



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

**THE CRISIS OF TRUTH AND WORD: A DEFENSE OF REVELATIONAL
EPISTEMOLOGY IN THE THEOLOGY OF CARL F. H. HENY**

by

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SUMMARY

There are times when a confluence of events, individual talent, preparation and strategic timing all meet at the same point in time which result in a historic period on the larger scale of history. Such is the life and legacy of Carl F. H. Henry. Henry was born at a strategic time in the history of the Protestant church in the United States. He possessed and developed intellectual gifts that far surpassed most of his contemporaries. He also possessed an ability to be at the momentous shifts in Christian history in the United States. This study examines, in historical context, the surrounding circumstances and the developments from those circumstances that gave rise to “the dean of evangelical theologians,” Carl Henry.

Henry burst onto the theological scene while the ambers were still burning from World War II. While the world was recovering from war, Protestantism, both in the U.S. and in Europe, was recovering from a battle of its own. In the United States, the conflict between liberals and conservatives had provided deep divides in the country’s denominations. With liberals having assumed seats of power in denominational structures and institutions of higher learning, the conservatives had withdrawn both culturally and theologically. Across Europe, two world wars within one generation had significantly damaged the cardinal doctrines of liberalism. In its place, came the rise of neo-orthodoxy. While on the surface the renewed emphasis on the Bible seemed to offer great promise, the philosophical underpinnings of neo-orthodoxy would soon erode the short lived hope that a return to the foundation of scriptural authority, as expressed by the Reformers, was in the making.

It was into the this milieu that Carl Henry emerged onto the scene, with the publishing of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, as a major theological voice calling for a renunciation of the obscurantism of the fundamentalists, and a re-engagement with culture both in terms of social ministries and a renewed commitment to academic excellence. In addition to *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, which received much more recognition than the preceding volume, *Remaking the Modern Mind* and then the later work, *The Protestant Dilemma*, these two books laid out the basic theological method that Henry would follow throughout his career resulting in his magnum opus, *God, Revelation and Authority*. It is here that evangelicalism finds its most definitive defense of biblical authority, inspiration and inerrancy, grounded in Henry’s theological methodology—revelational epistemology.

In addition to Henry’s prodigious theological output, he was instrumental in changing the theological landscape in America. Having called for the re-engagement of the culture and the mind, Henry was pivotal in the forming of several key evangelical institutions. Henry actively took part in the founding of the NAE, ETS, Fuller Seminary and *Christianity Today*.



Henry's legacy is cemented in his ability to articulate and formulate viable contemporary expressions to fulfill the Great Commission. His contributions to the Kingdom of God are as monumental in their breadth and scope as the King he served.



Keywords: a priori, apagogic method, biblical authority, deduction, fundamentalist, evangelical, *imago Dei*, inerrant, infallible, law of non-contradiction, logic, univocal, revelational epistemology.



ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CD</i>	- <i>Church Dogmatics</i>
<i>CT</i>	- <i>Christianity Today</i>
ETS	- Evangelical Theological Society
<i>GRA</i>	- <i>God, Revelation, and Authority</i>
NAE	- National Association of Evangelicals
<i>The Uneasy Conscience</i>	- <i>The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism</i>

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I declare that the thesis, *The Crisis of Truth and Word: A Defense of Revelational Epistemology in the Theology of Carl F. H. Henry*, which I hereby submit for the degree Philosophiae Doctor at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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Dedicated to GW, JMK, and DLA

My three men of Athens

your journeys have all inspired me



VITA

Dr. Kevin L. King Sr. was born in Savannah, Georgia on June 22, 1962. Kevin was born to an unwed sixteen year old teenager, who made the decision to give her baby up for adoption. Dr. King was adopted seven months later by John and Cozette King. Dr. King grew up just south of Atlanta, Georgia where he married Joy Akin on June 9, 1984. The Kings have three children, Daylee Elise, who was born December 19, 1985; Kevin Lebel Jr., who was born January 20, 1985; Julianna Faith, who was born June 13, 1998.

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Dr. King has pastored several churches in North Carolina, Georgia, and Colorado. Dr. King's first church, Sandy Creek Baptist Church was in Louisville, North Carolina (1994-1995). After Sandy Creek, Dr. King served as the Youth Pastor at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Georgia (1995-1997). After Mt. Zion, Dr. King went to pastor First Baptist Church in Buchanan, Georgia from 1997-1999. Since July of 1999 to the present, Dr. King has been the pastor of the Anchor Way Baptist Church in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Dr. King is currently a DLP (Distance Learning Professor) at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia. He teaches evangelism and church history classes. Additionally, Dr. King taught at Southern California Seminary in San Diego, California until the fall of 2008. While at Southern California Seminary, Dr. King taught on-line apologetic, philosophy, evangelism and New Testament classes.