Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity

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ISBN 0-8308-1694-1

Printed in the United States of America ©

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

McGrath, Alister E., 1953-.
Evangelicalism and the future of Christianity / Alister McGrath.
  p. cm.
  Includes bibliographical references.
  ISBN 0-8308-1694-1
1. Evangelicalism. 2. Evangelicalism—History.
  3. Christianity—20th century. 4. Title.
BR1640.M41994
280'.F69—dc20
94-23846
CIP
Evangelicalism is one of the powerhouses of the modern Christian church in the Western world. Time and time again, people—especially young people—put their discovery of the vitality and excitement of the gospel down to the witness of evangelicalism. In an increasingly secular age, evangelism is of decisive importance in reaching out beyond the bounds of the church and bringing men and women the good news of Jesus Christ. There is a growing realization that the future existence and well-being of the churches depends on a determined and principled effort to proclaim the gospel. Evangelicalism, once regarded as marginal, has now become mainline, and it can no longer be dismissed as an insignificant sideshow, sectarian tendency or irrelevance.¹ It has moved from the wings to center stage, displacing others once regarded as mainline, who consequently feel deeply threatened and alienated. Its commitment to evangelism has resulted in numerical growth, where some other variants of Christianity are suffering from severe contraction.

These trends have been widely noted by both Christian and secular observers of the global religious scene. Evangelicalism is generally accepted as being well on its way toward becoming a major constitu-
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Yet this new awareness of the importance of evangelicalism has not been accompanied by a deepening understanding of the origins, nature and distinctive features of the movement. Even among evangelicals there is often an alarming lack of awareness of their own family history. It is therefore of considerable importance to establish what evangelicalism is, sketching at least the contours of the movement, and to attempt to understand both its enormous attraction and its darker side.

Knowing the Family History

I recall once hearing a lecture in southern California given by a Kiowa Apache Indian, a Native American from the Oklahoma region. His theme was discovering one's identity through the history of one's people. He told his audience how he learned the story of his people while he was still a young boy.

One day, just after dawn, his father woke him and took him to the home of an elderly Kiowa woman. He left him there, promising to return to collect him that afternoon. All that day the woman told this young boy the story of the Kiowa people. She told him of their origins by the Yellowstone River and how they then migrated southward. She told him of the many hardships they faced—the wars with other Native American nations and the great blizzards on the winter plains. She told him of the glories of the life of the Kiowa nation—the great buffalo hunts, the taming of wild horses and the skill of the braves as riders. Finally she told him of the coming of the white man and the humiliation of their once-proud nation at the hands of horse soldiers who forced them to move south to Kansas, where they faced starvation and poverty. Her story ended as she told him of their final humiliating confinement within a reservation in Oklahoma.

The lecturer told us how, shortly before dark, his father returned to collect him. “When I left that house, I was a Kiowa,” he declared. He had learned the story of his people. He knew what his people had been through and what they stood for. Before learning the family history, he had been a Kiowa in name only; now he was a Kiowa in reality.

Evangelicals tend not to know their family history. They are often unfamiliar with the great struggles that evangelicalism has gone through in the past—its victories and its defeats. They are unaware of a small galaxy of writers, thinkers, preachers, pastors and ordinary believing Christians who went before them and prepared the way. Through ignorance of that history, they are liable to repeat the mistakes of the past—the evangelical infighting, for example, that came close to extinguishing the movement in the 1920s and early 1930s. Knowing one's family history is one way of avoiding past errors and preparing to face the future. As Woody Allen quipped, “History repeats itself. It has to. Nobody listens the first time round.”

As evangelicalism gains further ground in the Western churches and beyond, it becomes ever more prone to make the mistakes that could send it spiraling into irreversible decline. Its hard-won victories could easily be undone by a new generation of evangelicals who unknowingly repeat the errors of the past.

But knowing the family history is not simply about avoiding mistakes. It also allows us to appreciate the attraction of evangelicalism and discover what it is about the evangelical approach to Christianity which has such a powerful appeal to so many people. Many younger evangelicals are unaware of what led to the emergence of evangelicalism as a leading force in global Christianity. Many just assume that it has always been like this. It certainly has not! Knowing and learning from the family history is one way of making sure that evangelicalism will continue to have a secure place in the future of Christianity.

The Historical Roots of Evangelicalism

The term *evangelical* dates from the sixteenth century, and it was first used to refer to Catholic writers who wished to revert to more biblical beliefs and practices than those associated with the late medieval church. Research tells us that attitudes toward the personal appropriation of salvation and the spiritual importance of the reading of Scripture which would now be called “evangelical” emerged in Italian Benedictine monasteries during the late fifteenth century. Similarly,
scholars of the later Italian Renaissance have identified a major spiritual movement, which became particularly important among the Italian aristocratic laity in the 1520s, that emphasized a personally appropriated salvation. Through an obvious lack of familiarity with Christian spirituality, earlier scholars of the movement used the inappropriate (though related) term *evangelism* to refer to it. It is clear that it is an early form of evangelicalism, the emergence of which can be paralleled throughout Europe during this period.

One of the most important features of the late Renaissance was the growth of lay religion throughout Western Europe and laypeople’s demands for a form of Christian spirituality that would be of direct relevance to their personal spiritual concerns. It must be remembered that much medieval spirituality was developed by monastic writers and was intended to be read within a monastic context. There was an urgent need for the evolution of forms of the Christian faith that related to the spiritual needs and concerns of the laity. Martin Luther’s doctrine of justification, with its emphasis on the faith and assurance of the individual, proved to meet the needs of at least some such people.

It is known that such evangelical attitudes were not initially regarded as a threat by ecclesiastical authorities; indeed, they were even welcomed in some areas as making an overdue and needed contribution to the renewal of the spiritual vitality of a tired church. The Italian church in particular was deeply and positively affected by the emergence of evangelicalism during the 1530s. Several cardinals of the period were profoundly influenced by evangelical attitudes, and they did not regard this as inconsistent with their senior positions within the church. It was only in the mid-1540s that an increasingly anxious church, alert to the growing threat posed by Northern European Lutheranism, condemned such attitudes as destabilizing, and evangelicalism fell into official disfavor. The church authorities had become convinced that to be an evangelical was to be a *Lutheran*—and hence to be anti-Catholic.

While I have considerable admiration for Luther, both as a person and as a theologian, I cannot fail to note this negative aspect of his impact: the identification of evangelicalism and Lutheranism led to the rejection of the former along with the latter. The criticism of a specific form of evangelicalism was thus extended to evangelicalism in general.

The term *evangelical* was especially associated with the 1520s, when the French term *évangelique* and the German *evangelisch* begin to feature prominently in the controversial writings of the early Reformation. In the 1530s the term *Protestant* became more significant; increasingly this came to be understood simply as “anti-Catholic.” However, it must be appreciated that this term was imposed on evangelicals by their Catholic opponents and was not of their own choosing. *Protestant* referred originally to the “protest” of the six princes and fourteen south German cities at the second Diet of Speyer (1529) against the rescinding of the religious freedom guaranteed by the first Diet of Speyer three years earlier. Despite the popular mythology surrounding the origins of the term, the “protest” in question was not against Rome, nor even against the theology of the pre-Reformation church, but against the outcome of a specific form of political intrigue in southern Germany.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the term *Protestant* had become generally accepted, and it gradually displaced the older term *evangelical*. But the word *evangelical* is regularly encountered in seventeenth-century English works of devotion, both Puritan and Anglican, with the general sense of “being grounded in the gospel,” as in John Owen’s studied definition of assurance as “a gracious evangelical persuasion of acceptance” or his reference to the Word of God as containing “sacred, evangelical, fundamental truths.” At this stage the term does not seem to have been used to denote a particular theological stance, and it was used by writers as diverse ecclesiologically as the high-church bishop Jeremy Taylor and the congregationalist divine John Owen.

In the German language, for historical reasons, the term *evangelisch* has now become more or less equivalent to “Protestant” and has lost at least a large measure of its original meaning; the somewhat clumsy
neologism *evangelical*, clearly derived from the English original, is now used increasingly by German evangelical writers to denote a specifically “evangelical,” rather than a more general “Protestant,” outlook.¹ In French the term *évangélique* has a long history of use to refer to evangelical (as opposed to Protestant) outlooks; however, the term *évangelisme* is now becoming increasingly accepted as the normal French term to refer to this movement.¹ This confusion has not happened in English, on account of a deliberate decision to prevent it from taking place. Since the 1940s there has been a determined, and largely successful, effort on the part of the English-speaking heirs of the Reformation to recover the older term and rehabilitate it.

The deliberate decision to use the term *evangelical* to refer to the form of Christianity to be discussed in this book dates from 1942. The formation of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in the United States represented a carefully weighed and considered move to distinguish “evangelicals” from “fundamentalists,” partly on account of the growing pejorative associations of the latter term and partly on account of an increasing recognition of the failures of the movement that it designated. There was a need for a reappraisal and a fresh start. The term *evangelical* was chosen to designate the new movement, but initially nobody seemed to like the word very much. For a start, it had British roots. More worryingly, it was seen as being outdated, recalling an earlier period in Christian history which many felt was passé. Yet as time went on, it became clear that Haubert himself could not have chosen a better *mot juste*. It pointed to a “theology of retrieval” in which the heritage of the evangelical past could legitimately be reappraised. By the early 1960s, both the term and the agenda associated with it had achieved widespread acceptance.

*Evangelical* is thus the term chosen by evangelicals to refer to themselves, as representing most adequately the central concern of the movement for the safeguarding and articulation of the *evangel*—the good news of God which has been made known and made possible in Jesus Christ. *Protestant* too easily implies a preoccupation with a system of church government (such as presbyterianism), which can come to overshadow more important concerns relating to the gospel itself. Evangelicalism refuses to allow any matter of church government to take precedence over the gospel itself; the term *evangelical*, by placing emphasis on this gospel, conveys both the focus and the substance of the movement. All else is deliberately subordinated, as a matter of principle, to this central theme.

**Significant Movements**

In one sense, then, evangelicalism recognizes only one normative historical source—the gospel of Jesus Christ, as this is proclaimed in the New Testament and anticipated in the Old. Yet evangelicalism also has historical roots in the sense that there have been significant movements in Christian history that have prepared the way for it and on whose resources it may draw. Several such movements may be recognized, and this complex mutual interaction of sources has led to a number of tensions within modern evangelicalism. Three major sources may be noted.

1. **The magisterial Reformation.** The mainstream Reformation, often referred to in the literature as the “magisterial Reformation” on account of its positive attitude toward the magistry and existing power structures, is a major source and reference point for modern evangelicalism. The Reformers Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564) demonstrated a passion for the reformation of the structures, doctrine and spirituality of the church along more biblical lines. Their intellectual coherence, pastoral concern and practical wisdom ensured that the emerging churches of the Reformation were endowed with an academically credible and pastorally relevant outlook that would be firmly grounded in Scripture. The Reformation remains a focus and defining point of reference for evangelicalism today, as it seeks to ensure that the central themes of the Reformation—such as the doctrine of justification by faith alone and the Scripture principle—remain deeply embedded in the evangelical consciousness.

Nevertheless, the Reformation cannot be allowed to dominate the
horizons of evangelicalism. As its name suggests, the sixteenth-century movement was concerned with the "reformation" of the Christian church. Its agenda centered on the need to reform an existing church in a settled Christian cultural context. The issue of evangelism—that is, reaching into a non-Christian context in order to gain converts—never became important for Luther or Calvin. Their horizons were dominated by the need to alter existing church structures. Even the program of "the evangelization of France," which was of major significance to Calvin from 1555 to the end of his life, is to be understood as the attempt to persuade Catholic Christians to become evangelical Christians. Calvin considered the Catholic Church of his day to be Christian; the problem was that it was an unrefomed, and hence unacceptable, version of Christianity. Evangelization was not understood primarily to mean converting individuals from a secular culture. The Reformation did not address the issue of evangelism in the modern sense of the term, so evangelicalism is obliged to extend the agenda of the Reformation in this respect.

2. Puritanism. The impact of Puritanism on evangelicalism has been considerable. Even John Wesley (1703-1791), whose theological Arminianism placed him at some distance from the more Reformed approach of writers such as John Owen (1616-1683), was sufficiently impressed by the Puritan tradition to include many of their writings in his influential Christian Library. Indeed, there are excellent reasons for supposing that the English evangelical revivals of the eighteenth century built directly on the foundations laid by Puritanism in the previous century.

Although Puritanism is often represented as a somewhat cerebral and moral movement, concerned for good theology and morals, it must be pointed out that recent scholarship has drawn attention to the Puritan emphasis on a "religion of the heart." A deep concern for spirituality is now recognized to have been integral to the movement. Despite the distinguished presence of the movement within English evangelicalism of the seventeenth century, it is generally thought that Puritanism reached its spiritual and intellectual zenith in the ministry and writings of the American Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758).

3. Pietism. During the second half of the seventeenth century, many German Lutherans became alarmed at the spiritual state of their church. It was doctrinally orthodox; nevertheless, it seemed to lack spiritual warmth and any obvious signs of the joyful presence of Christ in its corporate life. Lutheran orthodoxy had become an intellectual system that was appreciated in the mind but did little to warm the heart. Pietism was a response to this. It placed considerable emphasis on a personally appropriated faith, which was understood as a "reborn" and "personal" living relationship with Christ rather than the passive assent to the creeds it discerned as underlying nominal faith. The phrase "a living faith" came to be used to refer to this personal and intimate relation with Christ. The writings of August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) are an especially important witness to this trend, and they had a major impact in the University of Halle in the eighteenth century.

Pietism, which began in Germany during the seventeenth century, had its greatest influence in England in the century that followed. John Wesley's Aldersgate experience, in which he felt his heart to be "strangely warmed" while he listened to a reading of Martin Luther's preface to Romans, is an excellent illustration of the Pietist emphasis on the positive place of experience in the Christian life. The great eighteenth-century awakening now generally known as the Evangelical Revival, had a deep impact on English religion. Although Pietism lacked the intellectual rigor of Calvinism and could easily lapse into little more than a personal devotion to Jesus, its passion for a living, personal spiritual experience gave it a popular appeal that in the eyes of many was of greater importance. It has often been pointed out that the fiercely antireligious French Revolution (1789) took place in a nation untouched by any form of Pietism and thus able to dismiss Christianity as an irrelevant and oppressive force. To put it simply, Pietism made the gospel relevant to the ordinary believer.

Other contributing sources could be listed. For example, the vigorously antitransitional approach of radical Reformers, such as Menno
Simons (1496-1561) and Balthasar Hubmeier (c. 1485-1528), has had an impact on a number of evangelical writers and has encouraged the development of separatist attitudes. The forms of revivalism that flourished in the United States before the emergence of fundamentalism in the 1920s should also be noted. Nevertheless, the three sources identified above have constituted the main fountains of evangelical thinking and offered frameworks through which the New Testament may be read and interpreted.

The Cultural Factor
It is important to appreciate, however, that while these three streams merge, as contributories, to form a single flux in modern evangelicalism, their mingling produces eddies and vortices. Like great rivers cascading at their point of juncture, their merger causes tension and disruption. The resulting flux is greater; yet it is also more disturbed, with a number of disagreements and debates featuring prominently within the evangelical heritage. This inherent theological and spiritual tension is supplemented by additional factors, including the cultural contexts in which evangelicalism finds itself.

The origin of this cultural tension needs to be understood. Although evangelicalism had its origins in the later European Renaissance, especially in France, Germany and Italy, it appears to have consolidated itself in England and North America. One major contributing factor to this development was the rise of Puritanism, which gained considerable influence in both England and North America during the early seventeenth century. Puritanism, as we noted above, is of particular interest and importance, as it appears to have brought together both the intellectual rigor of the Reformed tradition, deriving from Calvin and his followers, and an emphasis on the experiential aspects of the Christian life which in a number of respects anticipated Pietism. Some of the Puritans forced out of England by the repressive religious policies of Charles I settled in the American colonies, which thus soon became centers of Puritanism. As a result, evangelicalism emerged and developed primarily within an English-speaking context.\(^{18}\)

While evangelicalism remained confined to well-defined (and related) geographical and cultural contexts, such as North America and England, the cultural factor remained of limited importance. To put it crudely, evangelicals were almost all white.\(^{19}\) However, as evangelicalism began to expand into Asian and African contexts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and as it became increasingly aware of its own black constituency in the United States, differences began to emerge in relation to cultural issues. The issue of the application of the gospel to cultures has become of major importance in global evangelicalism. Differences between American and East Asian, or English and East African, evangelicals often reflect deep-seated cultural differences rather than fundamental differences concerning the gospel itself. The importance of such disagreements must not be overestimated. They exist, but are not seen as identity-giving. There is, to use Wittgenstein's helpful term, a clear "family resemblance" among the various types and styles of evangelicalism.

One such disagreement in North America in the 1920s led directly to the emergence of a distinctive form of evangelicalism known as fundamentalism. In view of the importance of this development, I will consider it in more detail.

Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism
Fundamentalism is both one of the most influential and one of the most detested movements in the modern world. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in particular has contributed significantly to the negative, anti-intellectual associations of the term. Fundamentalist tendencies are now well established within Protestant, Roman Catholic, Hindu, Jewish and Islamic contexts. It is not a specifically Christian, or even a specifically Protestant, phenomenon. In what follows, however, I will restrict my comments to Christian Protestant fundamentalism and use the term fundamentalist to refer to this specific movement, whose relationship to evangelicalism requires particular comment.

In 1910 the first of a series of twelve books appeared from a small
American publishing house. The series was unremarkably entitled The Fundamentals. By a series of historical accidents, the term fundamentalist took its name from this series of works. Fundamentalism arose as a religious reaction within American culture to the rise of a secular culture. Despite the wide use of the term to refer to religious movements within Islam and Judaism, the term originally and properly designates a movement within Protestant Christianity in the United States, especially during the period 1920-1940. Initially the term fundamentalism was devoid of the overtones of obscurantism, anti-intellectualism and political extremism now associated with it. Yet these were not long in developing.

Fundamentalists at first saw themselves simply as returning to biblical orthodoxy. This point was recognized at the time by Kirsopp Lake (1872-1946), a leading British modernist writer who specialized in the field of New Testament and patristic studies. In his *Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow* (1926), which advocated a form of religion based on individual human perceptions and experience rather than revelation, Lake wrote as follows:

*It is a mistake often made by educated men who happen to have but little knowledge of historical theology, to suppose that fundamentalism is a new and strange form of thought. It is nothing of the sort; it is the partial and uneducated survival of a theology which was once universally held by all Christians. . . . The fundamentalist may be wrong; I think he is. But it is we who have departed from the tradition, not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone who tries to argue with the fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and the *corpus theologicum* of the church is on the fundamentalist side.*

Lake, writing at the time of the emergence of fundamentalism as a distinctive movement, recognizes the continuity between its basic ideas and the historical witness of the Christian church.

Yet the modernist context in which the fundamentalist protest took place inevitably had an influence in shaping the movement's response to the challenges facing it. In consequence, it is not correct to regard

the movement simply as a return to older positions, although aspects of fundamentalist teachings may indeed be discerned in the writings of classic Reformed orthodoxy and in those of members of the Old Princeton School such as Benjamin B. Warfield (1851-1921) and Charles Hodge (1797-1878). As James Davison Hunter points out, fundamentalism cannot be equated with "a basic unaltered orthodoxy":

Orthodoxy as a cultural system represents what could be called a "consensus through time"—more specifically, a consensus based upon the ancient rules and precepts derived from divine revelation. Its authority and legitimacy derive from an unaltering continuity with truth as originally revealed—truth in its primitive and purest expression. *Fundamentalism is orthodoxy in confrontation with modernity.*

This point has been emphasized by Martin E. Marty, the distinguished student of modern American Christian thought. He writes, "The fundamental theological feature of modern fundamentalisms which are religious is oppositionalism. Fundamentalism in any context takes form when members of already conservative or traditional movements experience threat."

In at least one sense, fundamentalism is a deliberate and considered reaction to developments in the twentieth century, and it is thus, in one sense of the word, thoroughly "modern." It was from its outset, and has remained, a countercultural movement, using central doctrinal affirmations as a means of defining cultural boundaries. Whereas most nineteenth-century forms of American evangelicalism were culturally centralist, committed to engaging with culture in order to transform it through the gospel, the fundamentalist reaction against "modernity" carried with it, as part of its religious package, a separatist attitude to culture. Certain central doctrines (most notably the absolute, literal authority of Scripture and the premillennial return of Christ) were treated as barriers, intended as much to alienate secular culture as to give fundamentalists a sense of identity and purpose.

The emphasis on the premillennial return of Christ is of special significance. This view has a long history, but it never attained any
great importance prior to the nineteenth century. It is not found in the writings of a group of theologians of major importance to fundamentalism, such as Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937). The idea was brought to North America by John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). Although it served as the intellectual foundation of Darby’s program of separation from existing denominations, nobody seems to have paid much attention to it. Then the controversies of the 1920s erupted. Suddenly separatism and its intellectual underpinning in dispensational premillennialism were found to have a new appeal. Moreover, fundamentalism appears to have discerned in the idea an important weapon against liberal Christian ideas of a kingdom of God on earth to be achieved through social action. “Dispensationalism,” especially of a premillenarian type, became an integral element of fundamentalism.

A siege mentality became characteristic of the movement; fundamentalist communities viewed themselves as walled cities, or (to evoke the pioneer spirit) circles of wagons, defending their distinctives against an unbelieving culture. “Oppositionalism,” to use Mart’s clumsy but illuminating term, became a leading characteristic of a fundamentalist mentalité.

The negative consequences of this polarization can be seen especially from the painful history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States earlier this century. In 1922 an ill-tempered controversy broke out, which is widely regarded as having marked the beginning of the spiral of numerical decline within that church, laid the foundations of schism and ultimately caused a radical loss of theological vision that eroded the church’s distinctiveness within the American situation. The row centered on whether traditional doctrines should be modified in the light of modern scientific and cultural knowledge.

On May 21, 1922, Harry Emerson Fosdick preached a polemical sermon entitled “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” One hundred and thirty thousand copies of the sermon, rewritten by a skilled public relations expert and funded by John D. Rockefeller Jr., were circulated. A vigorous riposte soon followed. Clarence Edward Macartney entitled his reply “Shall Unbelief Win?” The situation rapidly polarized. Toleration and compromise proved impossible. Presbyterians were forced to decide whether they were, to use the categories of the protagonists, “unbelieving liberals” or “reactionary fundamentalists.” The church was shattered. There were other options and saner voices; yet the climate of opinion made it impossible for them to gain a hearing. “Oppositionalism” led to the issue being perceived in crystal-clear terms: either an unbelieving culture would win or victory would go to the gospel. There were no alternatives.

Conservatives soon discovered that there seemed to be nothing they could do to retard the influence of modernist thinkers such as Fosdick in their denominations. The slide into modernism seemed inexorable. This led to a growing demand within fundamentalist circles for separation from allegedly corrupt denominations. If it proved impossible to reform a denomination from within, the only course open was to break away from the denomination and form a new, doctrinally pure, church body. The separatist approach went back to the dawn of American Protestantism: Roger Williams (c. 1604–1684), founder of Rhode Island, had been a leading proponent of a pure, separatist church. He argued that the Church of England was apostate and that any kind of fellowship with it was a serious sin. Yet Williams was also a vigorous defender of religious freedom, establishing Rhode Island as a model of toleration.

These attitudes, generally minus the emphasis on toleration, re-emerged within fundamentalism over the period 1920-1940. Indeed, for some fundamentalist writers the only way of safeguarding the “fundamentals of faith” was to separate. George Marsden comments on this development as follows:

By the 1930s, when it became painfully clear that reform from within could not prevent the spread of modernism in major northern denominations, more and more fundamentalists began to make separation from America’s major denominations an article of faith. Although most who supported fundamentalism in the 1920s still remained in their denominations, many Baptist dispensationalists
forms of fellowship with true brothers in Christ who had not left. Christ's command to love one another was destroyed. What was left was frequently a turning inward, a self-righteousness, a hardness. Sadlly, this pattern would emerge time and time again within evangelicalism, as the sometimes vicious and wounding struggle within English evangelicalism over the same issue in the 1960s would demonstrate. Evangelicalism can be very good at self-righteousness, when it ought to be concerned with Christian love.

One of the most significant results of the shakeup within the Presbyterian Church in the United States, noted above, was the departure of four members of the Princeton Theological Seminary faculty to form Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. Convinced that Princeton had abandoned its commitment to the "old theology," J. Gresham Machen and three Princeton colleagues (including Cornelius van Til) became the nucleus of the faculty of the new seminary, dedicated to maintaining the tradition from which Princeton now seemed to have departed. They took with them some of the seminary's most promising students, including Carl McIntyre and Harold J. Ockenga, both of whom proved to be of considerable significance to the development of evangelicalism. By separating from Princeton, Machen and his colleagues believed that they could reclaim the classical evangelical heritage that Princeton seemed to them to be abandoning in its rush to embrace modernism.

Princeton had long been established as a center of academic excellence for conservative evangelicalism of a Reformed character. In the nineteenth century the seminary had been dominated by the likes of Hodge and Warfield. Yet its evangelical affiliation came under scrutiny and was eventually broken. Machen saw in this a depressingly familiar pattern—"the same old story, so often repeated, of an institution formerly evangelical that is being made to drift away by insensible degrees from the gospel it was founded by godly donors to maintain."4

"Oppositionalism" rapidly proved, however, to be of limited value in constructing a movement to face the future. Those who demanded
separation from apostate denominations found that their agreement did not always extend beyond this short-term agenda, and their unstated and unresolved differences soon came to the surface once they attempted to chart out a positive program of their own.

An example of this development is associated with Machen himself. It centers on the formation of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions in 1933, set up in response to his perception that the official Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions failed to do justice to the uniqueness of Christianity. Those who joined him shared this sentiment; as time proved, they shared little else. Divisions over other issues, such as strict Calvinism versus dispensationalism, soon emerged. Machen was ousted as its president in 1936, and, worn out by the arguments and dissent within a supposedly "doctrinally pure" body, died within months. By the time of his death in January 1937, the board had virtually ceased to exist in anything but name.

Despite this weakness, separatism continued to be of defining importance to a generation of fundamentalists. In September 1941 Carl McIntyre announced the formation of the American Council of Christian Churches. This organization was designed to be a separatist counterpart to the mainline Federal Council of Churches (founded in 1908), which McIntyre regarded as little more than a hotbed of liberal and modernist agitation.

There were parallels to these developments outside the United States around the same time; however, they lacked the intensity of the American experience. As historian David Bebbington comments, fundamentalist controversies existed in Britain during the period between the world wars, but they were "storms in a teacup when compared with the blizzards of invective that swept contemporary America." A similar pattern emerges within the Canadian context, where fundamentalist attitudes had a strictly limited impact in shaping the Christian response to the drift of Canadian culture away from its Christian moorings. Similarly, Australian evangelicalism has been relatively little influenced by fundamentalist trends, whereas what might be termed "classic Protestantism" or "conservative evangelicalism" has been of major importance since World War I, especially in the city of Sydney.

Despite its many apparent successes, most historians regard fundamentalism as never having recovered its credibility from the Scopes "monkey trial" of 1925. In May 1925, John T. Scopes, a young high-school science teacher, fell foul of a recently adopted statute that prohibited the teaching of evolution in Tennessee's public schools. The American Civil Liberties Union moved in to support Scopes, while William Jennings Bryan served as prosecution counsel. The trial proved to be the biggest public relations disaster of all time for fundamentalism. Bryan, who had billed the trial as a "duel to the death" between Christianity and atheism, was outmaneuvered by the celebrated agnostic attorney Clarence Darrow. The legal move was as simple as it was brilliant: Bryan was called to the stand as a hostile witness for the defense and interrogated concerning his views on evolution. Bryan was forced to admit that he had no knowledge of geology, comparative religions or ancient civilizations, and he showed himself to have hopelessly naive religious views.

In the end, Bryan succeeded in winning the trial in the courtroom; Scopes was fined one hundred dollars. But a much greater trial was taking place in the nation's newspapers, in which Bryan was declared to be unthinking, uneducated and reactionary. Fundamentalism might make sense in a rural Tennessee backwater, but it had no place in sophisticated urban America. In particular, the journalist and literary critic H. L. Mencken (to whom Sinclair Lewis later dedicated Elmer Gantry) successfully portrayed fundamentalists as intolerant, backward and ignorant dolts who stood outside the mainstream of American culture.

From that moment onward, fundamentalism became as much a cultural stereotype as a religious movement. It could not hope to win support among educated and cultural elites within mainstream Protestantism. The damage inflicted would never be undone. It was only with the emergence of a new form of evangelicalism after World War II that momentum and credibility were regained.
But how did this new form of evangelicalism emerge? The story of the emergence of the “new evangelicalism” is one of the most important episodes in modern Western church history; it deserves to be told in some detail.

The Public Emergence of Evangelicalism in the United States
It is beyond doubt that there has been an evangelical renaissance in the West since World War II. One of the most distinctive features of this “new evangelicalism” has been its recovery of the vision of the gospel as something that transforms culture as well as saving souls. If the separatist vision traced its roots back to Roger Williams, the “new evangelicalism” saw itself as resuming the agenda set by John Winthrop (1588-1649), the first Puritan governor of Massachusetts, who sought to build a Christian civilization on the basis of the gospel. It was imperative that evangelicalism engage culture, with the ultimate objective of bringing it captive to Christ.

In many ways the “new evangelicalism” that began to emerge in the 1940s sought to return to the approach of the mainstream of the Reformation, rather than the separatist mentality of the radical Reformation, often still referred to as Anabaptism. In terms of the history of the Reformation, separatism is a specifically Anabaptist, rather than a universally evangelical, position. That reformers such as Luther operated outside the Catholic Church is undeniable; it is equally undeniable that this was not their preferred option.

Luther’s vision of “reformation” was that of reform and renewal from within the church. It cannot be stated too often that he did not choose to separate from the medieval church; he was kicked out of it and forced to undertake a program of reform from outside that church. Even as late as 1519, well after his epoch-making discovery of the “righteousness of God,” Luther wrote: “If, unfortunately, there are things in Rome which cannot be improved, there is not—nor can there be!—any reason for tearing oneself away from the church in schism. Rather, the worse things become, the more one should help her and stand by her, for by schism and contempt nothing can be mended.”

Schism was forced on, not chosen by, Luther.
Separatism was thus an option that sixteenth-century evangelicals were obliged to accept, rather than one that they themselves would have chosen. The leading Luther scholar Heinrich Bornkamm summarizes the situation as follows:

Luther was excluded from his church because of his criticism of the theology and the ecclesiastical conditions of his time. It was his church from which he was excluded, for it was for no other church that he uttered his fervent pleadings and prayers and his painful laments and angry indictments. Everything he did and said and wrote was not against it, but for it, for its sake, not in order to establish a new church. It was because his church, the Roman Church of that time, excluded him that an inner reform, which had often taken place before, became something new, outside of the hitherto existing church.

The mainline Reformation vision was thus that of reform within a church rather than the creation of a new church. As Luther put it, there could be no justification for separatism; for by schism nothing was resolved. Even once separation became inevitable, Luther remained hopeful that it would be merely temporary and that a reconciliation might take place in his lifetime, with his reforming agenda being taken with the seriousness it deserved.

Up to the early 1940s, it was an approach more typical of the radical than the mainstream Reformation which gained the ascendancy among American evangelicals dissatisfied with developments within mainline Protestantism. Like Anabaptism in the sixteenth century, fundamentalism withdrew from what it regarded as a corrupt society and an apostate church. This is not to say that fundamentalism deliberately and consciously decided to appropriate ideas drawn from the sixteenth-century radical Reformation. Rather, the approaches that fundamentalists adopted, whether they were aware of it or not, were more typical of the radical than of the mainstream Reformation. Anabaptism affirmed the need for believers to separate from a godless society and form communities of the committed faithful. The same
trend can be seen at many other points in Western religious history—
for example, among Baptist communities in seventeenth-century Lon-
don. Yet the rise of fundamentalism in the United States during the
1920s saw this separatist tendency reach its zenith. The doctrinally
pure chose to separate from those who were deemed impure.

In his influential study *Christ and Culture*, H. Richard Niebuhr
characterized this stance as “Christ against Culture.” Although Nie-
buhr finds this model primarily in the period of the early church
-especially Tertullian), monasticism and later writers such as Tolstoy,
it is clear that one of the unacknowledged targets of his critique of
countercultural trends is the Anabaptist tradition within American
Christianity. It is not correct to say that Anabaptism in any way
caused the emergence of fundamentalism, as there is no evidence of
any serious awareness among fundamentalists of the distinctiveness of
Anabaptism at this point. Nevertheless, the similarities caused some
alarm to many modern Anabaptist writers, who reacted with dismay
to any perception of a link between themselves and fundamentalism.49

But in the 1940s a new option became possible—recovering an
approach more typical of the mainline than of the radical Reformation,
with the distinctively world-affirming and culture-embracing vision of
evangelicalism. There are strong parallels here between fundamental-
ism and postexilic Judaism, which insisted that the only way of main-
taining holiness and distinctiveness was through separation; the more
affirmative and engaging style of Jesus Christ was taken up by neo-
evangelicals, taking their cue from the mainstream Reformers, who
saw this as an authentically Christian means of bringing the good news
to the world.50

The emergence of evangelicalism as a distinctive option, avoiding
the weaknesses of both fundamentalism and modernism, dates from
the period immediately following World War II, and it is especially
associated with the figures of Billy Graham (b. 1918) and Carl F. H.
Henry (b. 1913). Both of these Christian leaders became disillusioned
with fundamentalism, but for different reasons.

Henry argued that fundamentalists did not present Christianity as

a worldview with a distinctive social vision, but chose to concentrate
on only one aspect of the Christian proclamation. As a result, an
impoverished and reduced gospel was presented to the world, radically
defective in its social vision. Fundamentalism was too otherworldly
and anti-intellectual to gain a hearing among the educated public, and
it was unwilling to concern itself with exploring how Christianity
relates to culture and social life in general. The seventy-five pages of his
*The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947)—the
“manifesto of neo-evangelicalism,” in the words of Dirk Jellema—
sounded a clarion call for *cultural engagement* on the part of evan-
gelicals. This book does not represent a critique of fundamentalism
from the standpoint of later evangelicalism; it is an essay in fundamen-
talist self-criticism, in which Henry—writing as a fundamentalist—
expresses considerable misgivings concerning the directions the move-
ment has taken and its failure to achieve its intended goals. As Millard
J. Erickson pointed out, it had become increasingly clear that funda-
mentalism had totally failed to turn back the rising tide of modernism,
that it had not achieved any significant impact on the thought world
of its day and that it had spurned the social problems of its time.52

Initially, the term *new evangelicalism* was used to refer to this third
force in North American Protestantism; gradually, as the movement
gained acceptance and ceased to be “new,” this was displaced by the
simpler and more economical term *evangelical*. The movement was
distinguished by its stalwart defense of orthodox Christian faith,
backed up by solid theological scholarship, and by its commitment to
the social application of the gospel message.51 Francis Schaeffer points
out that the term *evangelical* came to be used

with the connotation of being Bible-believing without shutting
one’s self off from the full spectrum of life, and in trying to bring
Christianity into effective contact with the current needs of society,
government and culture. It had a connotation of leading people to
Christ as Savior, but then trying to be salt and light in the culture.54
Schaeffer himself contributed significantly to this new mood within
evangelicalism, publishing a series of widely read books dealing with
the relation of the gospel and culture.35

So important was Henry to the development of this new style of evangelicalism that he deserves to be discussed in more detail.36 Carl Ferdinand Howard Henry was born in New York City on January 22, 1913. His parents sent him to a local Episcopalian church, apparently seeing this as ensuring social respectability without any awkward demands for personal religious commitment. After his confirmation, Henry dropped out of church life and began a career as a cub reporter for various local newspapers. Everything changed on June 10, 1933, when he fell into a three-hour conversation with a Christian friend. As a result of this, Henry had a conversion experience and joined a Baptist congregation on Long Island. Reappraising his life’s priorities, he enrolled at Wheaton College in 1935, attracted both by its academic reputation and by the emphasis placed on the rational dimension of faith by its president, J. Oliver Buswell. He subsequently went on to study, and then teach, at the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago, which had been founded in response to the increasingly modernist direction being taken by the University of Chicago Divinity School.

The year 1947 marked a turning point in Henry’s life. The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism appeared, setting out his anxieties concerning the weaknesses of fundamentalism, and that same year witnessed his invitation to join the faculty of the newly founded Fuller Seminary in Pasadena.37 A series of influential works followed, in which Henry established himself as a formative influence and guide for the rapidly expanding and developing evangelical movement in North America. Remaking the Modern Mind (1948), Giving a Reason for Our Faith (1949), The Protestant Dilemma (1949) and The Drift of Western Thought (1951) gave a sense of direction and intellectual rigor to the emerging movement. By the early 1950s Henry was firmly established as a leading architect of evangelical thought.38

His early work as a journalist received a new lease on life when he was invited by Billy Graham and L. Nelson Bell to give editorial leadership to a journal then being launched. As editor in chief of Christianity Today from 1956 until 1968, Henry established the profile, shared concerns and credibility of the new evangelicalism, leading to such major global ventures as the 1966 World Conference on Evangelism as well as a series of publications dedicated to the consolidation of the evangelical renaissance then emerging within North America and beyond.

Billy Graham is also of considerable importance to the shaping of the “new evangelicalism.” Although Graham was initially associated with the fundamentalist wing of American Protestantism, he gradually found himself disenchanted by its rigidity in relation to his burgeoning evangelistic ministry. In 1956 the popular fundamentalist magazine Christian Life published an article entitled “Is Evangelical Theology Changing?”39 It argued that the old guard was committed to the slogan “Ye should earnestly contend for the faith,” whereas the new generation preferred “Ye must be born again.” A heated controversy resulted. Three months later the same journal published an interview with Graham, in which he declared that he was “sick and fed up” with such controversies and wanted to get on with preaching the gospel.40 For Graham, “oppositionalism” had become a barrier to the preaching of the gospel.

The growing alienation of Graham from fundamentalism had been publicly demonstrated when he accepted an invitation in 1955 to hold a crusade in New York City. The invitation came from a coalition of Christian churches, many of which were not fundamentalist. By the time the crusade opened to massive publicity in the spring of 1957, fundamentalism seemed to be something of the past. Christianity Today and the Graham crusades became the icons of the “new” evangelicalism, which displaced the old.

It must be appreciated that evangelicalism, in the modern sense of the term, is a postfundamentalist phenomenon. It arose in reaction to the perceived deficiencies of fundamentalism. While it is unquestionably true that evangelicalism picked up and developed many insights deriving directly from the Reformation, Puritanism and Wesleyanism, the fact remains that the impetus to retrieve these great evangelical
traditions came from a conviction that fundamentalism had failed at every level—social, scholarly and spiritual.

As a result of such developments, evangelicalism began to emerge as a movement of major public importance in the United States in the 1950s. The full public recognition in America of the new importance and public visibility of evangelicalism is generally thought to date from the early 1970s. The crisis of confidence within American liberal Christianity in the 1960s was widely interpreted to signal the need for the emergence of a new and more publicly credible form of Christian belief.4 In 1976 Newsweek magazine informed the United States that its citizens were living in the “Year of the Evangelical,” with a born-again Christian, Jimmy Carter, as their president. The result was an unprecedented media interest in evangelicalism,6 even if the outcome of that interest was not always positive.

Some writers have persisted in applying the outdated and totally inappropriate label fundamentalism to evangelicalism, with polemical intentions that parallel those of some fanatical right-wing politicians who brand anything that hints at social concern as “communist.” As the Canadian scholar Clark Pinnock points out, fundamentalist has come to be “more often than not a word of contempt, a theological smear-word.” This is certainly the case with James Barr’s abusive and polemical book Fundamentalism (1977),7 which fails to make the necessary distinction between fundamentalism and evangelicalism. As Pinnock observes, “The people Barr is sharply and vehemently criticizing, the British evangelicals, do not like the term being applied to them because they are not, in fact, fundamentalists.”8 Some twenty years ago historian Richard Quebedeaux complained of the uncritical and hostile tendency of “mainstream ecumenical liberalism to lump together with pejorative intent all theological conservatives into the worn fundamentalist category.”9 The use of the term fundamentalist in this context is tired, outdated and must now also be deemed to be politically incorrect.

More significantly, the kinds of criticisms that Barr directed against his “fundamentalist” opponents were already widely current within evangelicalism at this time. As Carl Henry himself seethingly remarked, evangelicals did not need Barr to tell them that “fundamentalist preaching is often exegetically shallow, that fundamentalism uncritically elevates certain prudish traditions to scriptural status . . . and that many fundamentalists tend to appropriate selected bits of non-evangelical scholarship rather than to initiate creative studies.”10 Barr’s deeply flawed work failed to distinguish between fundamentalism and its evangelical critics, satisfying only those sufficiently ill-informed to be unable to distinguish them yet sufficiently prejudiced to dislike each with an equally uncritical vigor.

Happily, a new and more positive attitude toward evangelicalism is beginning to emerge within mainstream Christian circles. An excellent example is provided from the recent writings of one of the most important liberal Christian theologians of today, David Tracy of the University of Chicago. In his earlier writings Tracy tended to dismiss anyone who was critical of modernity as “fundamentalist.” Yet Tracy now recognizes that it is as simplistic as it is inaccurate to suggest that approaches to Christianity must be either “fundamentalist” or “modernist.” In his recent writings he draws a distinction between a “neo-conservative revival” and fundamentalism, declaring that the former “sees through the emptiness of the present and the poverty of the modern subject.” Here is a theology of retrieval, of rediscovery, which “knows that a present without past memory and tradition is self-illusory and . . . sees the folly of the Enlightenment’s wholesale attack on the very concept of tradition.” While continuing to insist that “fundamentalism cannot be taken as an intellectually serious option,” Tracy declares that “the non-fundamentalist version of anti-modernity . . . merits not merely human but full intellectual respect . . . as in conservative evangelical but not fundamentalist Christians.”11 This clear distinction between “fundamentalists” and “conservative evangelical Christians” is to be welcomed, as representing a somewhat overdue recognition by the academy that evangelicalism represents a distinctive, viable and intellectually respectable Christian option in its own right.
What has been said thus far might convey the impression that evangelicalism is primarily an American phenomenon. This is not entirely the case, although the considerable influence of American writers, speakers, journals and publishing houses must be acknowledged. To illustrate the global nature of evangelicalism, let’s pause to consider its evolution in England since World War II.

**Evangelicalism in Postwar England**

Prior to World War II, evangelicalism was a despised minority presence within the English church. Hensley Henson (1863-1947), bishop of Durham, famously dismissed the movement as “an army of illiterates, generalised by octogenarians.” With exceptions as honorable as they were few, the movement was characterized by an anti-intellectual defensiveness, nourished by a separatist mentality. “Evangelicals inclined to the view that they were excused culture, scholarship and intellectual exercise on religious grounds and they felt exonerated from loving God with their minds. It was all part of their ‘backs-to-the-wall’ attitude.”

The isolation and numerical weakness of the movement led to what many now regard as an unhealthy passion for uniformity within the movement, with those who stepped out of line, even on matters of relative rather than absolute importance, being branded as traitors or compromisers. Although the movement honored Scripture, it perhaps fostered the impression that no biblical truth could be permitted to be expressed in any terms other than those inherited from the Reformation or Charles Simeon and that there was nothing to be learned from Scripture that evangelicals did not already know. It was not until the 1950s that things began to change—decisively.

Why? Part of the explanation of the rapid growth in evangelicalism lies in developments within England itself which owe little, if anything, to what was happening in North America. Although it initially seemed that the intellectual and ecclesiastical leadership of English evangelicalism might pass into the hands of liberal evangelicals such as Stephen C. Neill and Max Warren, a new generation of more conservative evangelicals emerged to displace them. E. J. H. Nash organized Christian camps at Iwerne Minster, aimed at “top boys from top schools,” which laid the nucleus for a new generation of evangelical thinkers and leaders. The Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research laid the foundations for a new generation of evangelical biblical scholars. The Inter-Varsity Fellowship (now the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship) extended its ministry in student circles, providing both intellectual and pastoral support for those of evangelical views. Its publishing house, Inter-Varsity Press (IVP), issued a series of “pocket books” providing reasoned and scholarly defenses of evangelical positions.

But it is generally agreed that one of the most important factors, if not the most important factor, was the personal ministry of John R. W. Stott, who was appointed rector of the central London church of All Soul’s, Langham Place, in 1950, when he was only twenty-nine years old. His impact on a rising generation of evangelical students through his speaking and writing, though universally acknowledged, cannot easily be measured. If the remarkable growth of English evangelicalism can be attributed to any one person, it is to Stott. Stott’s parish-based ministry gave evangelical clergy and ordinands throughout England a new awareness of the possibilities open to them. Monthly “guest services” provided opportunities for Christians to bring their friends along to hear the gospel preached and subsequently to join “nursery groups” that explained and explored the Christian faith. It was not long before these ideas were being replicated in evangelical parishes throughout the country.

Yet the impact of developments in the United States must also be noted. It was not long before the influence of the “new evangelicalism” began to be felt elsewhere in the English-speaking world. England happens to be a case in point. Billy Graham, perhaps the most publicly visible representative of this new evangelical style, became a well-known figure in English society. Initially he was unknown to anyone in England. Yet this changed dramatically through the astonishing impact of his three-month crusade at Harringay Arena in 1954, which,
with the benefit of hindsight, can be seen as one of a series of turning points for British Christianity since World War II. Evangelism became a major issue, was talked about extensively by the British public and captured the imagination of many younger evangelicals. The obvious emotional appeal of Graham's style of evangelism (criticized by some as lacking intellectual weight and substance) was supplemented by a vigorous appeal by leading British preachers such as D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones to ground Christian faith firmly on Scripture. The rise of the Puritan and Westminster Conferences, associated with Lloyd-Jones and James I. Packer, gave added intellectual muscle, linked with a firm sense of demonstrable continuity between the greatness of the English religious past and the reemerging evangelical presence.

Many outside the movement were alarmed at the reemergence of evangelicalism in an English context, seeing it as unreflective and uncritical. The last truly great evangelical revival had reached its climax in the early 1800s, after which, despite a significant and influential presence on the foreign mission field, it was gradually overshadowed at home by the emergence of the Oxford Movement. Many had thought it had been eradicated totally from the English context, and they were anxious about the consequences of its reappearance. As late as 1955, Canon H. K. Luce, headmaster of Durham School, complained about the fact that Billy Graham was being allowed to lead a mission to the University of Cambridge. Universities, he argued, existed for the advancement of learning; so why was an intellectual lightweight being allowed to speak at such an academically distinguished center as Cambridge? “Is it not time that our religious leaders made it plain that while they respect, or even admire, Dr. Graham’s sincerity and personal power, they cannot regard fundamentalism as likely to issue in anything but disillusionment and disaster for educated men and women in this twentieth-century world?”

Luce’s haughty and condescending attitude, which treated evangelicalism (here referred to as “fundamentalism”) as totally unsuited for “educated men and women,” was widely echoed at the time. Evangelicalism was seen as being suited to illiterates, not to the cultured and sophisticated clergy of the Church of England. This attitude was reinforced by Michael Ramsey, then bishop of Durham, who in 1956 published an article entitled “The Menace of Fundamentalism,” accusing Graham of being heretical and sectarian. It proved to be a serious error of judgment; yet it corresponded well to mainstream Anglican attitudes to the new evangelicalism that was gaining momentum in the United States. (Happily, Ramsey would later change his mind on this matter, largely through personal meetings with Graham. As Ramsey’s official biographer noted, by the mid-1960s he “was still sure that Graham’s methods were not the best, but evidence forced him to admit that every time Graham came to England on a mission, more young men had vocations to be priests.”)

The consolidation of evangelicalism within the English Christian scene has not been without its painful and controversial moments. One such moment was the historic 1966 confrontation between John Stott and Martyn Lloyd-Jones at the Second National Assembly of Evangelicals, which was widely seen to center on the issue of separatism. Lloyd-Jones, who along with leading Anglican evangelical thinkers such as Packer had played a major part in renewing interest in Puritanism within English evangelicalism during the 1950s, was a staunch and influential defender of a separatist approach. The future of evangelicalism in England, he asserted, could be safeguarded only as evangelicals left their apostate churches and formed their own explicitly evangelical groups. The publication of radical works such as Honest to God, written by John A. T. Robinson, a bishop in the Church of England, had raised serious questions concerning that church’s public commitment to orthodoxy. How, Lloyd-Jones and his allies demanded, could an evangelical credibly belong to a denomination, such as the Church of England, which was doctrinally mixed? Withdrawal was the only acceptable option.

Packer, one of the most theologically sophisticated opponents of this trend, describes it as follows:

Some have urged evangelicals in “doctrinally mixed” churches to withdraw into a tighter fellowship where the pre-critical pre-liberal
view of Scripture is rigorously upheld and sceptical revisionism in theology is debarred. It has been said that failure to do so is as unprincipled as it is foolish. It is unprincipled, so the argument runs, because by staying in churches which tolerate heretics you become constructively guilty of their heresies, by your association with them; and it is foolish because you have not the least hope of cleaning up the theological Augensta stable while liberals remain there. Withdrawal is the conscientious man's only option.77

It was perhaps inevitable that a confrontation would develop within English evangelicalism over the same separatist agenda that had caused such bitterness and division in the United States a generation earlier.

Matters reached a head at the Second National Assembly of Evangelicals on the evening of October 18. Lloyd-Jones issued what was widely understood to be a passionate call for evangelicals within the mainstream churches to "come out" and, in effect, form a denomination of their own. Many of those present at the meeting have spoken of the "electric" atmosphere this address created. Stott, acting as chair of the meeting, intervened to suggest that the rightful and proper place of evangelicals was within those mainstream denominations, which they could renew from within.

A leading Christian journal summarized Lloyd-Jones's speech under a banner headline "Evangelicals—Leave Your Denominations," printed above a photograph of the platform party.78 A week later the same journal published a protest note, complaining that all save one of the platform party were opposed to Lloyd-Jones's policy; the journal's headline, it was alleged, implied that they all supported it. To many observers, Lloyd-Jones became increasingly a voice in the wilderness, as the move to regain the high ground within the mainline denominations gathered momentum. The results of this would be felt most keenly within the Church of England.

Stott's opposition to the strategy commended by Lloyd-Jones was endorsed and consolidated through the National Evangelical Anglican Congress at Keele University shortly afterward (April 4-7, 1967). This congress was addressed by such leading British evangelicals as Michael Green, Philip E. Hughes and James I. Packer and attended by exactly one thousand clergy and laity. Keele marked the beginning of the positive role of evangelicalism within the Church of England and was determinative for evangelicals staying within the national church. It was also important in opening up the social aspects of the gospel, to which English evangelicalism had become blind (despite its heavy commitment to this area in the period 1780-1830). Although lingering bitterness remains over the issue to this day, Keele is widely regarded as marking the end of a numerically significant separatist party within Anglican evangelicalism (although a vociferous and militant campaign to this extent appears to have developed once more since the 1992 decision to ordain women to the priesthood, regarded as unacceptable by some conservative evangelicals).

The full story of this congress has yet to be told, and it promises to be one of the most important tales in recent English church history. At the parish level, the congress drew on the pioneering work for renewal among evangelicals in the north of England, nurtured by people such as Raymond Turvey and given a fresh sense of purpose and direction by Stott. At the intellectual level, the congress benefited enormously from the groundbreaking work being carried out at the recently established evangelical think tank and research center in Oxford, Latimer House. Under the erudite and wise guidance of its warden, James I. Packer, this became the focus of theological and liturgical working parties, bringing together leading evangelical thinkers and representatives from across the nation.79 A volume of position papers by leading evangelicals of both the older and newer generations, published in advance of the congress, ensured both continuity and consensus within the movement.80

Keele was thus no hasty response to the crisis of October 1966; it was a well-prepared attempt to face the challenge of an unknown future, armed with the historic resources of the evangelical tradition fully deployed. In no way, as some recent critics have suggested, was it Stott seeking to impose his will on an English evangelicalism that
ought to have supported Lloyd-Jones; it represented a corporate decision by one thousand people, including the most significant evangelical thinkers, leaders and writers within the Church of England. The resulting Keele Statement is widely regarded by nonevangelicals and evangelicals alike as "one of the most important ecclesiastical documents, not only of the sixties but of this century," in relation to the history of Christianity in England. Evangelicalism could no longer be dismissed as a marginal movement that could be sidelined by the Church of England; it had to be taken seriously—and it was. Some older evangelicals, especially within nonconformist and independent churches, regarded Keele as a sellout and described it as a "tragedy" that could only lead to a weakening of English evangelicalism; this was, however, a minority view.

The growing numerical strength of evangelicalism within the Church of England can be traced back to the new sense of confidence and direction given to the movement at Keele. As Packer commented approvingly, "This pledge of new involvement closed a generation-long chapter of evangelical detachment. . . . Evangelicals today are more deeply involved in the inner life of the Church of England than ever before, and the old days of entrenched 'party' isolationism are gone."

Separatism has continued to have its attractions for a small number of Anglican evangelicals, especially those who feel marginalized from the mainstream of church life or who have only a superficial commitment to the Anglican ethos. As Packer remarks, there are still those in England who claim that "all true evangelicals are committed to Baptist or Congregationalist church principles." But basically separatism is no longer taken seriously as a realistic option, and large numbers of evangelicals are content to worship and minister within the Church of England.

Evangelicalism has continued to increase substantially within Western Christianity, in terms of its numerical strength, its influence at every level of church life and its theological sophistication. Despite rather crude attempts on the part of some church leaders to suppress this influence, it has continued to grow into the 1990s and seems set to exercise still greater influence in the opening of the next millennium. As the reaction against fundamentalism on the one hand and modernism on the other grows in momentum, there is an increasingly clear need for the development of forms of Christianity that avoid both. As Hans KÜng pointed out recently, the church "must find a way between a modernism without foundations and a fundamentalism without modernity." Evangelicalism is ideally placed to meet this challenge.
Notes

Chapter 1: The Evangelical Renaissance


For the emergence of Reformation spirituality, see Alister E. McGrath, *Spirituality in an Age of Change: Rediscovering the Spirit of the Reformers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994).


See, for example, the titles of the organization Gemeinschaft europäischer evangelischer Theologen, and the journal *Jahrbuch für evangelische Theologie*, which began to appear in 1877. Older German works of evangelical theology retain the traditional term see Helmut Thielicke, *Der evangelische Glaube*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1973-1978).

For the origins of the term and its implications, see Ulrich Zwingli, "Evangelikale in Deutschland: Skizze einer neuen geistigen Bewegung im deutschen Protestantismus," *Okumenische Rundschau*, 1973, pp. 309-19. This article illuminates the distinction between the three related adjectives evangelikal, evangelisch, and protestantisch. I owe this reference to Rolf Hille of the Albrecht-Bengel-Haus, Tübingen.


This does not mean that the evangelical outlook is restricted to such contexts; on the growing influence of evangelicalism in German theology, for example, see Robert W. Yarbrough, "Evangelical Theology in Germany," *Evangelical Quarterly* 65 (1993): 329-53.


27A point stressed by Edward J. Carnell during his 1953 campaign to have Fuller Seminary drop its foundational commitment to premillennialism; see George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 150-51.


33For the details, see Longfield, *Presbyterian Controversy*, pp. 28-53, 162-80.


3By the time of Martin Bucer, separation seemed inevitable; it was therefore necessary for Bucer to begin to develop a specifically evangelical ecclesiology that made allowance for this development. See Jacques Courtois, La notion d’église chez Bucer dans son développement historique (Paris: Fédé, 1933).


3Carl F. H. Henry, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1947), Henry clearly regards evangelicalism and fundamentalism as analogous at this stage. In his later work, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1957), fundamentalism is clearly distinguished from evangelicalism, and it is criticized on account of its narrow-minded polemicism.


3Schaeffer, Great Evangelical Disorder, p. 97.

3There is much useful information in Ronald W. Rugegger, ed., Reflections on Fran-


3For details of the development of this major institution, see George M. Marsden, Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987).


3Quebecke, Young Evangelicals, p. 19.


3Manwaring, From Controversy to Co-existence, p. 55.


3Billy Graham has had a major impact on evangelicalism elsewhere. Australia is a particularly significant example. The mission of 1939 led to a reinvigoration of evangelical churches and institutions, especially in the Sydney area. See S. B. Babbage and


34In his *Fundamentalism and the Church of God* (London: SCM Press, 1957), Gabriel Hebert mounted a forthright yet inaccurate attack on the ideas of "conservative evangelicals in the Church of England" and "the Inter-Varsity Fellowship" (p. 10). This attack was decisively refuted by James I. Packer in his first major published work, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1958), which remains a landmark of British evangelical writing.


38I hope to be able to provide an account of the importance of both James I. Packer and Latimer House to the evangelical renaissance in England in my biography of the former, which is due to be published in 1996.

39James I. Packer, ed., *Guidelines: Anglican Evangelicals Face the Future* (London: Focal, 1967). At one point these papers were conceived as lectures to be delivered at the congress and published later. In the end they were published in advance, allowing full discussion of their themes and the establishment of a greater degree of consensus than might otherwise have been the case.


42Ibid., p. 5.