible, but also a violation of one of the principles Evangelicals have been trying to stand for. It will be remembered from the first chapter that one of the objectives of Evangelical movement is "its stress on the rationality of faith" (Bloesch).[108] Carl

Henry describes "the separation of revelation and reason" as "a costly misadventure."[108] Indeed, argues Henry, one of the committments that distinguishes Evangelicalism from Neo-Orthodoxy is that "... [Evangelicals] stand against Barth on the side of coherence ... emphasizing the *intelligible content* and universal validity of divine revelation" (emphasis added).[110]

Packer and Geldenhuys are arguing instead that it is not necessary to try to understand the intelligible message of revelation; they are content to assume that faith is not necessarily rational. They are willing to separate reason and revelation. It must be admitted that this might become necessary, *if and only if no reasonable solution can be provided for a given theological problem.* However, to give up on finding a rational faith (and much more, to call such a quest "misplaced") is counter-productive, or else all theological inquiry is irrelevant.

There are a small band of Evangelical writers who are pointing toward a view of divine sovereignty that eliminates the illogic of the three propositions with which I began this chapter. Their approach is to deny proposition (1): that God determines all human events and decisions. They argue that God sovereignly bestows freedom upon His creatures. It is to their thought that we turn next.

(C) A Minority View

Many Christians outside of the Evangelical movement have observed the incoherence of a completely deterministic God and a free and responsible humanity inhabiting the same universe. The well-known process theist, Charles Hartshorne, for example, challenges Evangelicals and others:

> Those who stand deep in the classical tradition are likely to object to the new theology that it fails to acknowledge "the sovereignty of God". To them we may reply, "Are we to worship the Heavenly Father of Jesus (or the Most Holy Merciful One of the Psalmist or Isaiah), or to worship the heavenly king, that is, a cosmic despot? These are incompatible ideals; candid thinkers should choose and not pretend to be faithful to both.[111]

This observation has not been limited, however, to non-Evangelicals. Reviewing Evangelical history, Millard Erickson observes (as an Evangelical)[112] that

> [e]xtreme forms of Calvinism tended to place so much weight on God's holiness and righteousness that love and mercy were somewhat atrophied. God, for His own glory, saves whom He wills and damns whom He wills in a rather arbitrary fashion.[113]

Recognizing this weakness, Millard does not, unfortunately, offer a fresh Evangelical interpretation of divine sovereignty for consideration.

Gerstner, in his defense of Calvinism as one boundary for Evangelicalism complains that within Evangelicalism the traditional notions of divine sovereignty and divine initiative are now being threatened. But he does not identify by whom or for what reason, at least on the contemporary Evangelical scene.[114]

Responding to Gerstner's article, Vinson Synan

replies that there has always been an "Armenian tradition"
within Evangelicalism paralleling the Reformed or Calvinistic
tradition that presently forms the majority. This Armenian
movement has often identified itself by the concept of
free-will (as in the denomination, "Free-Will Baptists").[115]
Armenian Evangelicals have refuted divine determinism,
particularly focusing their attack on the doctrine of
unconditional election. Vinson desribes the

> Armenian view of salvation; that is that Christ died
> for all and that all who accept him as Saviour can be
> saved. Man can exercise his free will and refuse the
> offer of salvation. ... The key to this view is God's
> sovereignty through which salvation is offered to
> all, and man's free moral agency whereby the
> individual can accept or reject God's proffered
> grace.[116]

This Armenian tradition remains the minority position of
Evangelical theologians today[117] for two reasons, both of
which relate to the history of its two primary groups of
adherents. Whereas the majority of theologians in
Evangelicalism today trace their theological roots from
Luther to Calvin to the puritans, the Armenian wing of the
movement traces its roots from Luther to Wesley.[118] As a
consequence, the early Methodists in North America posed a
significant challenge to Calvinistic Evangelicalism:

> When the Methodists began to grow rapidly after the
> American revolution, they often came into sharp
> conflict with the "old school" Calvinism that
> dominated much of American Protestantism through the
> middle of the nineteenth century. To the Calvinist
> claim of "unconditional election" (some are
> predestined to be saved while others are predestined
> to be lost), the Methodists answered with the theory
> of "conditional election" (predestination is based on
> God's foreknowledge of what a person will do, not

God's decrees).[119]

Methodism today does not form a significant part of
Evangelicalism. This is not because their numbers have
declined, but because in the early part of this century North
American Methodism moved away from the kind of theological
foundations that have shaped Evangelicalism in favour of more
liberal theology. (There are, to be sure, exceptions to this
trend, notably in the southern United States).

Another Armenian stream of Evangelicalism, according
to Synan, are the Pentecostal, Holiness and Charismatic
Evangelicals. They can also be traced through Luther to
Wesley. However, this wing also does not affect a large
number of modern Evangelical theologians because they have
traditionally been "very small players" in Evangelicalism.[120]
It is also unfortunately the case that Pentecostalism and its
cousins have not had a large theological affect upon other
Evangelicals simply because the Pentecostal movement has not
produced very many of its own serious, academic theologians.

Although there have always been a small minority of
Armenians defending human freedom in Evangelicalism, they
have not made much of an impact upon the Evangelical
theological establishment. Currently, however, there are a
number of writers from mainstream Evangelicalism who are
questioning divine determinism, and its impact on our
understanding of human freedom. Their concerns seem to be
pastoral rather than theological. But out of this pastoral
concern they are pointing Evangelicalism in some exciting new

theological directions.

John Claypool, for example, approaches the question of divine sovereignty as it applies to the experience of suffering.[121] He observes that Evangelicals are inclined to face suffering with passive resignation to the inevitable, believing themselves to be, despite their suffering, located in the will of God. Claypool finds this unacceptable, believing that it

> ... reduces all of life to a mechanical power transaction. To be sure, a leaf submits to the wind without saying a word, and a rock allows the flood water to do whatever it pleases without murmur, but are these appropriate analogies for the relation of God and man?
> According to the Bible they are not, for in this document the mystery of Godness is depicted as involving more than brute power.[122]

Claypool argues that the determinism of traditional Calvinism "undermines the most precious dimension of our existence, the personal dimension."[123] Traditional determinism reduces human persons to objects acted upon by a force equally impersonal (because if we are merely objects of divine power, we are not capable of relationship with God, and if God cannot engage in relationships, He cannot be said to be personal).

The Evangelical understanding of sovereignty and determinism is approached by Richard Foster from the standpoint of another pastoral issue: the issue of prayer. Foster suggests that Evangelicals would find it easier to practise and understand prayer if their vision of God were somewhat different:

> It is easy for us to be defeated at the outset
> because we have been taught that everything in the
> universe is already set, so things cannot be changed.
> We may gloomily feel this way, but the Bible does not
> teach that. The Bible pray-ers prayed as if their
> prayers could and would make an objective
> difference.[124]

Foster completely rejects the closed universe of Calvin,

arguing instead for a universe radically open to new

directions:

> ... [T]he Bible stresses so forcefully the openess of
> our universe that, in an anthropomofphism hard for
> modern ears, it speaks of God changing His mind in
> accord with His unchanging love.[125]

To thus change our view of God, argues Foster, is to

also effectively change our view of ourselves. As humans, we

are much more aware of our freedom in such an open universe.

> The Apostle Paul gladly announced that we are
> "co-labourers with God" (1 Cor. 3:9); that is, we are
> working with God to determine the outcome of events.
> It is stoicism that demands a closed universe, not
> the Bible. Many with their emphasis upon acquiesence
> and resignation to the way things are as "the will of
> God" are already closer to Epitetcus than to
> Christ.[126]

It is clear that this awareness which underlines human

freedom also comes "as a genuine liberation to many of us but

it also places a tremendous responsiblity before us. We are

working with God to determine the future!"[127]

Another Evangelical writer who has dealt with the

tension between omnipotence and human freedom is Anthony

Campolo. Like Claypool, Campolo's starting point is

theodicy. Campolo suggests that the usual responses

Evangelicals make to suffering are inadequate:

It is not enough to say that it is not God's will
that these evils be corrected; or that there are
great lessons He is trying to teach us through such
trials; or that such terrible events are part of some
wonderful plan we will someday understand.[128]

Campolo further suggests that these tradional

responses to suffering, with their underlying assumption that

God has determined the suffering, undermine what is perhaps

the most important element of our understanding of God: His

love.

We evangelicals have hailed the Lord as one who
controls events and dictates the way things should
be. And yet, it may be that our overemphasis on His
omnipotence has dealt Him an injustice. It may be
that by upholding His power we have called His love
into question.[129]

Campolo appeals to "a deeper understanding of the

incarnation of Jesus"[130] for support of his denial that God

possesses the only real power in the universe:

In Jesus, God expressed Himself in a way that
is shocking. He expressed Himself as a God of love
and in the process set aside power...
God did not incarnate Himself as a superboy
who dazzled His peers with magic tricks. The Church
fathers knew that Jesus grew up as one of us, taking
on our frailties and weaknesses. They knew that in
Jesus, God had abandoned His power and majesty in
order to present Himself as one whom we could
imitate. If it had been otherwise, He would not have
been able to ask us to be like Him.[131]

Jesus' *modus operandi* in the redemption and salvation of the

world was "sacrificial self-giving, rather than through

awesome demonstrations of power."[132]

After demonstrating that the God revealed by Jesus

Christ is a God who empties Himself of power, Campolo then

asks the question, "What can such a God offer us?"[133] This

question has some extremely practical implications in terms of how we live out faith in such a God: "...if praying to God won't automatically cure my mother's cancer, result in my child's salvation, or keep my friend from being killed in Vietnam, what does He offer me?"[134] The answer Campolo offers to this question is love: "...the empathy of love, the concern of love, the fellowship of love, the sharing of love."[135] Thus, God's response to human suffering is to suffer with us: "He weeps with those who weep and suffers with those who suffer."[136]

Campolo makes it clear that, in his view, this "limitation" on God's power is self-imposed: "God has limited Himself -- His limitation is self-imposed."[137] Campolo clarifies that God can and occasionally does use His power (i.e., ignore His self-limitation): "I am not saying that God has no power to perform miracles ... God is God and He can do what He wants when He wants."[138] Indeed, Campolo looks to an eschaton in which God no longer limits His ability to end suffering: "I [do not] want to suggest that God could not stop it all [suffering] from happening. What is more, I want to affirm that one day He will stop it all".[139]

The question might then be raised, if God has limited His power only temporarily, why has He done so? Campolo's answer is consistent with the strong Evangelical emphasis on evangelism. "If God had come to us in power...we would be reduced to nothing before Him...But the good news is that He comes to us in love and invites us to be His friends (John

Due to an error in pagination page 72 does not appear.

15:14,15)."[140] Campolo reiterates:

> God has choosen to set aside His power in His
> efforts to win us to Himself. He does not seek to
> overawe us with wonders and miracles, but rather
> seeks to draw us to Himself as a sacrificial lover...
> We are drawn to a God who presents Himself
> not as one who can put the stars in space and set the
> earth spinning on its axis, but as a broken man
> nailed spread-eagled to a Roman cross outside a city
> wall.[141]

In summary, Campolo views God as voluntarily limiting

His power for a specific purpose. His purpose to to make it

easier for an individual to come to personal faith in and

thus engage in a personal relationship with Him.

This minority of Evangelicals who are trying to

understand God as they encounter pastoral human issues argue

that Evangelicalism needs to move beyond Calvinistic

determinism. They might find some unexpected support in

Augustus Strong who admits that "Omnipotence in God does not

exclude, but implies the power of self-limitation."[142]

Indeed, suggests Strong, "We are likest the omnipotent One

when we limit ourselves for love's sake."[143]

(D) A Qualification on Each of These Views

We have seen two Evangelical understandings of divine

sovereignty. On the one hand there are a majority of

Evangelical theologians that define sovereignty in fairly

deterministic terms. On the other hand, there is a minority

which, emphasizing human freedom, understand self-limitation

on divine power as the option and act of divine sovereignty.

It must be recognised that neither group completely

denies the position of the other. We have already seen quite
clearly that the majority which argue in favour of
unconditional election nevertheless refuse to deny human
responsibility and therefore retain in their thought (at
least a measure of) human freedom. The majority would agree
with Strong that "[h]uman freedom is not rendered impossible
by divine omnipotence, but exists by virtue of it."[144] It
might be the case, as I have argued, that this is a logically
untenable position. But it is also the case that it is the
position held by a majority of Evangelical theologians.

By the same token, it should not be thought that
those Evangelicals who argue in favour of a God who willingly
confers freedom upon His creatures do not deny divine
sovereignty. Packer (writing from the majority viewpoint)
observes that

> [i]t is not true that some Christian believe in
> divine sovereignty while others hold an opposite
> view. What is true is that all Christian believe in
> divine sovereignty, but some are not aware that they
> do.[145]

The minority are aware that they believe in divine
sovereignty. They simply define it differently. It will be
recalled that Synan identified two thoughts at the center of
Armenian soteriology: "God's sovereignty through which
salvation is offered to all, and man's free moral agency
whereby the individual can accept or reject God's proffered
grace."[146] To those in the minority, divine sovereignty and
human freedom are not incompatible. In fact, they argue that
God, in a sovereign decision, determined to share power,

particularly the power of decision, with His creatures.

As we turn to the message and methods of the Evangelical evangelists, we will discover that this second approach is far more consistent with this vital facet of Evangelical life and identity.

NOTES

1.   John H. Gerstner, "Theological Boundaries: The Reformed Perspective", eds. David F. Wells and John B. Woodbridge, The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are; Where They Are Changing (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1975), 31.

2.   John H. Gerstner, "Theological Boundaries: The Reformed Perspective", 26.

3.   I recognise that the use of "logic" will, perhaps, be problematic for both some philosophers and theologians.
The philosopher will wonder, quite rightly, with what kind of precision I use a term from the language of philosophical discipline. I am not a philosopher, and I use the term "logic" as a layperson to the discipline of philosophy. I would accept the definition of logic provided by Irving M. Copi in Introduction to Logic. Copi defines logic as "the study of the methods and principles used to distinguish good (correct) from bad (incorrect) reasoning. ... [The logician's] question is always: does the conclusion reached follow from the premisses used and assumed? If the premisses provide adequate grounds for accepting the conclusion ... then the reasoning is correct. Otherwise, it is incorrect."
The theologian might wonder whether "logic" has any relevance to a discussion of God and/or His acts at all. The theologian might ask, "Is our understanding of God to be bound by the rules of logic, or does God, rather, transcend human logic?" Given that Evangelical theology wishes to stress "the rationality of faith" (Bloesch) and deems "the separation of revelation and reason" to be "a costly misadventure" (Henry), I would suggest that Evangelical thought is required to consider the demands of reason upon its thought.
See Irving M. Copi, Introduction to Logic (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1972), 3,5.
See also pp. 64,65.

4.   See Vinson Synan, "Theological Boundaries: The Armenian Tradition", eds. David F. Wells and John B. Woodbridge, The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are; Where They Are Changing (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1975).
The Armenian tradition is so named as it refers to the thought of the Dutch theologian, Joseph Armenius, who led the theological movement of conflict with Calvinism, culminating in the Synod of Dort in 1618 and 1619.

5. In his book, <u>Notes on the Doctrine of God</u>, Henry includes a chapter entitled "Sovereign Father". In this chapter he simply assumes sovereignty to be understood by the reader, and so he neither defines nor outlines his own understanding of divine sovereignty here. Rather, this chapter focuses on the theme of God's parenthood.
See Carl F. H. Henry, <u>Notes on the Doctrine of God</u> (Boston: W.A. Wild, Co., 1948)

6. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u> (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 459.

7. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 478.

8. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 78.

9. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 78.

10. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 455.

11. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 455.

12. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 84.

13. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 78.

14. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 76.
For a fuller exegesis of the concept of God's freedom from an Evangelical view, see James Daane, <u>The Freedom of God</u> (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1973).

15. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 77.

16. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 472.

17. Carl F. H. Henry, <u>God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II</u>, 478.

18. Arthur Pink and his books pre-date the modern Evangelical movement. This is also true of Augustus Strong. However, both are not only relevant, but important to a

discussion of modern Evangelical theology because they have had a very strong influence on the movement.

19. Arthur W. Pink, <u>The Sovereignty of God</u>, rev. ed. (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1961), 20,21.

20. Andrew K. Rule, "Providence and Preservation", ed., Carl F. H. Henry, <u>Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought</u> (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 76.

21. Augustus Hopkins Strong, <u>Systematic Theology</u> (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976), 286.

22. Augustus Hopkins Strong, <u>Systematic Theology</u>, 287.

23. Augustus Hopkins Strong, <u>Systematic Theology</u>, 287.

24. These questions will be dealt with in a fuller manner later.

25. Augustus Hopkins Strong, <u>Systematic Theology</u>, 287.

26. William Childs Robinson, "Predestination", ed., Carl F. H. Henry, <u>Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought</u> (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 49,50.
I must say that I find Robinson's notion of justice as contained in this quote somewhat ironic. How God can choose particular humans to condemn to damnation without any reference to their character or use of freedom, and call this condemnation justice is simply beyond me.

27. Arthur W. Pink, <u>The Sovereignty of God</u>, 22,23.

28. Arthur W. Pink, <u>The Sovereignty of God</u>, 23-26.

29. Peter Toon, <u>God Here and Now: The Christian View of God</u> (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1979), 89.

30. J.I. Packer, <u>Knowing God</u> (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973), p. 88.

31. J.I. Packer, <u>Knowing God</u>, 89.

32. J.I. Packer, <u>Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God</u> (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), p.9.

33. J.I. Packer, <u>Knowing God</u>, 92,93.

34. J.I. Packer, <u>Knowing God</u>, 90.

35. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 16.

36. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 33.

37. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 33-36.

38. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 36-38.
One must therefore accept the sound of cats making love
at 1:00 A.M.!

39. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 39-42.

40. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 91.

41. Gordon Girod, The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of
the Canons of the Synod of Dort (Grand Rapids, Mich.:
Reformed Publications, 1958), 18,19.

42. Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology, 779.

43. Gordon Girod, The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of
the Canons of the Synod of Dort, 20.

44. J. Norval Geldenhuys, "Effectual Calling", ed.,
Carl F. H. Henry, Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary
Evangelical Thought (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston,
1962), 183.

45. Gordon Girod, The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of
the Canons of the Synod of Dort, 54.

46. John H. Gerstner, "Theological Boundaries: The
Reformed Perspective", 35.

47. Gordon Girod, The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of
the Canons of the Synod of Dort, 22.

48. M. Eugene Osterhaven, "Common Grace", ed., Carl F.
H. Henry, Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical
Thought (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 175.

49. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 46,47.

50. William Childs Robinson, "Predestination", 51.

51. J. Norval Geldenhuys, "Effectual Calling", 180.

52. J.I. Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God,
12.

53. J.I. Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God,
12.

54. Gordon Girod, The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of the Canons of the Synod of Dort, 21,22.

55. William Childs Robinson, "Predestination", 50,51.

56. Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology, 287.

57. Andrew K. Rule, "Providence and Preservation", 79.

58. J. Oliver Bushwell, Jr., "The Origin and Nature of Sin", ed., Carl F. H. Henry, Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 107.

59. J. Oliver Bushwell, Jr., "The Origin and Nature of Sin", 107.

60. M. Eugene Osterhaven, "Common Grace", 173.

61. William Childs Robinson, "Predestination", 53,54.

62. See Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 99-108.

63. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 92,93.

64. See Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology, 637-639.

65. See Gordon Girod, The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of the Canons of the Synod of Dort, 55-57.

66. See Gordon Girod, The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of the Canons of the Synod of Dort, 54.

67. Gordon Girod, The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of the Canons of the Synod of Dort, 54.

68. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 74.

69. Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology, 783.

70. See Vinson Synan, "Theological Boundaries: The Armenian Tradition".

71. Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1973), 52.

72. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation (San Fransico: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), 28,29.

73. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 30.

74. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 30.

75. Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance, 53.

76. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 27,28.

77. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 28.

78. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 24.

79. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 25.

80. See Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 25.

81. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 29.

82. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 45.

83. Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance, 65.

84. Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance, 63.

85. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 41.

86. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 41.

87. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 88. This has already been aptly demonstrated; see also Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 21,22.

88. Carl F.H. Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II, 82. For further insight into Henry's view of human responsibility for sin see Carl F.H. Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II, 457.

89. Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology, 557. See also Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology, 509.

90. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 40.

91. Gordon Girod, The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of the Canons of the Synod of Dort, 25.
It would seem to me that if God has foreordained such a state, it is unjust. Surely the soul could say to God, "I never had any real choice in the matter; you predestined my eternal destiny!".

92. Julius R. Mantley, "Repentance and Conversion", ed., Carl F.H. Henry, Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 197.

93. J.I. Packer, Knowing God, 158.
See also 153-163 for a description of the judgement of God upon sin; see also 164-175 for a discussion of the wrath of God against sin.

94. Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation, 34.
See also 652-660 for a discussion of physical and spiritual death as a penalty imposed against sin.

95. Carl Henry strongly affirms the doctrine that God is essentially just; He cannot be, therefore, unjust in any circumstance. See Carl F.H. Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II, 86; 402-435.
See also Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology, 785, for Strong's discussion of divine justice vis-a-vis election.

96. See J.I. Packer, Knowing God, 157-159.

97. See J.I. Packer, Knowing God, 159.

98. Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 9.

99. Andrew K. Rule, "Providence and Preservation", 79.

100. Andrew K. Rule, "Providence and Preservation", 79.

101. Andrew K. Rule, "Providence and Preservation", 79.

102. Andrew K. Rule, "Providence and Preservation", 79.

103. Andrew K. Rule, "Providence and Preservation", 79.

104. J.I. Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, 22.

105. J.I. Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, 21.

106. J. Norval Geldenhuys, "Effectual Calling", 184.

107. J. Norval Geldenhuys, "Effectual Calling", 181.

108. Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance, 33.

109. Carl F.H. Henry, "A Critique of Process Theology", ed., Millard T. Erikson, The Living God: Readings in Christian Theology (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1973), 400,401.

110. Carl F.H. Henry, "A Critique of Process Theology", 401.

111. Charles Hartshorne, Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1984), 14.

112. All of the authors cited in the remainder of this chapter will be writing from an Evangelical perspective.

113. Millard Erikson, The New Evangelical Theology (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1968), 91.

114. See John H. Gerstner, "Theological Boundaries: The Reformed Perspective", 9.

115. See Vinson Synan, "Theological Boundaries: The Armenian Tradition", 38.

116. See Vinson Synan, "Theological Boundaries: The Armenian Tradition", 42.

117. Vinson Synan, "Theological Boundaries: The Armenian Tradition", 39.

118. See Vinson Synan, "Theological Boundaries: The Armenian Tradition", 38-40.

119. Vinson Synan, "Theological Boundaries: The Armenian Tradition", 41.

120. See Vinson Synan, "Theological Boundaries: The Armenian Tradition", 38,39.
Though the Pentecostal and charismatic movements have previously been only "small players" in the Evangelical movement, my personal suspicion is that they are the fastest growing wing of the movement today by quite a significant amount. It will be interesting to see how a development of

serious Pentecostal theology will affect not only Pentecostal thought, but the thought of the rest of Evangelicalism as well. However, there really are not many serious Pentecostal theologians to have emerged thus far.

121. We will see that the problem of theodicy will also be the starting point for Anthony Campolo. It is not surprizing that suffering is the issue leading these Evangelicals to question the majority view, for no other issue brings the power of God so much into question.

122. John Claypool, _Tracks of a Fellow Struggler_ (New York: Pillar Books, 1976), 68.

123. John Claypool, _Tracks of a Fellow Struggler_, 68.

124. Richard J. Foster, _Celebration of Discipline_ (San Fransico: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), 32.
It is interesting to note that J.I. Packer also uses the subject of prayer as an argument in favour of a deterministic view of God, opposed to that of Foster. See J.I. Packer, _Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God_, 11.

125. Richard J. Foster, _Celebration of Discipline_, 32.

126. Richard J. Foster, _Celebration of Discipline_, 32.

127. Richard J. Foster, _Celebration of Discipline_, 32.

128. Anthony Campolo, _The Power Delusion_ (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1983), 82.

129. Anthony Campolo, _The Power Delusion_, 85.

130. Anthony Campolo, _The Power Delusion_, 86.

131. Anthony Campolo, _The Power Delusion_, 86,87.
It is important to notice that Campolo retains the traditional doctrine of the Incarnation: that in Jesus God became human. "While our liberal opponents doubt the diety of Christ, we have a tendency to doubt His humanity." (88) This means that because we see in Jesus One who voluntarily relinquished power, we can assume that God does the same: "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

132. Anthony Campolo, _The Power Delusion_, 88.

133. Anthony Campolo, _The Power Delusion_, 90.

134. Anthony Campolo, _The Power Delusion_, 90.

135. Anthony Campolo, _The Power Delusion_, 91.

136.   Anthony Campolo, <u>The Power Delusion</u>, 92,(

137.   Anthony Campolo, <u>The Power Delusion</u>, 85.

138.   Anthony Campolo, <u>The Power Delusion</u>, 95.

139.   Anthony Campolo, <u>The Power Delusion</u>, 85.

140.   Anthony Campolo, <u>The Power Delusion</u>, 92.

141.   Anthony Campolo, <u>The Power Delusion</u>, 95,96.

142.   Augustus Hopkins Strong, <u>Systematic Theology</u>, 288.
Strong also appeals to the Incarnation to substantiate
this view. "It is an act of omnipotence when God humbles
himself to the taking of human flesh in Jesus Christ."(288)

143.   Augustus Hopkins Strong, <u>Systematic Theology</u>, 288.

144.   Augustus Hopkins Strong, <u>Systematic Theology</u>, 288.

145.   J.I. Packer, <u>Evangelism and the Sovereignty of
God</u>, 16.

146.   Vinson Syman, "Theological Boundaries: The
Armenian Tradition", 39.

Chapter Three: EVANGELISTIC LITERATURE-
STEWARDSHIP OF FREEDOM

It will be recalled from Chapter One that the heart of Evangelical self-identity is not a shared theology so much as it is a shared mission to "spread the Gospel to all the world". Certainly there is a theology, particularly a soteriology (with a corresponding anthropology) assumed and declared as this mission is fulfilled. Because of the nature of the Evangelical movement itself, it might well be argued that the message of the evangelist ought to be more formative to the Evangelical vision of God than is the message of the academic theologians. This is undoubtedly the case with respect to popular Evangelicalism.

A survey of the literature of Evangelical evangelism is consequently an important area of study with regard to the subject of God's sovereignty vis-a-vis human freedom in Evangelical thought. Whereas there is a conflict in academic Evangelical theology regarding the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom, that tension is notably absent in the literature of the Evangelical evangelists. The assumption of Evangelical evangelism is clear: humans are free to sin and free to accept the gift of salvation offered in Christ.

In this chapter I will briefly review and demonstrate the assumption of human freedom in the literature of the evangelist. This literature falls into two distinct

categories. The first category is the literature written with the intent of leading the reader to an experience of conversion. We might consider this category of evangelistic literature as containing the *message* of Evangelical evangelism. The second category is that literature in which the evangelist aims to instruct other Evangelicals in the art of persuasive evangelism. This category of evangelistic literature contains the *methods* of Evangelical evangelism. We shall see that assumed in both is a free humanity and a persuasive God rather than a determinative God.

It should be remembered that this chapter does not explore the thought of systematic theologians. The intent of these writers is not so much that their readers understand God as it is that they experience God. However, this literature represents a very powerful influence on the thought of the Evangelical movement as their mission is at the heart of Evangelicalism. It probably is also a better indication of popular Evangelical theology than are the writers cited in Chapter Two, and thus, perhaps, has a far greater impact on the thought and expectations of the large number of people identified with Evangelical Churches.

A. Implications in the Evangelists' Message
Regarding Human Freedom and Divine Persuasiveness
1. A Definition of Evangelical Evangelism

In 1974 Evangelical Christians from all parts of the world met in Lausanne, Switzerland, for an "International

Conference on World Evangelism". The delegates to this

conference emerged with an Evangelical definition of

evangelism that has very broad acceptance among Evangelicals:

> To evangelize is to spread the good news that
> Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from
> the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the
> reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins
> and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who
> repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the
> world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that
> kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen
> sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism
> itself is the proclamation of the historical,
> biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, *with a view to
> persuading people to come to him personally* and so be
> reconciled to God. In issuing *the gospel invitation*
> we have no liberty to conceal the cost of
> discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow
> him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and
> identify themselves with his new community. The
> results of evangelism include obedience to Christ,
> incorporation into his church and responsible service
> in the world. (emphasis added).[1]

Already, in this Evangelical definition of the evangelist's

mission are two important concepts. The role of the

evangelist is to persuade and invite. The evangelist does

not assume that those unconditionally elected to salvation

will be saved, else such emphasis on human persuasion is

senseless. Further, the personal and voluntary nature of the

decision to be reconciled to God is clear. This definition

contains a number of assumptions we will see made by the

evangelists all of which point to a humanity with real

freedom and a God that persuades rather than determines human

events and decisions.

The soteriology of the evangelists is consistent with

these assumptions. The evangelist begins with human need.

Billy Graham (undoubtedly the foremost modern Evangelical evangelist) describes this need. "... [T]he Creator made us for Himself; and we shall never find completeness and fulness apart from fellowship with Him."[2] That divine/human fellowship has been destroyed by sin, which ultimately, if not dealt with, results in the eternal damnation of the sinner.[3] God, however, in His mercy provided Jesus Christ as a substitutionary atonement for that sin. This atonement is efficacious by an act of willing faith that personally appropriates the sacrifice.[4] This act of faith not only enables the sinner to receive divine forgiveness, it also results in a "conversion": a changed life dedicated to righteousness flowing from a sincere love of God and a consequent desire to obey God.[5]

We will now look at some of the elements of this soteriology in more detail, revealing the assumptions made by the evangelist regarding human freedom and divine persuasiveness.

2. The Personal Nature of the Evangelists' Message

One of the foundational features of the evangelists' message in Evangelicalism is the radically personal nature of the faith experience. This has already been seen in Chapter One as a number of thinkers have included in their conceptual unity a belief in the need for an individual, experiential and personal faith relationship between God and humans.

This personal nature of the gospel is again evident

as David Watson, a prominent British evangelist, describes

his message:

> It is a gospel that must be *personally appropriated*
> ... Until there has been a wholehearted personal
> response to the Gospel, so that we not only believe
> it, but also hold it fast, the gospel itself is in
> vain.[6]

This personal nature of the gospel places the efficacy of the

gospel on the response of the human recepient rather than on

the intiating divine act of election as argued by the

theologians in Chapter Two.

Addressing directly those who have not yet personally

appropriated the gospel, Billy Graham informs them that there

are four things they must do if they wish to be saved:

> First, *you must recognise what Christ did.*
> ...
> Second, *you must repent of your sins.* ...
> Third, *you must receive Jesus Christ as*
> Saviour and Lord. ...
> Forth, *you must confess Christ publicly.* ...[7]

Notice the heavy emphasis on what humans *must* do to be saved.

Unless the human responds, the gospel is in vain. The onus

is placed on human choice, not divine decree.

James Kennedy, who has developed the most popular

program for local Church evangelism in modern Evangelicalism,

echoes the thought of Graham. Discussing "the message of

evangelism", he also underlines its personal nature. "...

[I]t calls for a response ... [people] must say either Yes or

No!"[8] The response that answers "Yes" contains three

necessary elements. The first is repentance, "a change of

mind, leading to a change of heart, resulting in a change of

direction."[9] The second is belief. "... [T]he call to

believe is a call to discipleship. It involves a clear

commitment of the will to the person of Jesus Christ.[10] The

final response is to "receive" salvation. This means to

consciously open our lives to the person of the Holy

Spirit.[1]

Graham describes the experience of conversion as

consisting of three steps, "two of them active and one

passive". They are (1) repentance; and (2) faith (which are

active) and (3) "the new birth or regeneration" (which is

passive).[12] It is fascinating to note that what God does is

the third rather than the first step in this process. In

Graham's message, it is clear that God saves not by intiating

human faith but *by responding to human faith*. Again, we see

the onus on human freedom as opposed to divine fiat.

3. Sin and Freedom in the Evangelists' Message

As we look even more specificly at how the

Evangelical evangelists understand repentance and faith, the

role of human choice becomes yet more clear. Repentance

assumes that sin is a freely chosen event for which humans

are directly responsible. Graham writes, "Repentance

involves first of all an acknowledgement of our sin. When we

repent we are saying that we recognize that we are sinners

and that our sin involves us in personal guilt before God."[13]

We are personally guilty because we are personally

responsible for our sinful choices. Graham writes, "We are

all sinners by choice."[14]   Again he writes, "Sin is not

merely a negative thing, it is not just the absence of love

for God. *Sin is the working of a positive choice, the*

preference of self instead of God" (emphasis added).[15] God

can act against human sin by bringing "conviction of sin" to

humans, but people can freely choose to resist this divine

attempt at persuasion.[16]

Bill Bright, founder and president of Campus Crusade

for Christ, has written a widely distributed evangelistic

booklet entitled "Have You Heard of the Four Spiritual

Laws?". This presentation of the gospel makes a serious

implication about the power of sin. Law number One is that

"God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." But

Bright then asks, "Why is it that that most people are no

experiencing the abundant life? Because... [turning to law

number Two] Man is sinful and separated from God. Therefore

he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his

life."[17] The implication implicit here is that humans have

the power to thwart God's plan. God is not the determinative

being who brings His plan to pass iregardless of human

decision or desire. God is dependent upon human response for

His plan to come to fruition. A further implication is that

God must therefore persuade humans to pursue the divine plan

if He is to take any action in the matter at all. This

evangelistic message is a radical break from the theological

position held by a majority of Evangelical academics.

Graham also identifies repentance as an act of human

will rather than divine decree.

> It is only when we come to the will that we find the
> very heart of repentance. There must be that
> determination to forsake sin - to change one's
> attitudes toward self, toward sin, and God; to change
> our feeling; to change one's will, disposition and
> purpose.[18]

In this view of sin and repentance is a clear
anthropolgy which includes freedom as an essential part of
what it means to be human. Graham writes, "...[U]pon ... man
God bestowed the most precious of all gifts - the gift of
freedom. God gave to man freedom of choice."[19] This freedom
(and the corollary limitation on divine power) comes as the
result of a sovereign decision on the part of God. He made
us free out of choice rather than necessity:

> God could have created us as human robots who would
> respond mechanically to His direction. Obviously,
> this would be a response over which man had no
> control. But instead, God created us in His image,
> and He desires that the creature worship the Creator
> as a response of love. This can be accomplished when
> "free will" is exercised. Love and obedience which
> are compelled do not satisfy. God wanted sons, not
> machines.[20]

A clearer refutation of the Calvinistic doctrine of so many
Evangelical theologians is difficult to imagine!
Furthermore, Graham guards against the assumption that God is
working a pre-determined plan through human choices that seem
to be free, but in reality have only one outcome. "Freedom
is meaningless if there is only one path to follow. Freedom
implies the right to choose, to select, to determine one's
individual course of action."[21]

According to Graham, human freedom is total:

> Adam had total freedom - freedom to choose or to
> reject, freedom to obey God's commands or to go
> contrary to them, freedom to make himself happy or
> miserable. For it is not the mere possession of
> freedom that makes life satisfying - it is what we
> choose to do with our freedom that determines whether
> or not we shall find peace with ourselves and with
> God.[22]

The "terrible freedom" given to Adam and Eve, "whether to

love God or rebel and build their world without Him", is also

"what He gives us."[23] If we so choose, we can live without

reference to God or His commands. God will not manipulate,

coerce, or force us to abandon our sin.

What then can God do? Graham answers, "[God] waits

to offer individual salvation and peace to the ones who will

come to His mercy. The same two paths that God set before

Adam still lie before us. We are still free to choose."[24]

What the evangelists remind us is that we must choose some

destiny. Because we are free, we must be responsible

stewards of our God-given freedom. We will be held eternally

accountable for what we do with our freedom. "... [W]hen we

reach the age of accountability ... God looks on us as

full-grown adults, making moral and spiritual choices for

which we will be held accountable at the judgement."[25]

The academic Evangelical theologians have difficulty

explaining why, when God exercises the power of determination

over sinful human beings, He also justly holds them

accountable for their sin. The evangelists have no such

difficulty. They proclaim that humanity is free. Sin is the

result of freedom gone astray, not the result of a mysterious

divine decree. God holds humans accountable for sin precisely because they are responsible for their abuse of freedom. By the same token, we shall now see that not only sin, but salvation as well, is a function of humans acting in freedom.

4. Salvation and Freedom in the Evangelists' Message

When we turn from the subject of sin to the subject of salvation, we see that the assumption of human freedom is just as clear in the evangelists' message on this second subject as it is on the first. The evangelist declares that God's response to human sin was to send Jesus Christ to die as a substitutionary sacrifice which atones for human guilt. This sacrifice, however, is only efficacious when it is accepted and applied by a personal and free decision of faith. Graham writes to the individual seeking salvation that

> [b]elieving is your response to God's offer of mercy, love and forgiveness. God took the initiative and did everything that was needed to make the offer of salvation possible. ... But only by committing yourself to Him, surrendering to Him - are you saved.[26]

Salvation is, to the evangelist, just as personal and individual as is sin. Bill Bright's Fourth "spiritual law" says,

> We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives. ... We receive Jesus Christ by faith as an act of the will. (emphasis added).[27]

Graham agrees that saving faith is a function of human will

freely choosing to believe. "Placing your faith in Christ means that you must make a choice. ... [Y]ou must choose to believe."[28]

Graham uses the experience of Moses as an example of how such faith must be viewed as a "decision" or a "choice", and how that decision is made.

> Moses considered the claims and obligations of
> religion carefully. ... He knew how much was at stake
> and he arrived at his decision with the full use of
> his well-trained and superior mental faculties.[29]

The role of human ability to decide, and the absence of any idea of a God acting behind the scenes determining the human decision and event of faith are clearly seen here. Faith is a human function, not a divine preordination. Being human, the decision of faith requires the active involvement of several human faculties. It requires knowledge regarding the object of faith.[30] It requires emotion (though Graham is clear that he does not mean "emotionalism", in which the emotions dominant the event, but rather a healthy involvement of emotion as one facet of the human person always involved in any decision).[31] Finally, "and most important of all", the decision of faith involves the will: "it is the will that makes the final and lasting decision."[32]

The evangelists' message clearly rejects the notion that faith is the act of God predestining human individuals to unconditional election to salvation. Faith is a human function. If a person is condemned, it is not that they were consigned to wrath by divine decree, but because they

refused, in a free decision, to respond to God's offer of salvation.[33] If a person does respond to Christ with faith, it is not as the result of a divine decision preceding that faith, but the result of a human process of choosing. Clearly, the Evangelical evangelist believes, in marked contrast to the majority of Evangelical academic theologians, that humans are free beings and that God is *not* determining human acts and decisions.

Indeed, the Evangelical evangelists are clear that God *will not act to determine this decision of faith*. Billy Graham asserts that

> [f]aith in Christ is ... voluntary. A person cannot
> be coerced, bribed or tricked into accepting Jesus.
> *God will not force His way into your life*. The Holy
> Spirit will do everything to disturb you, draw you,
> love you- but finally it is your personal decision.
> ... [God] gives the Holy Spirit to draw you to the
> cross, but even after all of this it is your decision
> whether to accept God's free pardon or to continue in
> your lost condition. (emphasis added).[34]

Leighton Ford, another North American evangelist prominent in Evangelicalism agrees. "[God's] love is relentless, but never coercing. ... Man is made with responsible freedom - allowed by God even to deny Him."[35] Another Evangelical author of well-known evangelistic literature, Paul E. Little, adds his agreement:

> Jesus Christ in all His power will come into our
> lives as we invite Him to take them over. He won't
> gate-crash or force His way in, but He is ready to
> respond to our invitation.[36]

The whole tenor of the message of the Evangelical evangelists refutes the Calvinism so popular among academic

Evangelical theologians. The onus is placed upon human freedom rather than divine decree. God's grace enters the life of any indiviual by human invitation rather than by divine implementation. The Gospel is an invitation to be freed from the consequences of freely chosen sin, but only by a decision of freely chosen grace. God has done all that He will do in sending His Son; now it is up to humans to respond. Representatively of the Evangelical evangelists, Graham writes, "... the new birth is something that God does for man when man is willing to yield to God."[37]

If God has thus limited Himself by human freedom, how then does He bring people to Himself? If He cannot, in Leighton Ford's words, "coerce", He must be left only with the *modus operandi* of persuasion. He must lure humans toward the free choice of salvation. As we have seen human freedom explicitly and implicitly in the message of the evangelists, we will now see divine persuasion implicit in the methods employed by the evangelists in their mission.

B. Implications in the Evangelists' Methods

As we turn our attention from the literature by Evangelical evangelists written with the aim of converting the reader to give attention to the literature describing the activity of evangelism itself, we come to some broad implications about the way God works to influence human decisions. We might well ask the Calvinistic theologians if they have any reason to share their faith (an activity at the

foundation of Evangelical self-identity). After all, if God
is going to predestine, initiate, and implement salvation
Himself, why bother with any human effort? The evangelist
has no such problem. Believing in human freedom and human
responsibility, the evangelist sees this mission of
proclamation as "... the only way God can make His appeal
through us to the world."[38]

Leighton Ford sees the need for evangelism itself
stemming from divine self-limitation.

> In His sovereign self-limitation, God's power
> is restrained by His own choice. God has committed
> to us the message of reconciliation...(2 Cor. 5:19).
> Jesus was born in a borrowed manger, he
> preached from a borrowed boat, he entered Jerusalem
> on a borrowed donkey, he ate the Last Supper in a
> borrowed room, he was buried in a borrowed tomb. Now
> he asks to borrow the lives of Christians to reach
> the rest of the world. If we do not speak, then he
> is dumb and silent.[39]

Elsewhere, Ford discusses the evangelistic practise
of "giving an invitation" (in which converts are invited to
walk to the front of the building to publicly confess their
new faith in Christ) at the conclusion of an evangelistic
sermon. Ford maintains the legitimacy of this practise,
arguing that a decision of faith is the primary goal of
evangelistic preaching: "The only proper reason to give an
invitation is that God calls people to decision. ... [T]he
scriptural tradition is *crisis preaching* that calls for a
decision."[40] Not only does this statement imply human
freedom to make such a decision, Ford's view of evangelistic
preaching itself carries the strong implication that God, as

a persuasive being, utilizes human persuasiveness to work out
His divine purposes. Rather than electing individuals to
salvation through divine fiat, God is seeking to persuade
through human persons:

> The only reason we have to ask people to commit their
> lives for time and eternity is that God is calling
> them. The Gospel message is both an announcement and
> a command: it tells what God has done and calls
> people to respond. ... God is making His appeal
> through us.[41]

In an interview in *Leadership* journal, Oswald C.J.
Hoffman (a well-known radio preacher) refers to God as "the
Persuader" who works through his honest, but persuasive,
proclamation of the Gospel. Throughout the interview, it is
clear that his understanding of preaching is that God is
speaking through the human voice, seeking to persuade and
elicit a response of faith from the hearer.[42]

Most reputable evangelistic writers within
Evangelicalism deplore high pressure tactics and manipulative
techinques for creating a faith decision. The reason for
this is simple. A number of writers have clearly identified
human coercion as being contradictory to the God behind the
message who works through persuasion rather than coercion.
Jerry Cook, for example, suggests that evangelism is most
effective when it is tied to relationships of authentic care
and concern. People are better motivated toward saving faith
in Christ by love than they are by force because God Himself
wins people by love and not by force. The evangelist
generally needs, therefore, to exert "less pressure and more

loving". This approach, suggests Cook, more accurately reflects who God is and how He acts.[43]

A Christian psychologist, Jard DeVille, has written a book for Evangelical Christians who are not professional evangelists, but yet want to bear witness to their faith in their circle of friends.[44] DeVille explores the psychology of religious decisions. Again, the assumption is that Evangelical Christians wishing to be evangelistic should be as persuasive as is humanly possible without becoming manipulative, because God, Himself, calls people to salvation persuasively, but not coercively.

A number of writers addressing evangelistic methodology recognize the possibility that their readers might attempt to force or trick others into a decision of faith. In unison they argue that to do so is to deny the nature of the faith decision and the God of love.[45] Leighton Ford perhaps summarizes their concern best when he writes:

> If I try to get people into the Kingdom of God by arm-twisting and brain washing, then I am repudiating the love of God. His love is relentless, but never coercing. I am also denying what the Bible tells me about the nature of man. Man is made with responsible freedom - allowed by God even to deny Him.[46]

C. Summary of the Evangelistic Literature

The key-note played throughout the evangelistic literature of the Evangelical movement is human freedom and responsibility. The evangelists' eminent position in Evangelicalism is due to the assumption that God is calling and persuading people to

turn to and follow Him. The evangelist seeks to address the
human need of personal guilt carried by humans that have
freely chosen sin. The evangelist proclaims that humans can
freely choose salvation. Indeed, the evangelist proclaims
that people must choose salvation, for their destiny will be
determined by the choices they make. The evangelist depends
upon God to act and work through human agency, but this
working is dependent upon the willing human agent. This
dependence on human will and decision is labeled by the
Evangelical evangelists as a sovereign divine
self-limitation. God has willingly arranged things in such a
way that He must perform His will in the world of freedom by
means of persuasion. To coerce the decision of faith would
be to deny the freedom and responsibility God has confered
upon humanity.   — .

The Evangelical evangelist maintains that the most pressing
issue for humans is the question of what we will do with our
freedom. As stewards of freedom we will be called to account
for how we have spent it. As stewards of freedom we will be
held responsible for the sin we have so often freely chosen.
As stewards of freedom we are offered the gift of salvation
we can either accept or reject. As stewards of freedom we
have the wonderful and terrible power of choice. In fact, as
stewards of freedom, the only freedom we do not have is the
freedom not to choose at all. The evangelist reminds us that
we must act wisely and well with our stewardship of freedom.

NOTES

1. David Watson, <u>I Believe in Evangelism</u> (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976), 26.
The statement defining evangelism which emerged from this conference is quoted or refered to more than any other definition of evangelism I have come across in my research. I suspect that this is the case largely because it is such an extensive yet concise definition. This might also be the case because it emerged out of a conference of many Evangelical evangelists, pastors and theologians, and so has a wide representation of thought inherent in it.
Though it is not of direct relevance to this thesis, there are elements to this definiton that are perhaps even more interesting than the assumption of human freedom and divine persuasiveness I have pointed out. This definiton clearly reveals an Evangelical commitment to the need for social involvement in the world (one of the issues that sharply divides the thought of Evangelicalism from that of Fundamentalism). Another interesting component of this definition is its affirmation of dialogue with the adherents of other faiths. An entire thesis could perhaps be written spelling out the many implications of this simple statement defining evangelism for many facets of Evangelical thought and practice.

2. Billy Graham, <u>Peace With God</u> (New York: Doubleday, 1953), 9.

3. See Billy Graham, <u>Peace With God</u>, 73.

4. See Billy Graham, <u>Peace With God</u>, 85-106.

5. See Billy Graham, <u>Peace With God</u>, 109.

6. David Watson, <u>I Believe in Evangelism</u>, 33.

7. Billy Graham, <u>How To Be Born Again</u> (Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1977), 168.

8. D. James Kennedy, <u>Evangelism Explosion</u> (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1972), 76.

9. D. James Kennedy, <u>Evangelism Explosion</u>, 77.

10. D. James Kennedy, <u>Evangelism Explosion</u>, 78.

11. D. James Kennedy, <u>Evangelism Explosion</u>, 79,80.
The idea of "receiving" salvation is evident in the language of Evangelical evangelism in which a person is often refered to as having "received the Gospel", or more simply, having "received Christ". Synonymous with this concept, and equally evident in the dialect of Evangelical Christianity is

the reference to having "accepted Christ" into the heart or life.

12. See Billy Graham, _Peace With God_, 112.

13. Billy Graham, _How To Be Born Again_, 156.

14. Billy Graham, _How To Be Born Again_, 71.

15. Billy Graham, _Peace With God_, 49.

16. Billy Graham, _Peace With God_, 123,124.

17. Bill Bright, "Have You Heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?" (n.p.,n.d.)

18. Billy Graham, _Peace With God_, 124.
See also Billy Graham, _Peace With God_, 121.

19. Billy Graham, _Peace With God_, 38.

20. Billy Graham, _How To Be Born Again_, 68.
See also Billy Graham, "Steps To Peace With God" (n.p,n.d.).
This second reference is a "gospel tract", a booklet published for wide distribution as an evangelistic tool. In this booklet Graham echoes his words quoted from _How To Be Born Again_:

> God created man in His own image and gave him
> abundant life. He did not make him as a robot to
> automatically love and obey Him, but gave him a will
> and freedom of choice. Man choose to disobey God and
> go his own wilfull way. Man still makes this choice
> today...

21. Billy Graham, _Peace With God_, 38.

22. Billy Graham, _Peace With God_, 38.

23. Billy Graham, _How To Be Born Again_, 68.

24. Billy Graham, _Peace With God_, 45.

25. Billy Graham, _How To Be Born Again_, 156.

26. Billy Graham, _How To Be Born Again_, 161.

27. Bill Bright, "Have You Heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?".

28. Billy Graham, _How To Be Born Again_, 160.

29. Billy Graham, _Peace With God_, 128.

30. See Billy Graham, <u>Peace With God</u>, 137.

31. See Billy Graham, <u>Peace With God</u>, 138.

32. See Billy Graham, <u>Peace With God</u>, 139.

33. Of course, this statement begs the question of the fate of those who have never heard the message of the evangelist, and thus have never had opportunity to respond. Obviously, those who have never heard the message of salvation have not freely chosen to reject it. How the Evangelical responds to this broader question would be an interesting subject for further research and clarification.

34. Billy Graham, <u>How To Be Born Again</u>, 162.

35. Leighton Ford, <u>Good News is For Sharing</u> (Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1977), 43.
For many years Leighton Ford was one of the Associate Evangelists on the Billy Graham team. For the last several years, he has been active in his own individual evangelistic ministry.

36. Paul Little, "Who's Got the Answer?" (Chicago: Acorn Booklets, n.d.). This is another "Gospel tract" designed for wide distribution.
See also Paul E. Little, <u>How To Give Away your Faith</u> (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966), 60:
    The Lord Jesus Christ is knocking at the door of our lives. He will not gate-crash or force His way in but will come in at our invitation.

37. Billy Graham, <u>How To Be Born Again</u>, 150.

38. Billy Graham, <u>How To Be Born Again</u>, 149.

39. Leighton Ford, <u>Good News is For Sharing</u>, 26.

40. Leighton Ford, "How To Give An Honest Invitation", <u>Leadership</u>, Vol. V, No. 2 (Spring, 1984), 106.

41. Leighton Ford, "How To Give An Honest Invitation", 105.

42. Dean Merrill and Marshall Shelley, "Turn the Gospel Loose: A Convseration with Oswald C.J. Hoffman and Bill Hybels", <u>Leadership</u>, Vol. VI, No. 4, (Fall, 1985), 12-23.

43. Jerry Cook, "Less Pressure, More Loving", <u>Leadership</u>, Vol. V, No. 2 (Spring, 1984), 12-20.

44. See Jard DeVille, <u>The Psychology of Witnessing</u>

(Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1980).

45. See Paul E. Little, <u>How to Give Away Your Faith</u>.
See also Jard DeVille, <u>The Psychology of Witnessing</u>, 16.
See also Rebecca Manley Pippert, <u>Out of the Salt Shaker</u>
<u>and into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life</u> (Downers
Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 15-28.
See also Gaines S. Dobbins, <u>Good News to Change Lives:</u>
<u>Evangelism in an Age of Uncertainty</u> (Nashwille, Broadman
Press, 1976), 40-50.

46. Leighton Ford, <u>Good News is For Sharing</u>, 26.

Chapter Four: A PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO THE DILEMMA

The previous two chapters reveal modern
Evangelicalism as a movement on the horns of a dilemma. On
the one hand, the majority of the movement's academic,
systematic theologians maintain a Calvinistic vision of God.
This God is quite deterministic. He controls the universe;
He predestines all human acts and decisions. This vision of
God results in a corollary understanding of humans as bound
by both the principle of sin and the decrees of God. In this
view, the sovereignty of God leaves no room for real or
meaningful human freedom.

On the other hand, the evangelists of the movement
(who provide much of the movement's self-identity) argue
instead for a free humanity. In their message, humans freely
sin and thus need to accept the divine invitation to
salvation. This invitation can only be accepted on the basis
of a free decision of faith that involves the entire human
being's faculties of choice. God works in this process, not
by determining or unconditionally electing, but by using
human agents of divine persuasiveness. God does not force,
manipulate or coerce His way into a person's life. He simply
calls, invites and lures humans into the wholeness and
salvation labeled by the evangelist as a "new birth".

Who shall the Evangelical believe? Shall the
Evangelical believe the majority of theologians and accept
divine determinism and human bondage? Or shall the

Evangelical believe the evangelist who proclaims divine

persuasiveness and human freedom? This is the dilemma.

It seems to me that Evangelicals are limited to only

three choices as they respond to this dilemma. The first

choice is simply to ignore it. This requires living with a

divided mind. I fear that because in many respects this

would be the easiest avenue to take (it requires no change),

it might well be the avenue many Evangelicals select. It is

the case that a number of Evangelical thinkers have

acknowledged this as their position.[1]

However, to ignore the dilemma, or even worse, to

incorporate such a dilemma into the theological content of

the Evangelical movement, can only be dangerous and

detrimental to the life and vitality of Evangelicalism in the

long run. To live with such a divided mind is to by

necessity engage in a schizophrenic division between the

cognitive content of religious faith and the actual practise

of that faith. Such ambivalence must certainly leave the

individual believer in a constant state of tension and

frustration. It seems to me that the probable result is that

individual Evangelicals will ignore either serious

theological reflection or active evangelism, being unable to

bring both together in a unified life of faith.[2] It is

obvious that ignoring the problem is not, in my view, an

adequate way to resolve the dilemma facing Evangelicals.

The second option open to Evangelicals in response to

this dilemma is to refute the message and methods of the

evangelist. This option would clearly and unambiguously accept the verdict of the majority of academic Evangelical theologians that God predestines the acts and decisions of humans who, in this scenario, are not free. This option has the advantage over the first choice that it maintains theological integrity. However, this integrity is maintained at the cost of any meaningful understanding or practise of evangelism. This carries a further implication that the cost of this theological integrity is most likely the very life-blood of the Evangelical movement. Indeed, if Bloesch is correct in saying "To be evangelical means to be evangelistic,"[3] then to pursue this second option is, in effect, to cease to be Evangelical.

The third option is just the reverse of the second. Evangelicalism can reject the Calvinism found in the majority of its systematic theologians. Evangelicals can maintain both the message and the practice of evangelism by understanding God as a Being who persuades rather than determines and understanding humans as free. This is the choice that I, as one Evangelical, make. A minority of mainstream Evangelical theologians have also made this choice. I consider the message of the evangelists and of this theological minority to be correct. I would also suggest, however, that this line of thought needs to be carried further.

What follows are three reasons why I would urge other Evangelicals to make the same choice. I will then suggest

some avenues of theological inquiry that remain to be
traveled by Evangelicals wishing to make this choice.

A. Three Reasons Why the Position of the Evangelists Ought to
Prevail in Evangelical Thought

1. The Logical Incoherence of Calvinism

The first reason I would suggest that the message of
the evangelists ought to prevail over the Calvinism of the
majority of academic Evangelical theologians is that the
position of this Calvinistic majority is itself internally
logically incoherent. I am re-stating here an argument I
have already made earlier.[4]

The Calvinistic theologians want to maintain three
propositions: (1) God predetermines human events and
decisions; (2) God holds humans responsible and accountable
for their decisions (and indeed, those who sin and/or reject
the gift of salvation will experience condemnation); and (3)
God is loving and just. These three propositions simply are
not logically compatible taken all together. If Evangelical
theology is serious about stressing "the rationality of
faith,"[5] one of these propositions must be denied.

We could argue, for example, that God will punish
humans for events and decisions that have stemmed from divine
freedom rather than human freedom, but to do so we must deny
God's love or justice. It would simply be cruel and unfair
to punish that over which people have no real control. But
to deny either the love or the justice of God is to deny what

are arguably the most crucial elements of the Christian understanding of God! If we deny proposition (3), we are left with a God few of us would wish to worship. Few, if any, Christian thinkers would be willing to deny divine love and justice, so we must therefore find some other proposition to deny.

We could argue that a just God determines human events and decisions. Being just, this God cannot hold humans responsible and accountable for their choices and acts, for these flow from divine decree rather than from human freedom. In this event, to speak of salvation or condemnation is irrelevant. There is nothing to forgive just as there is nothing to condemn. There is no need for grace. There is no need for atonement. There is certainly no need for evangelism. There is no need for developing any understanding of morality or ethics, for these are questions taken out of the sphere of human activity or choice. We are simply acting out divine decisions over which we have no control and for which we have no responsibility. To deny human responsibilty and accountability makes nonsense of much Christian thought, teaching, concern and tradition. This denial leaves us not only with moral chaos, but also with a small, petty God who clings to all the power of decision-making with tenacious insecurity. This again is a God few of us would be inclined to worship. Consequently, proposition (2) is also a tenet few of us would be willing to deny.

This leaves us only with one other choice: the choice of denying the propostion that God determines all human events and decisions. Certainly a just and loving God could (and would) hold us accountable for our choices and acts given that those choices and acts flow from real and legitimate human freedom.

It might be that Calvinistic thinkers would argue that this makes God "too small". I would reply that the only other options leave us with a God who is petty, tyrannical or insecure. I would then be arguing, in essence, that the God of Cavinism is too small. Indeed, it seems to me that a God daring enough to bring into being a creation full of freedom is anything but small! Such a God need not command my worship. His very Being elicits my worship and challenges me in the ethical realm to use my freedom well and with all the human maturity I can muster.

It might be that Calvinistic thinkers would argue that this position denies the Christian belief in divine sovereignty. I would argue that freedom is not in any way a denial of God's sovereignty, it is rather a product of God's sovereignty. God, Himself, is free to choose. But every choice logically limits future choices. The choice to create, for example, makes the choice to never have created impossible. To express this a little differently, in choosing to create God exercised a divine self-limitation on the potential choice to never have created. This does not limit divine sovereignty, it simply reveals God sovereignly

deciding and acting. The only way God could act without imposing some form of self-limitation on his future choices is for God not to act at all. This would not leave us with an active, sovereign God, but with a passive, fearful divinity. I would argue that God is sovereign, and in His sovereignty choose to create real beings- beings with the power of choice; beings with, in Billy Graham's words, "terrible freedom."[6]

Even if Evangelicals did not have the message of the evangelists refuting the Calvinistic theological majority, in the logical fallacy of this majority position there is adequate reason for the Evangelical to be dis-satisfied with what the majority of Evangelical academic theologians are saying about divine determinism. Reason requires the Evangelical to refute a position that contains three logically incompatible propositions. Further thought makes it obvious that the proposition that must be denyed if the entire Christian understanding of God is not to falter is the statement that God determines all human acts and decisions.

2. Evangelism and Evangelical Identity

The second reason why the message of the evangelists ought to prevail over the Calvinism of the majority of academic theologians in Evangelical thought is that evangelism and the message of the evangelist play such an important role in Evangelical self-identity.

We have surveyed the concepts considered by

Evangelicals to unify the Evangelical movment in Chapter One, and it is notable that not one writer identified Calvinism in general or divine determinism in particular as being one of those convictions that bind Evangelicalism together. Writer after writer, however, identified the soteriology proclaimed by the evangelists and the mission of the evangelist as being essential to what it means to be Evangelical. I would argue, therefore, that to believe in human freedom and divine persuasiveness ought, by reason ahd logic, to also be intregal to being Evangelical.

Surveying the message of the evangelist, we have seen that Evangelical soteriology is personal. It deals with personal sin that by its nature is freely chosen by the human sinner. It deals with personal faith that is a free decision of the human believer. In the personal, experiential gospel that Evangelicals perceive as part of their essential self-identity there is a strong assumption of human freedom.

Further, in the urgency of the evangelistic mission there is the strong implication that God's *modus operandi* in the world is persuasion rather than determination or coercion. If it is the case that God has fore-ordained and unconditionally elected those who are to be saved, Evangelicals are wasting millions of dollars and much time and energy seeking to "win the lost to Christ". If Evangelicals *really* believe in divine determinism the way that most Evangelical theologians define it, evangelism would not play such a large role in what it means to be

Evangelical. But Evangelicals do believe in and practise evangelism- it is a hallmark of what it means to be Evangelical.

I would argue that the Evangelical soteriology is a *de facto* statement of human freedom. I would further argue that the Evangelical commitment to and emphasis upon the practise of evangelism is a *de facto* statement of divine persuasiveness as opposed to divine determinism. The problem is that in many cases these *de facto* statements have not been included, and have even been denied, in the doctrinal formulations of Evangelicalism. To look at the same issue from the opposite angle, I would argue that a view of divine determinism and the corollary view of a very limited human freedom are *de facto* denials of the message and practise of Evangelical evangelism. Given that a commitment to the message and practise of evangelism is essential to what it means to be Evangelical, I would conclude that a view of divine determinism and the corollary restricted human freedom are, in fact, a denial of Evangelicalism itself.

To be sure, the many Evangelicals who are committed Calvinists would strongly disagree with these assertions. My response is simply that they have decided to live with a divided mind on the subject, appealing to such notions as divine mystery and inscrutability to explain their inability to bring their doctrine and their practise together in a unified vision of God and what it means to believe in and follow Him. If Calvinistic Evangelicals wish to maintain

divine determinism and evangelism, then it seems to me that

the onus is on them to demonstrate how the two can be

reasonably defended as logically compatible- a demonstration

that has not yet been made. It seems to me that if

Calvinistic Evangelicals are unable to rationally defend both

poles of their position, then they should refute either their

Calvinism or their Evangelicalism.

Whereas Calvinism is not one of the few features of

Evangelical self-identity, and whereas evangelism's message

and practice are, it would seem to me that Evangelical

thought should begin with the assumptions of human freedom

and divine persuasiveness found in evangelism. To let go of

these assumptions is ultimately to lose what it means to be

Evangelical.

3. Pastoral Relevance

The third reason I would argue that the message of

the evangelists ought to prevail over Calvinism in

Evangelical thought is that *divine persuasiveness and human*

freedom are concepts that are more pastorally helpful than

are the concepts of divine determinism and human bondage.

Right at the outset of this argument I acknowledge

that it cannot stand on its own. The reason I make this my

third argument rather than my first is that I recognize that

a belief might be convenient to pastoral concerns or

practice, but not necessarily true. At the same time,

however, it must also be the case that what we experience as

having power to work positively in people's lives must be given serious consideration. If human experience does not form part of our theological reflection, the entire discipline of theology runs the risk of becoming utterly irrelevant.

Richard-Foster has demonstrated (as we have already seen) that the concept of divine determinism creates a barrier to the spiritual discipline of prayer.[7] If the events of the universe are already set for eternity without the possibility of change, why pray? It would seem to me that as it is seen in both Scripture and Christian experience, the discipline of prayer is the discipline by which God and humans are able to communicate with one another in order to cooperate in our co-labour in the world. That we sense a need for this human/divine communication, and that God (apparently) sanctions such a discipline, would seem to suggest that we and the world can potentially move in a variety of directions depending upon how humans and God respond to each other.

To turn this argument around, I would suggest that anyone who prays believes that their human act makes a difference, or else they would disregard the discipline entirely. It is difficult, if not impossible, to teach that our human prayers have a direct impact upon God's response to the world while at the same time teaching that God's response to the world is predetermined and foreordained. In this case, God does not make a *response* at all to our prayer, for

neither He nor our situation is changed by it. There is no

adequate reason to pray to a determinative God.

. A God who works through persuasion and who leaves

room for creaturely freedom is, by contrast, far more

religiously accessible. Prayer to such a God makes sense.

Indeed, if free humans are working with a free God in the

world, prayer is necessary. We must have some avenue by

which we can discern where and how God is luring us to act

and decide. The message of the evangelists is, in this

matter of prayer, obviously far more pastorally applicable

than is the message of modern Evangelical Calvinistic

theology.

In another pastoral issue, Anthony Campolo and John

Claypool have also demonstrated that a belief in divine

determination creates a serious problem for Evangelicals

wrestling with the challenge of suffering.[8] In a world where

there is such misery, the conviction that it is all part of

an unalterable, foreordained plan of God is not much comfort.

It is, at times, difficult enough to worship and pray to God

from the environment of such suffering. To worship and pray

to a God that has actually caused it is for many impossible.

An understanding of a persuasive God and a free humanity,

however, can provide us with at least a good starting point

for an Evangelical theodicy that does provide comfort as well

as reason to worship and pray (see "Appendix: Toward an

Evangelical Theodicy").

The many activities of clergy and Church that call

upon people to deal decisively with their lives are irrelvant if their lives are already predetermined. Were I, as one pastor, convinced that the decisions elicited by my preaching were preordained and had nothing to do with either my persuasiveness or the hearers' faculties of choice, I would not work nearly so hard as I do to preach intelligently, persuasively and well. What would be the point of such work? The outcome would depend not upon my preaching, nor upon the hearers' listening, but upon a divine decision already made before I step into the pulpit and the listener settles into the pew.

Were I, as one pastor, persuaded that the outcome of the personal counseling I do with parishioners is already determined, I would not work so hard to be a wise and good counselor. I would not endure the frustration of giving advice that is at times painful for the counselee to hear and difficult to implement. If the outcome of each counseling session is already predetermined, why work at it? If an individual's life events and choices are already determined by God, why spend such time and emotional energy encouraging them to make good, constructive life decisions? This demanding ministry only makes sense if underlying the pastor's counsel is a God persuading people into spiritual and emotional health and wholeness.

Many Evangelical pastors maintain a doctrine of divine determinism and human bondage and nevertheless work very hard. They work hard at preaching, counselling,

evangelism, prayer, teaching, meeting the needs of the community, providing ecclesiastical leadership as they set congregational goals- and a host of other pastoral activites that seem to require and imply free decisions on the part of those who receive such ministry. I do not mean to discredit the hard work of these pastors. I do mean to suggest that their hard work belies their theology. My hope is that they will continue to work hard, and that they will be encouraged and motivated in their work by the knowledge that God is working through them: persuading, calling and inviting through their effort.

As one pastor, were I to believe that my life work is merely mechanical - God acting on me and thus, acting on others - my life would be characterized by hopelessness, exhaustion and despair. This is so because I would feel that my life, and my response to God's call, are without any meaning beyond that meaning given to a pawn on a chess board. The conviction that God is not acting upon me, but working through me, leads to a different view. This conviction leaves me with human dignity and worth, and a strong sense of responsiblity.

A view of humans as free and God as persuasive gives meaning and relevance to much of my pastoral work. Even more importantly, this view gives me meaning, challenge and fulfillment as a human being. The benefits of a pastorally relevant view of God are to be shared not only by pastors,

but by all people who receive their ministry.

B. Three Directions Evangelical Theology Needs to Take

If Evangelicalism is going to be successful in incorporating the theology of the evangelist into its systematic theology, there are three directions those Evangelicals arguing for a persuasive God and a free humanity are going to have to take.

1. The Need for a New Systematic Theology

In the first place, this vision of God is going to have to be incorporated into a much larger systematic theology. As was seen in the first chapter, one of the weaknesses of Evangelical thought has been that, due to the particular history of the Evangelical movement, its theology has been shaped "into the the form of haphazardly related doctrines."[9] The evangelist is concerned with freedom as it relates to evangelism. The pastor is concerned with freedom as it relates to prayer, theodicy and other specific pastoral issues. What is needed is a large, systematic approach to the issue that examines how this vision of God touches upon a number of Christian doctrines.

Considering the Evangelical's deep committment to Biblicism, for example, questions as to how divine persusiveness and human freedom affect the way Evangelicals understand the process of revelation must be addressed. The doctrine of divine persuasiveness needs to be corelated with

an understanding of the Incarnation. Anthropological
questions such as the origin and nature of sin need to be
answered. It would seem to me that an underlying conviction
of divine persuasiveness and human freedom open some
interesting windows on all anthropological questions. How
does divine persuasiveness relate to the issue of
eschatology? What does human freedom imply about the flow of
history toward some ultimate victory of God? How does divine
persuasiveness change our understanding of the Church and how
it is to be governed? Is, for example, a congregational form
of Church government more consistent with who God is and how
He works than are hierarchial structures of Church
government? How do divine persuasiveness and human freedom
affect our worship and our celebration of such powerful
religious symbols as baptism and communion? How does this
understanding of God instruct us with reference to such
events as miracles or divine healing? What exactly *does*
prayer to a God who is persuasive rather than determinative
accomplish?

The questions that need to be raised seem endless.
This is the case because our understanding of God, Himself,
inevitably must influence profoundly the way we think about
the many issues that surrond our belief in God. Evangelicals
have for too long lived with an inconsistent theology, and
added to that inconsistency a lifestyle of faith that is not
always compatible with theological convictions. This
situation can only be redressed when there is a systematic

theology in place that coincides with Evangelical life as well as being internally coherent to itself.

This process of systematizing our thought might itself require some change in the Evangelical community. The reason that the Calvinistic theologians have won the day is that those involved in evangelism have been so busy evangelizing that in many cases they have been unwilling to invest the time and energy into serious theological reflection. While I respect the tendency to emphasize the practice of evangelism, I would suggest that the evangelist is weakened when there is no seriously defined theology for the evangelist's converts to believe and be taught.

For too long the Pentecostal and charismatic proponents of human free-will have been suspicious of the intellectual content of systematic theology. They have wanted to retain "the simple gospel". I would suggest that the issues that face all Evangelicals today must leave us with an awareness that life, humanity and God are not always simple issues. It might take some serious and concentrated thought to rediscover what "the simple gospel" actually is! As one Evangelical more in the mainstream of Evangelicalism, I would welcome some serious theological insight from the Pentecostal, charismatic and "holiness" wing of Evangelicalism that has never lost a belief in divine persuasivenss and human freedom, but has also, unfortunately, never given us a serious, thoughtful and systematic exposition of their doctrine.

In any event, as long as those Evangelicals whose commitments lead them to accept divine persuasion and human freedom resist engaging in the study and writing of serious systematic theology, those Evangelicals wishing to have and study a systematic theology will turn to Calvinist thinkers. There simply are no other alternatives. It is my opinion that the Evangelical movement is ready and waiting for a number of people to begin writing and promoting this new systematic theology. I would suggest that this new direction contains the seed for a powerful renewal within the Evangelical movement.

2. The Preservation of Divine Sovereignty

I find myself in agreement with Donald Bloesch that, "If there is anything that characterizes the evangelical ... it is the stress upon the sovereignty of God."[10] As the new Evangelical theology is defined, it must be clarified that what is involved is not a rejection of divine sovereignty, but rather a re-definition of divine sovereignty.

There are other theological movements (process thought notable among them) that define God as persuasive rather than determinative. Process thinkers view human freedom and divine persuasiveness as metaphysical necessities.[11] Evangelicals will reject this view. Evangelicals will retain a vision of God as having the capacity to maintain all power in the universe. They will also argue, however, that in the act of creation, a sovereign

God imposed a self-limitation on divine power by creating free beings. This understanding of sovereign self-limitation on the part of God is described consistently by the few Evangelicals defending divine persuasiveness. It seems likely to me that unless this divine self-limitation continues to be clearly underlined this vision of God will be rejected by the majority of Evangelicals who will not, and should not, deny divine sovereignty.

3. The Development of a Biblical Argument for Divine Persuasiveness and Human Freedom

It should be recalled from the first chapter that one of the unifying concepts tying the Evangelical movement together is a common commitment to the Bible as the ultimate authority for matters of Christian faith and practice. Because of enduring Evangelical commitment to Biblicism, part of the theological defense of divine persuasiveness and human freedom will have to be the development of Biblical arguments in favour of this position.

A survey of what has been written by the minority of mainstream Evangelical theologians that do promote human freedom and divine persuasiveness and the writings of the evangelists indicates that they are as proficient in "proof-texting" their view as are the Calvinists. I would nevertheless suggest that there remains the task of developing an academically responsible biblical argument for this view. Just as the doctrine itself has not been brought

into a systematic framework, the biblical arguments in its defense are a hodge-podge collection of passages taken from the Bible. (It must be added that this is largely true of both sides in this debate.)

To adequately perform this task, an Evangelical view of the Bible itself must be clarified. Then, using the best hermenutical principles and tools available to the Evangelical, a serious, systematic study of Scripture exploring this entire issue needs to be undertaken. Without having performed this task,[12] I suspect that what will emerge is a realization that the Biblical revelation is probably larger than any single view of God. Nevertheless, I am convinced that a biblical argument can be made for the vision of God I have suggested the Evangelical assume. I am further convinced that this biblical argument will be just as compelling as the argument made by the Calvinist majority of Evangelical systematic theologians today.

C. Conclusion

In the pages of this thesis I have described a religious movement on the horns of a dilemma. The foundational principles and practises of modern Evangelicalism are in conflict with the movement's professed systematic theology. I have suggested the beginning of an alternative theology. I have provided arguments why I believe this alternative to be viable. I have suggested some avenues that need to be traveled as Evangelicalism moves into

the future, addressing this crucial issue.

    This is a beginning, not an ending. I, like a few other mainstream Evangelicals, have exposed a need and proposed a solution. Now the hard work of implementing that solution must begin. I hope that I will have the opportunity to be involved in the process of re-defining Evangelical systematic theology so that we can come to a theology that is in-harmony with our evangelism and spiritual life.

NOTES

1.   We have already seen, for example, that J.I. Packer and J. Norval Geldenhuys accept the logical incoherence of a commitment to evangelism and a belief in divine determinism. They claim a willingness to live with such a "mystery" (Geldenhuys) or "antinomy" (Packer).   (See pp. 60-62.)

2.   My experience as a pastor would verify this probable result.   I have encountered many people in the Churches I have served who have shied away from serious theological reflection because it all seems too puzzling to contemplate. In particular, people (in my experience) will shy away from a discussion of pre-destination, asserting that they "recognise its truth" but find it too confusing to try to understand. Perhaps it is too confusing to understand because it is not true! Perhaps the confusion of these laypersons who have not studied theology poses the challenge of logic to the theologians in an indirect way.

3.   Donald G. Bloesch, The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity Amid Diversity (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 17.

4.   See pp. 57-62.

5.   See p. 17.

6.   See pp. 88,89.

7.   See pp. 66-67.

8.   See pp.67-70; 65,66.

9.   Bernard Ramm, After Fundamentalism: the Future of Evangelical Theology (San Fransico: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1983), 3.

10.   Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1973), 52.

11.   See David Griffin, God, Power and Evil: A Process Theodicy (Philadelphia:Westminster Press, 1976), 276-281.

12.   Such a task would require a thesis in itself!

One of the most challenging issues to confront all
Christian thinkers is the problem of theodicy. How can a
loving Being with ample power to be described as "God" be
reconciled with the pervasiveness of suffering, evil, misery,
and cruelty in the world? The problem is made evident in
three statements: (1) God is all loving; (2) God is all
powerful; and (3) suffering exists. These three simple
statements cry out for some explanation or reconciliation. I
would suggest that a vision of a God who is persuasive rather
than determinative (and the consequent doctrine of human
freedom) provides the Evangelical with a good starting point
for solving the problem of theodicy.

Theodicy poses a critical set of theological
questions to the Christian. What is God like? What can God
do? Why, if God has power, does He not always use it to
allieviate suffering? How do prayer and miracles fit into
our understanding of God? There are many more such
theological questions. But at the heart of the theodicy
issue are some very basic experiential questions for the
believer. Can I love and worship God given that there is so
much pain and suffering He obviously has not alleiviated? Is
God, in fact, a being of love and grace - how can these terms
describing God's relationship to humans accompany the human
experience of a world that is often anything but loving and

gracious? Does God really care about me and my pain - or am

I part of an unfolding plan over which I have no control and

in which I have no real significance? The question of

theodicy is much more than theological speculation. To

provide an adequate theodicy is to respond to the cry of

pain: "Why, Lord?"

As I utilize the concept of divine persuasiveness to

point toward an answer to these questions, I am responding to

an important existential quest in my own life. For this

reason, what I consider to be the start of an Evangelical

theodicy will be prefaced by a very personal report of how I

have arrived at my conclusions.

A. A Personal Search for Meaning in Suffering

This entire thesis really began on Labour Day, 1982.

My wife and I were expecting our second child, due any time

the coming week. The guest room had been converted to a

nursery. The crib was in place, the diapers washed - all was

ready. Then the baby stopped moving in the womb. Within

hours it was determined that for some unknown reason, life in

the womb had simply ceased. (It later became evident that

the umbilical cord was too short, and that as the baby

entered the birth canal, the tension on the cord was too much

for it to bear).

No one who has never experienced a stillbirth can

begin to understand the agony of losing a fully developed,

unflawed baby that one never heard cry in the night, never

caressed, and never had the opportunity to know. Only those
who have been through such an experience know how the normal
agony of labour (for mother and father) is intensified by the
certainty that there will be no baby's cry at the end, only
an aching sense of loss.

At the time I had six years of pastoral experience
comforting others in their bereavement. I could not comfort
myself. I heard the responses one so often hears. "God has
a plan we cannot see." "This will make you a stronger person
and a more compassionate pastor." "She's better off in
heaven." Like Job I wished to complain, "I have heard many
such things; miserable comforters are you all! ... How then
will you comfort me with empty nothings?" (Job 16:2; 21:34,
RSV).

Religious faith became more of a bane than a help.
How could God permit such a thing? Did He not hear our many
prayers for a healthy child? Did He not know that we were on
His side? How could God expect that I would pray to Him
again? God and I were engaged in an intense lovers' quarrel.
I felt betrayed.

As the need to understand became more and more
urgent, I began to study what some Christians outside of
Evangelicalism are saying about theodicy. I discovered in
John Hick an solution to the problem of suffering that hinges
upon human freedom. According to Hick, the opportunities for
growth ("soul-making") in this world are worth the agony.
God has not caused the specific case of suffering encountered

at any given time, but rather, has presented us with a world

of freedom. This freedom leaves us with great possibilities

for both good and evil.[1]

I read process theodicies by writers such as Charles

Hartshorne, David Griffin and Barry Whitney. They argued

that the metaphysical structure of the universe demands that

God be persuasive. They argued a radical freedom for all of

creation. They argued that God and suffering co-exist for

the simple reason that, given the metaphysical structure of

the universe, God cannot prevent suffering.[2] This is not, as

it might seem at first reading, a radical denial that God is

God. Hartshorne clarifies the position:

> [God's] power is absolutely maximal, the greatest
> possible power is still one power among many others.
> ... God can do everything that a God can do,
> everything that could be done by "a being with no
> possible superior."[3]

Though I could not, as an Evangelical, accept the

epistemological foundations of either John Hick or the

process theists, I nevertheless found their thought to be

very helpful. If it were true that God, in a free world, did

not prevent suffering because He could not, this would carry

me a long way toward answering the theological questions

raised by my suffering. But even more importantly, if these

people were right, my complaint against God was unjust. The

difficulty lay not in God's response to my life, but in my

expectations of what God could and would do.

But were divine persuasiveness and creaturely freedom

consistent with Evangelical theology? Was it possible to

find the same solution to the problem of suffering from with
the epistemological framework of Evangelicalism? I
discovered that a very few credible, mainstream Evangelicals
were bothered by the same questions that bothered me, and
pointing toward the same solution.[4] As I read a number of
different types of Evangelical literature with these
questions so much in the forefront of my thinking, I became
increasingly aware that there is a great dissonance between
what the systematic theologians and what the evangelists are
saying about God and humans. In this observation this thesis
was born.

I have made the argument that divine persuasiveness
and human freedom are not only possible doctrines within
Evangelicalism – I have argued that these concepts are, in
fact, more intrinsic to Evangelicalism than are divine
determinism and human bondage. I have emerged from this very
personal search with some answers that would enable me to
rebuild my relationship with God. The existential and the
theological have come together (as they always should) into a
unified vision of God.

What follows is a description of a possible
Evangelical starting point for dealing with theodicy in a
manner that is consistent with the theology I have suggested.
This beginning of a theodicy also, hopefully, will speak to
the experiential needs of suffering people. This theodicy
assumes human freedom and divine persuasiveness. It assumes,
further, that the evangelistic invitation of grace and

salvation offered by God is the most crucial free-choice that human individuals will make. Thus it is a distinctly "Evangelical" theodicy.

B. Living in a World of Choices: Beginning an Evangelical Theodicy

Theodicy begins with the three irreconcilable statements I have already made. (1) God is all-powerful. (2) God is all loving and good. (3) Evil and suffering exist. The problem is clear. If God is all loving, surely He must want to bring an end to the suffering and misery His creation so often experiences. If God is all-powerful, surely He must be able to do so. Yet, evil and suffering exist.

It could, perhaps, be argued that evil and suffering are, in fact, illusions. Those events which seem to be evil might be God's mysterious way of working out His good and perfect plan. I was told when my daughter died, for example, that this was God's way of making me a better, stronger person. I was also told that God was, perhaps, preventing some future evil worse than my present bereavement. This funeral parlour theology, though apparently prevalent in popular religious life, is simply not tenable. If God is, indeed, all-powerful and can do anything, then certainly He can prevent great evils by the employment of good rather than the employment of lesser evils. A further difficulty lies in the sheer immorality of this position. This understanding of evil assumes that God uses people and their suffering in a

mechanical kind of manner in order to implement His own agenda. People, in this view, are treated as objects of divine manipulation rather than persons who engage in meaningful relationships with God. Certainly we would deem any individual guilty of such crass manipulation and de-personalization as evil. This denies the premise that God operates within the context of a holy and perfect character.

We are left, then, with a denial of either the premise that God is all-powerful, or the premise that God is all loving and good. In the main body of this thesis I have argued that God is not all-powerful if we understand omnipotence to mean that God can do anything He wants. God is not limited intransitively, but He has imposed a self-limitation on the use of His power in order that He may enjoy relationships of real love with His creatures. This assumption has profound implications for the problem of suffering.

When we discuss the evil and suffering in the world, it is necessary to recognise two distinct catagories of suffering. We might describe moral evil: that suffering that comes as the result of immoral behaviour on the part of persons. Moral evil is evident in such events as war, urban crime, the lie that ruins another's reputation, or the simple negligence of the drunk driver who really didn't mean to harm anybody. We might also describe physical evil: that suffering that comes as a result of the fact that the laws of nature can at times be cruel in their effects. Into this

catagory fall such events as stillbirths, famine, the
suffering-inflicted by predatory animals, earthquakes, fierce
storms, and all other sorts of "natural disaster".

It is clear that these two types of evil are very
different in their origin. Let us see how we can apply the
principle of divine persuasiveness and human freedom to each
of these catagories.

Moral evil clearly is the product of human act and
decision. If the systematic theologians of Evangelicalism
are correct, this still does not reduce divine responsibility
for these events. These theologians have informed us that .
God does control even the evil acts and choices of humans,
and if He wills to do so, can actually prevent the evil.[5] In
this event, God must take ultimate responsibility for the
evil and suffering inflicted by one human upon another.

But if the evangelists are (as I have argued) correct
in saying that God has given humans the "terrible gift" of
freedom, this situation is quite different. In this event,
moral evil is simply the result of human freedom misused.
God does not wish these abuses of freedom, but the only way
in which He could possibly prevent them is to remove the gift
of freedom, itself. To do so reduces us from the status of
real persons to the status of machines acting at the impulse
of God.

This is an issue closely related to Evangelical
soteriology. Were God to have removed human freedom before
it ever was abused, we would have lost forever the

possibility of the real, personal relationship of love with God that is at the heart-of Evangelical religion. Were God to have removed the gift of freedom at any time after the first abuse of that freedom, forgiveness would be an impossibility given Evangelical soteriology. Evangelicals maintain that salvation is given on the basis of a free decision to love God and accept His gospel. Thus, for God to remove freedom after any instance of sin would be for God to deprive the sinner of any means toward salvation. It would seem clear that in either event the Evangelical cannot argue that God would deprive humans of freedom.

Confering freedom upon humans, however, carries the immense risk that this freedom is going to be abused. The inevitable result of this abuse of freedom is that people (and other creatures!) are going to suffer. Because God engages in meaningful and loving relationships with suffering creatures, this implies that God Himself will suffer at the hands of free persons. This is seen nowhere more clearly than at the cross of Christ.

Does this freedom imply that God's hands are bound: that there is nothing God can do? Certainly not! God calls persuasively. While giving humans the gift of freedom, God constantly invites, urges and lures us to use our freedom wisely and well. He even uses (not causes!) the suffering we cause one another to spur us on toward a better use of our freedom. But He does not coerce us to accept His invitations. We can, and often do, reject the positive

choices God places before us in favour of negative and destructive choices. It is in these abuses of freedom that moral evil is to be found.

Moral evil is thus to be understood in this Evangelical theodicy as the result of humans misusing their God-given gift of freedom. God will not coerce good choices, for that would create unreal beings with an unreal love for Him. Given the sinful past, for God to limit our freedom now would be to deprive us of the very gift of salvation. We cannot blame God for moral evil - it lies within the scope of human responsibility.

But what of physical evil? While the correlation between human freedom and moral evil is fairly obvious, couldn't God at least prevent the multitude of natural disasters that bring suffering upon creation? Certainly, human freedom cannot be held directly accountable for such events.

I would argue that physical evil is related to human freedom in two ways. Firstly, physical evil insures human freedom, particularly the freedom to choose to love God for the sake of that love itself. Secondly, the reality of physical evil represents a constant reminder to humans that while we have freedom to choose, we have no freedom not to choose. The time in which we must decide whether or not we will accept God's invitation to salvation is limited. Let us look at each of these thoughts more closely.

Recalling that the evangelist presents us with a free

choice to accept God's love, we must ask ourselves how the absence of physical evil would affect that choice. Were the world a place of instant justice in which the good never got sick and the evil were constantly unhealthy, true freedom could not exist. Were the world a place of instant justice in which the kind became wealthy and the mean became, impoverished, true freedom could not exist. In such a world where good things always happened to good people and bad things always happened to bad people, who could say that they chose good for good's sake? More to the point, who could say that they had chosen God for His own sake? Certainly we would have to say that we had chosen health and prosperity. Such a world would present us with no possibility to freely choose to love God for His own sake.

God has given us a world, however, in which He has refused to stack the deck in His own favour. In this world, it is equally possible to hate God as it is to love Him. One must choose to love God here. The choice is not destined for us by either the decree of God or by the moral order of the universe. This world demands a free choice of faith. In this world, faith is utterly essential to choosing God and good. But faith is not impossible. God's persuasive invitation contains much of the goodness and graciousness of the world that we so often miss when we focus on the suffering. Freedom and faith come together in this world to provide the hope that we can, indeed, use our freedom well. But we never lose the essential freedom that makes us real

people. We are free to grow. We are free to morally and spiritually stagnate. We are even free to regress. This world challenges us to choose well and leaves us with the freedom to choose poorly.

The only choice we cannot make is not to choose. In its own way, the physical evil of this world presents us with the same challenge as does the evangelist. Whether we die in war or in sickness; as the victim of crime or the victim of famine, we will all surely die. The physical evil of the world reminds us that there is ultimately an equality in death. Death stands before each one of us with a granite inevitability, forcing us to ultimately choose where we will spend our eternity. The biblical dicotomy of heaven and hell is a manifestation of this freedom to choose. If salvation is universal, then we do not have the free choice to hate God.[6] We can only be said to have that choice if a real possibility exists that we can choose an eternity without Him.[7]

Moral evil and physical evil come together to underline the message of the evangelist. The reality of moral evil demonstrates to us the gap between what we are and what we should be. We can choose either to ignore this or to respond to the God who calls and invites us in Jesus Christ. We can choose to accept by faith the atoning death of Jesus to bridge the gap between what we are and what we should be. If we make this choice, we find in the consequent relationship with God the fulfillment of our human nature.

But we have the freedom not to enter that relationship if we so choose.

God does not force us into a relationship with Him, for that would deny any virtue in the relationship. He will not force our hand. He will not stack the deck in His favour. Physical evil preserves our freedom to make real faith choices. God simply gives us life as an opportunity to choose and death as a reminder that we must choose some destiny.

Theodicy, then, merges with the persuasive message of the evangelist. Moral evil is the direct result of human freedom. This is why we need salvation: we have abused the freedom God has given us. Physical evil presents us with a world that gives us the completely free choice to reject or accept God's gift of grace, while simultaneously reminding us that such a choice must be made in the time that we have. I am convinced that this understanding of evil and suffering is not only consistent with the new Evangelical systematic theology I am proposing, it is also consistent with the Evangelical psyche in its stress on evangelistic freedom and responsibility.

Certainly there is need for much more discussion and consideration. There are many outstanding questions.[8] My purpose here has not been to describe a complete Evangelical theodicy, but rather to demonstrate that an Evangelical understanding of divine persuasiveness and human freedom can be very constructively applied to an Evangelical response to

the questions raised by suffering and evil.

C. One Important Question

One questions remains, however, that requires an answer. Does this theodicy help? After five years of thought, study, discussion, prayer and writing about theodicy, do I feel any better about the death of my daughter beyond that healing that time, alone, effects?

Were I given the option of trading all of the insight I have gleaned through this process of reflection in exchange for the daughter I lost, I would not hesitate one second. I would choose my child, alive and healthy. We must not fall into the temptation of believing that understanding our suffering will lessen its hurt. The question "Why, Lord?" is seldom a theological inquiry. It is an expression of pain.

While not lessening the pain, however, an adequate understanding of theodicy such as I have proposed has had one very beneficial affect on my experience. It has removed naive and false expectations of what God can and will do to prevent future suffering. Eliminating from our thought those false expections of God frees us to expect what God can do. Evangelicals and process theists can come to an unusual agreement[9] as to what a persuasive God does for sufferers. A.N. Whitehead has described God as "the great companion - the fellow-sufferer who understands."[10] Anthony Campolo agrees that what God offers is "... the empathy of love, the concern of love, the fellowship of love, the sharing of love.

... He weeps with those who weeps and suffers with those who suffer."[11]

It is this understanding of God that I believe will be truly helpful to the Evangelical encountering suffering. The conviction that God will, in His power and majesty, protect us from all suffering and evil adds immense disappointment and doubt to the agony already caused by the suffering itself. While other Evangelicals maintain God's infinite ability to work, I would maintain another infinite ability. I would underline to Evangelicals God's infinite ability to suffer. I would emphasize God's infinite ability to agonize with creation. The apostle Paul bears witness to this ability.

> We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, ... groan inwardly... . In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. ... [T]he Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. (Ro. 8:22,23,26, NIV)

The ultimate test, for me, of the relevance of this theodicy, is to ask how it applies to my existential needs with respect to my daughter's stillbirth. This theodicy informs me that it is pointless to look for some hidden purpose of God in the event. God has, without question, used the suffering in my life for constructive ends. But it is not a punishment, a test, or a severe stimulus to growth, for that would reduce my relationship with God to mere mechanics. The suffering I have experienced is the result of the fact that I live in a free universe: a universe in which God has

refused to stack the deck in His own favour. As a free human

in relationship to a persuasive God, I must, nevertheless,

listen closely to what I can learn about my living from the

experience of suffering. I suffer because, apparently, God

deems freedom worth the cost of suffering. I do not enjoy

suffering. I do not desire suffering. But in the final

analysis, I acknowledge that I would far rather suffer with

freedom than be merely a comfortable robot.

NOTES

1. See John Hick, _Evil and the God of Love_ (San Fransico: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), 243-387.

2. See Charles Hartshore, "A New Look at the Problem of Evil", _Current Philosophical Issues_, ed. F.C. Dommeyer (Springfield: C.C. Thomas, 1966), 201-212.
    See also David Griffin, _God, Power and Evil: A Process Theodicy_ (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 259-281.
    See also David Griffin, "A Process Theodicy", ed. Stephen T. Davis, _Encountering Evil_ (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 101-136.
    See also Barry Whitney, _Evil and the Process God_ (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 96-108.
    See also Barry Whitney, "Hartshorne's New Look at Theodicy", _Sciences Religieuses/Studies in Religion_ (8/3, Summer 1979), 281-291.
    There is a great deal of promise in a dialogue between Process thought and Evangelical thought, in my opinion. The differences between the two cannot be ignored. It is, for example, questionable whether Process theists will agree with Evangelicals that the Bible should be viewed as the final authority on all matters of Christian faith and practice. Likewise, it is questionable whether Evangelicals will accept the metaphysics of A.N. Whitehead. These differences will mean that the two movements will never become one.
    There is room, nevertheless, for comparison and discussion that could be quite fruitful for both movements. Both, for example, share a commitment to strip the veneer of Aristotelean thought away from much of Western Christian theology. This Neo-Platoism, of course, is largely due to the strong influence of Augustine on both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.
    I hope that I have argued effectively in this thesis that a vision of God as persuasive should be viewed as intrinsic to Evangelical commitments. This would be a view to be shared by Process thinkers. The Evangelical thinkers discussing divine persuasiveness also observe that God is immutable in character and in purpose, but is also changable in His relation to the world (see Richard Foster's chapter on prayer in _Celebration of Discipline_, for example). They could benefit, therefore, from a reading of process thought on God as processive.
    Unfortunately, whatever conversation has taken place between Evangelical and process thinkers (and there has not been much!) has tended to be characterized by spiritual and/or intellectual arrogance (see for example Carl Henry's article, "A Critique of Process Theology"; I have not found a process critque of modern Evangelical theology). Is it not possible that two schools of Christian thought can agree to disagree, and then learn from their points of agreement? I would say that this is not only possible, but desirable.

I would hope that at some point Evangelicals and Process theists would come into an intentional dialogue to learn from and with one another. Perhaps it is not impossible to synthesize process metaphysics into Evangelical theology. Perhaps Evangelicals need to be challenged by process thinkers with regard to their understanding of freedom vis-a-vis sub-human creatures. Perhaps Evangelicals, who share with Process theists a very personal vision of God, can also share with process thinkers the personal nature of the faith experience. From my perspective, one of the most important concepts Evangelicals can share with process thinkers is the need, message and power of evangelism.

It is my hope that at some point in the future I will be able to extensively study and write about the common ground shared by Evangelicals and process theists.

See Richard J. Foster, <u>Celebration of Discipline</u> (San Fransico: Harper & Row, Publishers), 32.

See Carl F.H. Henry, "A Critique of Process Theology", ed. Millard J. Erickson, <u>The Living God: Readings in Christian Theology</u> (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1973).

3. See Barry Whitney, <u>Evil and the Process God</u>, 98,99.

4. See pp. 68-73.

5. See pp. 50-52.

6. See p 16. It will be recalled that one of the features that distinguishes Evangelical thought from Neo-Orthodoxy is an Evangelical rejection of universal salvation.

7. I am not here implying what I understand "hell" to mean - this might best be left for another study which would carefully examine Evangelical convictions regarding the reality and nature of hell.

Pesonally, I would accept the fairly traditional definition of hell as the complete and total absence of God. Because I consider God to be the foundation and sustenance of all existence, I therefore consider hell to the the absence of any existence at all.

Whether or not many other Evangelicals would agree with this view remains for further study. I suspect there would be considerable disagreement between Evangelicals regarding the nature of hell, though I doubt that many Evangelicals would wish to entirely deny the concept of hell.

8. Without listing all the possible questions to be asked, I would identify the most pressing questions to me, personally, as relating to prayer and miracles. What does this all imply about what we can expect as to prayer? Are such events as divine healings possible, or do we inevitably

expose ourselves to disappointment and disillusionment if we expect such things. I believe in miracles and I believe in healing. I do think that much work needs be done, though, to answer the question why some are healed, for example, and some are not.

As is the case elsewhere, I am inclined to turn my attention to the issue of evangelism. It seems to me that the solution to this problem might lie in understanding the *kerygmatic* content of miracles: what they proclaim about God. If such things as healings are declarations of God's reality and presence, with the allieviation of suffering as a beneficial by-product, then there are at least some possible directions Evangelicals can take in responding to this question.

9.   Though I have pointed out some similarities between Evangelicalism and process thought, such close echoing of one another is uncommon in the writings of the two movements.
For other Christian interpretations of the divine ability to suffer see W. McWilliams, <u>The Passion of God: Divine Suffering in Contemporary Protestant Theology</u> (Macon, Ga.: Mercier University Press, 1985).

10. Ed., Donald W. Sherburne, <u>A Key to Whitehead's Process and Reality</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 190.

11.   Anthony Campolo, <u>The Power Delusion</u> (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1983), 91,92.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bloesch, Donald G. _Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority and Salvation_. San Fransico: Harper & Row, 1978.

_____. _The Evangelical Renaissance_. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans's Publishing Company, 1973.

_____. _The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity Among Diversity_. New York: Doubleday, 1983.

Bright, Bill. _Have You Heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?_. n.p.,n.d.

Campolo, Anthony. _The Power Delusion_. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1983.

Claypool, John. _Tracks of a Fellow Struggler_. New York: Pillar Books, 1976.

Cook, Jerry. Less Pressure, More Loving". _Leadership_. Vol. V., No. 2. Spring, 1984, 12-20.

DeVille, Jard. _The Psychology of Witnessing_. Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1980.

Dobbins, Gaines S. _Good New to Change Lives: Evangelism in an Age of Uncertainty_. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979.

Erickson, Millard. _The New Evangelical Theology_. Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1968.

Ford, Leighton. _Good News Is For Sharing_. Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1977.

_____. "How To Give an Honest Invitation". _Leadership_. Vol. V., No. 2. Spring, 1984, 106-108.

Foster, Richard. _Celebration of Discipline_. San Fransico: Harper & Row, 1978.

Girod, Gordon. _The Deeper Faith: An Exposition of the Canons of the Synod of Dort_. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Reformed Publications, 1958.

Graham, Billy. _How To Be Born Again_. Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1977.

_____. _Peace With God_. New York: Doubleday, 1953.

_____. _Steps To Peace With God_. n.p., n.d.

Henry, Carl F.H. God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part II. Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1983.

_____, ed. Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962.

Hunter, James Davison. American Evangelicalism: Conservation Religion and the Quandry of Modernity. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1983.

Inch, Morris. The Evangelical Challenge. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978.

Kantzer, Kenneth, ed. Evangelical Roots. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.

Kennedy, D. James. Evangelism Explosion. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, Publishers, 1972.

Little, Paul E. How To Give Away Your Faith. Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varisty Press, 1966.

_____. Who's Got the Answer?. Chicago: Acorn Booklets, n.d.

Marsden, George, ed. Evangelicalism and Modern America. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans's Publishing Company, 1984.

Merrill, Dean and Marshall Shelley. "Turn the Gospel Loose: A Conversation With Oswald C.J. Hoffman and Bill Hybels". Leadership. Vol. VI., No. 4. Fall, 1985.

Packer, J.I. Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God. Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961.

_____. Knowing God. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973.

Pink, Arthur W. The Sovereignty of God. London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1961.

Pippert, Rebecca Manley. Out of the Salt Shaker and into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life. Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979.

Ramm, Bernard. After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology. San Fransico: Harper & Row, 1983.

_____. The Evangelical Heritage. Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1973.

Strong, Augustus Hopkins. _Systematic Theology_. Old Tappan,
    N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976.

Toon, Peter, _God Here and Now: The Christian View of God_.
    Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1979.

Quebedeaux, Richard. _The Worldly Evangelicals_. San Fransico:
    Harper & Row, 1980.

_____. _The Young Evangelicals_. New York: Harper & Row,
    1974.

Watson, David. _I Believe in Evangelism_. London: Hodder and
    Stoughton, 1976.

Wells, David F. and John D. Woodbridge, eds. _The Evangelicals:
    What they Believe; Who They Are; Where They Are
    Changing_. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1975.

Woodridge, John D., Mark A. Noll and Nathan O. Hatch. _The
    Gospel in America: Themes in the Stories of America's
    Evangelicals_. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing
    House, 1979.

VITA AUCTORIS

1954	Born in Hampton, Virginia
1973	Completed High School at North Albion Collegiate Institute, Toronto, Ontario.
1977	Received Bachelor of Theology Degree majoring in Pastoral Studies from the Ontario Bible College, Toronto, Ontario.
1978	Ordained into the Christian Ministry by the Baptist Convention at Ontario and Quebec.
1979	Received Bachelor of Arts Degree, General Program, from the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario.
1977-1981	Pastor of the Bricker Street Baptist Church, Port Elgin, Ontario
1981	Pastor of the Olivet Baptist Church, Windsor Ontario.