

CHAPTER 4 EVANGELICAL DEFINITION

4.1 Evangelical: What does it Mean?

Attempting to offer a definition of what constitutes evangelicalism is difficult.

Donald Dayton says that the term “evangelical” is a disputed term. It can be defined in a narrow sense where the term refers to:

that group of conservative of Protestants in the Anglo-American world who made a conscious attempt, beginning in the 1940s, to dissociate themselves from the more obnoxious aspects of fundamentalist hyperconservatism without abandoning its basic theological convictions, the doctrine of biblical inerrancy being the identifying mark of their orthodoxy. This movement, while it has fairly distinct institutional center approachable theologically because of the inability of Evangelicalism and the Fundamentalism from which it arose to identify its common doctrinal bond with any degree of precision, despite the importance of inerrancy as the emblem of the movement. . . . Precisely what beliefs bind its Evangelicals together, however, is a more difficult—and fairly delicate — question. There is a sense, moreover, in which the term applies to charismatics, and twentieth century representatives of nineteenth century holiness revivals, along with numerous strains of millenarian. While one must grant the title to any Christian who applies for it, there is a vocal, visible, and self-aware part of the movement which tends to be regarded as “Evangelicalism as usually define” and therefore willy-nilly draws the rest in its train, at least as far as general perceptions are concerned. Its prominent institutions include Christianity Today, the Evangelical Theological Society, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Wheaton College, the original Fuller Theological Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and individuals such as Billy Graham—who is probably the single most important Evangelical and in a sense the icon of the movement—Carl F. H. Henry, the late Harold John Ockenga and Edward John Carnell. These men and institutions represent a dominating and hence party within Evangelicalism.¹

¹ Steven Mark Hutchens, “Knowing and being in the context of the fundamentalist dilemma: A comparative study of the thought of Karl Barth and Carl F. H. Henry” (Th.D. diss., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1989), 1. If the title of evangelical can be claimed by anyone who applies for it, then the term becomes meaningless. Billy Graham, especially after the spectacular results and media coverage of his Los Angeles Crusade in 1949, became the person that most in the United States would identify as an Evangelical. As Ralph C. Wood says in article for *First Things*, “What Wittgenstein said about the aroma of coffee can also be said of evangelicalism: everyone knows it exists, but no one can precisely describe it.

Hutchens also notes the concerns and issues raised by Dayton and Martin E. Marty in defining evangelicalism. Dayton objects to the reduction in definition in limiting the term to “neo-fundamentalist heirs of a culturally dominant Princeton theology in intellectual ascendancy.”² Furthermore, Dayton objects to limiting the definition of evangelical to what was, in his estimation, an essentially “popular religious movement with a holiness-pietist-Arminian character with an imperious Calvinist orthodoxy regarded itself as the center of the evangelical faith.”³

Marty concedes to the term as the preferred self-designation, but only reluctantly in commenting on the Neo-evangelical offspring of fundamentalism:

Many participants in and observers of church life, I among them, have only grudgingly yielded [the Evangelicals] their chosen designation, having long preferred [with Dayton] the earlier term Neo-Evangelical. This attitude was based not on a theological judgment that they were in no way locked in validly to so many histories of so many churches and movements that are not part of their outlook. Eventually, however, one gives in to sociological necessity; the term has won acceptance as a handy if still confusing and not always appropriate name.⁴

Wags have declared that an evangelical is anyone who likes Billy Graham.” Ralph C. Wood, “American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction,” *First Things* http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=2233, [accessed April 21, 2008].

² Ibid., 2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. In attempting to define evangelicalism, the designation of evangelicalism being a movement has surfaced. There has been one notable objection to attributing the status of movement to evangelicalism. Richard F. Wells writes that evangelicalism is not a movement: “. . . the effects of modernization are evident in what has incorrectly been identified as the evangelical movement. I say *incorrectly* because, however evangelical it may once have been it never managed to become a movement. Movements must exhibit three characteristics: (1) there must be a commonly owned direction, (2) there must be a common basis on which that direction is owned, and (3) there must be an *esprit* that informs and motivates those who are thus joined in their common cause. What has been missing most obviously from evangelicalism is the direction, despite the best efforts by such leaders as Carl Henry in the earlier years of its current growth to provide one (see issues of *Christianity Today* from the late 1950s through the early 1970s). To be sure, there was the semblance of common direction every time churches were rallied to the call of world evangelization, but that focus always proved too narrow to provide a lasting sense of common direction in a culture now adrift from its moorings. Unity must be built on more than a shared desire to evangelize; it has to grow out of a broad cultural strategy, the implementation of a broad biblically worked-

4.2 Henry and the Problem of Evangelical Definition⁵

Henry rendered his verdict on liberalism and fundamentalism. One was a perversion of scriptural theology and the other a perversion of the biblical spirit.⁶ In order to combat these perversions, Henry and others decided it was time to “perform surgery” on fundamentalism and call it back to the cultural consciousness squandered by fundamentalists during their reaction to the threat of modernism:⁷

A new generation of earnest intellectuals is appearing within the ranks of avowedly fundamentalist groups and educational institutions. . . . A strand of irenicism runs through their thought. They are able to view other kinds of theology more objectively and appreciatively than their predecessors did in the 1920s and to deal responsibly with these theologies from the standpoint of their own presuppositions.⁸

Mohler comments on Henry’s writings, “In a very real sense, almost everything Carl Henry has written relates implicitly to the issue of evangelical identity and definition. More than any other evangelical of the modern period, Henry has written with the self-conscious intention of defining the evangelical movement and its theological character.”⁹ Even a summary look at the work of Henry will show the problematic nature of evangelical definition: *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, *Evangelicals at the Brink of Crisis, A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration*, and *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* are books that Henry has written to address the

out view of the world. And that was never there.” *No Place for Truth or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 8–9.

⁵ This heading is borrowed from R. Albert Mohler Ph.D. dissertation, “Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response,” 110.

⁶ Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology*, 47.

⁷ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, preface.

⁸ Arnold Hearn, “Fundamentalist Renaissance,” *The Christian Century* (April 30, 1958): 528.

⁹ Mohler, “Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response,” 110.

problem of evangelical definition.¹⁰ Henry would define that the new evangelicalism would be fully orthodox and engage both society and the academy. In his article in *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* Henry defines evangelicalism in the following way:

Evangelical Christians are thus marked by their definition to the sure Word of the Bible; they are committed to the inspired Scriptures as the divine rule of faith and practice. They affirm the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, including the incarnation and virgin birth of Christ, His sinless life, substitutionary atonement, and bodily resurrection as the ground of God's forgiveness of sinners, justification by faith alone, and the spiritual regeneration of all who trust in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.¹¹

Additionally, in Henry's vision, evangelicalism would consist of five programmatic emphases: (1) the new evangelicalism aims to clarify the philosophical implications of Biblical theism, (2) relates Christianity to the pressing social issues of the day, as well as to individual salvation, (3) reacts against the division of evangelicals over secondary and tertiary points of prophetic detail, (4) is alert to the possibility of a Biblical ecumenicity, and (5) is finding its way back from systematic theology to Biblical theology.¹² With the perceived collapse of liberalism, and the inadequacy of neo-

¹⁰ Carl F. H. Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture; Evangelicals at the Brink of Crisis* (Waco: TX: Word, 1967); *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971); *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco, TX: Word, 1976). In addition to the many books by Henry, his role as the founding editor of *Christianity Today* uniquely enabled Henry to shape and speak for the developing movement. A representative sampling of some of the editorials from Henry's tenure at *Christianity Today* highlight his role: "American Evangelicals and Theological Dialogue," *Christianity Today* (January 15, 1965): 27–29; "Agenda for Evangelical Advance," *Christianity Today* (November 5, 1976): 38; "Evangelical Profits and Losses," *Christianity Today* (January 25, 1978): 69–70; "Evangelical Summertime?," *Christianity Today* (April 1, 1977): 38–40; "Evangelicals and Fundamentals," *Christianity Today* (September 16, 1957): 20–21; "Evangelicals: Out of the Closet but Going Nowhere?," *Christianity Today* (January 4, 1980): 16–22.

¹¹ Carl F. H. Henry, "Evangelical," in *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (ed. J. D. Douglas; Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1974), 358–59.

¹² Mohler, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response," 114.

orthodoxy, evangelicals sensed an opportunity to stand in the gap and reclaim their Reformational heritage that fundamentalism had thrown away when given to the excesses of militant separatism.

Henry's vision for evangelicalism was nothing less than earth shattering for the religious landscape in America. Writing in *Evangelicals in Search of an Identity* (1976), Henry chronicles the early development of evangelicalism in the 1940s:

Twenty-five years ago there were signs that the long-caged lion would break its chains and roar upon the American scene with unsuspected power. The evangelical movement's mounting vitality baffled a secular press, beguiled by ecumenical spokesman for liberal pluralism into regarding conservative Christianity as a fossil-cult destined to early extinction. While modernist disbelief and neo-orthodox universalism scotched the indispensability of conversion, the Graham evangelistic crusades demonstrated anew the gospel's regenerating power. Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947 brought a higher dimension to most evangelical divinity learning. The Evangelical Theological Society at mid-century canopied hundreds of scholars committed to scriptural inerrancy and hoped to shape a theological renaissance. Evangelical books of philosophical and theological power were on the increase: G. C. Berkouwer, J. Oliver Buswell, Gordon Clark, Cornelius Van Til, E.J. Carnell, Bernard Ramm and other paced the way as J. Gresham Machen had done a half century earlier. Vigorous symposium and commentary series appeared. The National Association of Evangelicals, founded in 1942, rallied a service constituency of 10 million American evangelicals. Christianity Today united scattered evangelical contributors from all denominations in a common theological evangelistic and social witness. Garnering an impressive paid circulation of 175,000, the magazine enlisted the loyalties of many disenchanted with fundamentalist far right and liberal left . . .¹³

As Henry stated in *The Uneasy Conscience*, his call was not to abandon the fundamentals of the faith, but to abandon the militant separatism that had come to characterize fundamentalism:

¹³ Henry, *Evangelicals in Search of an Identity*, 19–20. In writing this book, Henry is trying to awaken and bring together what he senses is a fraying of the unity of the evangelical world. He comments on (p. 24) after having listed the accomplishments of evangelicalism, he now worries about the direction that movement that he helped foster will take: "Having burst his cage in a time of theological default, the lion of evangelicalism now seems unsure which road to take."

Those who read with competence will know that the “uneasy conscience” of which I write is not one troubled about the great biblical verities, which I consider the only outlook capable of resolving our problems, but rather one distressed by the frequent failure to apply them effectively to crucial problems confronting the modern mind. It is an application of, not a revolt against, fundamentals of the faith, for which I plead.¹⁴

It is this application of the fundamentals that is now under examination.

4.3 Evangelical Institutional Development

In the 1940s and 1950s there were several key institutional changes that facilitated the application of the vision of fundamentalism correctly applied as Henry had written. The founding of the National Association of Evangelicals (1942), the founding of Fuller Seminary (1947), the founding of the Evangelical Theological Society (1949), and the founding and launching of *Christianity Today* (1956) were instrumental in the rapid rise of evangelicalism. Significantly, Carl F. H. Henry played a pivotal role in each.

In an editorial in 1942 in *Bibliotheca Sacra* the editorial board made the following comment:

Long indeed have political chiefs known the indisputable fact that an organized minority can wield more influence and achieve their ends far better than an unorganized majority. Sectarian politics, which too often dominates the machinery of church gatherings, is constantly demonstrating that a very few well-intrenched and organized, designing men are able to deprive a very large majority of any expression of their convictions. With these patent conditions in mind, there is genuine ground for encouragement in the nationwide movement which has been styled the *National Association of Evangelicals for United Action*, which has as its objective the uniting of the vast evangelical forces in America for the fair and reasonable expression of their convictions.¹⁵

¹⁴ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, preface.

¹⁵ Lewis Sperry Chafer, “Editorial,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 99 (October 1942): 385.

4.3.1 The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)

The NAE was founded to provide a centrist or *via media* platform between fundamentalism on the one side and liberalism on the other.¹⁶ Like the other two institutions mentioned, Fuller Seminary, and *Christianity Today*, Harold Ockenga was either a co-founder, or president. Historians have determined that the founding of the NAE was in fact the beginning of neo-evangelicalism, even though the term would not be coined until five years later by Ockenga. It was at this time and as would later be brought out at the founding of Fuller and *Christianity Today* that there are differences between fundamentalism and evangelicalism. A major impetus in the founding of the NAE was the reaction by the more “irenic” fundamentalists who were dissatisfied with the issue of the separation from corrupt denominations.¹⁷ The more irenic fundamentalists were loyal to the rudiments of the fundamentalists. Additionally, they wanted to find a *via media* between the liberals and fundamentalists. Included in that search for a middle ground was the distinction between the orthodox and the neo-orthodox (this issue will be taken up in chapter 6).¹⁸ Harold Ockenga wrote the following in 1948 regarding the NAE:

This may be a more hopeful movement on the horizon. In it are thirty-two evangelical Christian denominations, hundreds of independent churches, and thousands of individual Christians. This movement is positive, co-operative, orthodox, and evangelical. Interestingly enough, an unpublished report from the International Sunday School Association on the National Association of Evangelicals and subsidiary organizations circulated privately said: “N.A.E. will

¹⁶ Amos Young, “The Word and the Spirit or the Spirit and the Word: Exploring the Boundaries of Evangelicalism in Relationship to Modern Pentecostalism,” *Trinity Journal* 23 (Fall 2002): 237.

¹⁷ For definition of irenic fundamentalists see John Fea, “Understanding the Changing Façade of Twentieth-Century American Protestant fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Definition,” 184–86.

¹⁸ McCune, “The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings,” 110.

have its significance in furnishing a framework in which most of the other groups named above may find some co-ordination and relationship.”¹⁹

The cooperative effort was a hallmark of the early days of the NAE.

To J. Elwin Wright goes the honor of having and then communicating the vision of a unified and cooperative evangelical voice. Wright, the leader since 1929 of a group of evangelicals called The New England Fellowship, had been touring the country from 1939 to 1941 issuing the call for a new coalition of evangelicals that held to the historic doctrinal positions of the Church, but at the same time would not be committed to militant separatism. Writing of this period Ellingsen gives the following description of the unity/separation issue: “In many ways this desire to present the old fundamentals of the faith in a positive, not merely defensive way was to set the agenda and rationale for the emergence of evangelicalism out of its original fundamentalist heritage.”²⁰

Harold Ockenga gave in his address “The Unvoiced Multitudes” the rationale for the formation of a new body. In that founding meeting Ockenga identified the three main enemies facing America in his estimation: Roman Catholicism, liberal/modernism, and secularism (generally in the form of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s political liberalism and international communism).²¹ Ockenga’s formula for meeting these enemies were “first, unity; fundamentalism faced a ‘terrible indictment’ for its ‘failures, divisions, and controversies.’ Rugged individualism was a ‘millstone’ that must be repudiated. Second,

¹⁹ Harold J. Okenga, “The New Reformation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 105, no.417 (January 1948): 97.

²⁰ McCune, “The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings,” 110.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

doctrinal purity an emphasis on the cardinal evangelical doctrines of Christianity. And third, ‘consecrated love.’”²²

As would be expected, the NAE was criticized from the right and the left. The fundamentalists criticized it for allowing membership in the NAE of those who did not share the concern for the doctrinal purity of the church. Criticism on the left came in the way of demagoguery when the editor of the liberal *Christian Century* wrote: “. . . the atomistic sectarianism which has long been a scandal of Protestant Christianity appears to be receiving a new lease on life.”²³

Irrespective of the criticisms that marked its birth, the forming of the NAE was a watershed event in the development of evangelicalism. Those “irenic fundamentalists” believed that the fundamentalism of the 1920s and 1930s was incompatible with the new generation of evangelicals and the direction that they believed they should go. In contradistinction to the separatism of the previous generation of fundamentalist—evangelicals, this new generation sought cultural engagement much like their forebears of the Reformation and the evangelicals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A fissure was now exposed in the bedrock of conservative Protestant Christianity in the United States of America. With the rise of Fuller Seminary, the Evangelical Theological Society, and *Christianity Today* that small crack would become a chasm that would not soon be spanned.²⁴

²² Ibid., 112.

²³ Ibid. In point of fact it was with the goal of inclusion that the NAE was founded. One can read their mission statement, statement of faith and core values and see that the NAE desires to foster cooperation around their statement of faith irregardless of denominational affiliation. Cf. NAE webpage <http://www.nae.net/index.cfm?FUSEACTION=nae.mission>, (accessed April 19, 2008).

4.3.2 The Fuller Experiment

Another break with fundamentalism that had seismic repercussions across the conservative Protestant Christian landscape was the founding and rise of Fuller Theological Seminary. Henry's role in the founding and shaping of Fuller has already been discussed in chapter 2 of this work, but one remark bears repeating:

The prodigious pen of Carl F. H. Henry in the 1940s and 50s did the most to raise the issue of fundamentalism's intellectual want and tried to elevate the standard of evangelical/fundamentalist scholarship and the intellectualism of the day. And it was Henry who did as much or more early on to set the scholastic tone and academic standards of the new evangelicalism's flagship of learning-Fuller Theological Seminary.²⁵

Part of Henry's call for cultural engagement as contained in *The Uneasy Conscience* and the explicit implications, of the *Remaking the Modern Mind* and *The Protestant Dilemma*, were the creation of a first rate evangelical school of higher education. As Dorrien noted in *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* it was Henry along with Edward J. Carnell, "who set out to rehabilitate the intellectual foundations of evangelical fundamentalism and make it worthy of respect."²⁶ Marsden points out that in

²⁴ Ibid., 113–16. McCune disagrees with the assessment of George Marsden that in the formation of the NAE "almost no one seems to have regarded the NAE as a sign that 'evangelicals' were now breaking from fundamentalism over the principle of separatism (*Reforming Fundamentalism*, p.48)." McCune writes, "This may have been the understanding of the liberals. It is true that the terms fundamentalist and evangelical had not yet developed all of their peculiar connotations and innuendos; and it is also true that some separatist fundamentalists thought they could work inside and thus direct the new group. And to be sure W. B. Riley was about the only fundamentalist leader in outspoken, public opposition to the new body (some would say this was due to his vested interest in the World Christian Fundamentalist Association). But given the background, statements, and actions of its organizers of the time, it should have seemed clear where the NAE's toes were pointed despite which way its face was turned." Cf. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 155.

²⁵ McCune, "The Formation of The New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings", 123–24. For an excellent treatment on the history of Fuller Theological Seminary, see George Marsden's *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (1987). *Reforming Fundamentalism* also serves as a sequel and companion to his *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (1980).

²⁶ Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*, 7.

addition to the need for academic respect there were other factors at play from the very beginning at Fuller:

Those who founded Fuller Seminary were consciously bound by allegiances to three major religious movements, although they did not usually see the three as distinct. They were loyal to a version of classical Protestant Christianity, they were loyal to the American evangelical heritage, and they were loyal to fundamentalism. These religious traditions are crucial for understanding both Fuller Seminary and the people who shaped it.²⁷

These allegiances to these different traditions would manifest themselves in the struggles that Fuller would go through at a relatively early point in its existence.²⁸

Mentioned earlier was a book review by John F. Walvoord on *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. After commending the book Walvoord makes the following statement indicating the leading role that Henry played in the early days of Fuller, “Of interest to seminarians is that this book with its introduction by President Harold John Ockenga of Fuller Theological Seminary and Dr. Henry, one of Fuller Seminary’s professors, gives a key to the principles guiding this new and promising institution.”²⁹

Fuller was intended to be the flagship of a revitalized and intellectually respectable fundamentalism. As was typical of the time Fuller, like the NAE, was criticized by both the right and the left. Hard line fundamentalists attacked Fuller’s desire to seek academic respectability. This faction viewed that desire as a form of idolatry. The left, principally local religious establishments (particularly the local United Presbyterians), criticized Fuller because they “obviously felt threatened by having a

²⁷ Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 3.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Walvoord, “Review of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*,” 364.

fundamentalist seminary in their back yard.”³⁰ Fuller has experienced radical changes in its philosophy since its inception. If in keeping the standard of the founders is a measurement of the success of Fuller, then one would have to conclude that Fuller did not succeed in gaining academic respectability as a fundamentalist institution.³¹

4.3.3 The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS)

Another major development in establishing the identity of Evangelicalism was the founding of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) in 1949. The establishment of the ETS was a seminal move in evangelicalism’s distancing itself from fundamentalism. At this pivotal time in the development of evangelicalism there arose a sense among the rising evangelical scholars of the need for an association of scholars who shared “evangelical presuppositions, to meet and work together to promote conservative theological literature. Acting upon this need, a faculty committee of Gordon Divinity School in Boston organized a meeting of evangelical scholars for the purpose of establishing such an association.”³²

A historical background of the ETS contained in the historical archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College contains the following:

In the first decades of the twentieth century, there was a reaction to the modernist movement among some conservative Protestants. They issued a call to return to the "fundamentals" to restore the emphasis on inerrant and authoritative teachings of the Bible to its former wide acceptance. A number of factors following World War I resulted in a general public reaction in the 1930s against the "Fundamentalists," as they came to be called, and subsequent withdrawal of conservative believers into a closed circle of independent congregations, para-

³⁰ Steven Mark Hutchens, “Knowing and being in the context of the fundamentalist dilemma,” 66.

³¹ Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 245ff.

³² John A. Wiseman, “Evangelicalism 1949–79: As Traced in the Evangelical Theological Society” (M.A. thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1989), 54.

church, and professional groups with increasingly less contact and interaction with mainline Christian denominations. Post-World War II years produced a rising concern among conservative scholars of the necessity to counteract this withdrawal of conservatives from the wider world of scholarly activity. While many Fundamentalists tended to be anti-intellectual, some conservatives, calling themselves Evangelicals, began to challenge liberal solutions.

The Evangelical Theological Society arose out of a long-standing and keenly perceived need for interaction and wider dissemination of conservative research on biblical and theological issues. Conservative, Evangelical scholars were equally concerned that the Bible was no longer being supported as authoritative in many schools and seminaries, among leaders of mainline denominations, or in published research. By providing an Evangelical arena of intellectual interchange and disseminating the results to a larger public, it was hoped that exposition and defense of Evangelical positions could be added to existing scholarly theological literature that was more liberal in content.

As a result of many informal conferences in schools and seminaries, faculty members of Gordon Divinity School, Boston, Massachusetts, decided to take the first step toward organization of a group of like-minded scholars into a society having as its purpose publication of such research and the provision of a forum for discussion and support between its members. A series of twenty-four letters to individual professors of approximately twenty conservative colleges and seminaries was sent out early in 1949 to gauge interest. Responses from these encouraged the committee, under the chairmanship of Edward R. Dalglish of Gordon, to proceed with further arrangements. A list of those originally contacted can be found on a separate page of this guide. Consensus of meeting time and place resulted in the first gathering of the Society in Cincinnati, on December 27 and 28, 1949. Meetings were held in the YMCA and were attended by sixty scholars, representing at least twenty different denominations. The group elected R. Clarence Bouma (Calvin Seminary) as President and appointed an Executive Committee to carry on the continuing business. Membership, Editorial, and a Standing Committee were established, the latter for program arrangements. A complete list of original officers and committees will be found on another page of this guide. A list of papers read at this meeting is also given.

The decision was made to form a society composed of independent individuals of conservative, Evangelical conviction with one common denominator: scholarship based on the concept of biblical inerrancy. These individuals were not required to be affiliated with schools and seminaries and were not to be limited to specific denominational or theological traditions. For these reasons, the creedal statement was limited to one sentence: "The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety is the word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs." It was also

decided that papers should not be limited to biblical and exegesis studies but were to range the entire field of theological disciplines.³³

Aside from the previously stated motives for the founding of the association, there were two other issues at play. One was to distance themselves from modernist/liberals. The other was to separate as well from the fundamentalists.³⁴

Clarence Bouma gave the keynote address and voiced the common assertion that a new association was needed. There was a need for a distinctively evangelical society:

The deepest and ultimate reason for this need, as I see it, is found in the radical divergence between the basis, presuppositions, and consequent methodologies of a sound evangelical theology on the one hand, and that of the prevailing type of theology (which may with a general term be designated as modernist) on the other. . . . The ultimate source and authority for Theology is no longer sought in the objective divine revelation of Scripture, but in the religious consciousness of man. Theology thus becomes anthropocentric instead of theo-centric. . . . This divergence between the historic Christian Theology and the current prevailing modernist Theology—of whatever shape or hue—is so great that the organization of separate scholarly societies for the evangelical theologian is so desirable. Here I do not wish to be misunderstood as condemning membership in all societies for biblical and theological study except those which are avowedly evangelical.³⁵

In regard to the second motive, distancing themselves from the militant fundamentalist, Walvoord, writing from a fundamentalist perspective, echoed Henry's critique of fundamentalism:

It is clear, however, that most evangelicals do not want to be considered fundamentalist. Many evangelicals today are glad to be done with the old, controversial type of fundamentalism. . . . It (evangelicalism) does not require

³³ "Records of the Evangelical Theological Society Collection 243," Billy Graham Center Archives. <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/243.htm#3> (April 21, 2008).

³⁴ The irony of this motive is not lost on the author. One of the criticisms that Henry and others had against the more strident fundamentalist was their doctrine of militant separatism. And yet, here was a group, many coming from within fundamentalism, that were separating themselves from fundamentalism for, in part, their insistence on separating themselves from those that did not agree with them.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

separation from denominational organizations which no longer require belief in the famous five fundamentals.³⁶

In *Christian Life* magazine in 1956 an editorial article made this description of the difference between fundamentalism and evangelicalism

. . . they thought there was more to Christianity than being on the defensive all the time. They wanted to build on the contributions of older leaders a positive, not reactionary movement. . . It's still as concerned over preserving the Christian essentials as were the early fundamentalists. But it is something more: a positive witness for God's redemptive love, wisdom and power as revealed in Jesus Christ. In short, fundamentalism has become evangelicalism.³⁷

Since the initial meeting of the ETS in 1949, gains in influence would come relatively quickly. So much so that some liberal scholars began to take notice. Arnold W. Hearn, a reputable liberal scholar wrote:

It is no longer proper, if it ever was, to view fundamentalism exclusively in terms of the stereotypes which emerged during the period of bitterest controversy following World War I; nor can it be dealt with by the conditioned responses which grew out of that era. A new generation of earnest intellectuals is appearing within the ranks of the avowedly fundamentalist groups and educational institutions.³⁸

Hearn would list the writing of Bernard Ramm, Henry, E. J. Carnell, and the publications of the ETS as representative of the new group of conservative scholars. Hearn would go on to comment that this new evangelical strand of fundamentalism “may just possibly be moving toward a place of much greater influence . . . in American Protestantism.”³⁹ Hearn's prophesy would prove to be more accurate than he could have possibly imagined. By the time he made this observation the last major institutional

³⁶ Ibid., 67.

³⁷ Ibid., 65–66.

³⁸ Ibid., 44.

³⁹ Ibid.

development of new evangelicalism had already been in existence two years. As is usual for this period of evangelicalism, Carl Henry was at the epicenter of the developments. In looking back to the ETS, Henry did more than just come up with its name he was a major influence as seen from its temperament and its commitment to excellence in scholarship.⁴⁰ The founding of *Christianity Today*, with Henry as the founding editor, would become in the next twelve years a major factor in shaping and influencing evangelicalism in the next twelve years.

4.3.4 The Flagship Journal of Evangelicalism (*Christianity Today-CT*)

In *Confessions of a Theologian*, Henry recounts that in 1955 he was asked if he might be interested in editing an evangelical magazine that would give the liberally oriented *Christian Century* a conservative counterpart. At that time Henry, recalls a spring day in 1938 while he was at Wheaton, when he along with two other seniors at Wheaton were asked to identify Christianity's greatest present day need. The other two students mentioned worthwhile missionary endeavors. Henry recalls that he "mentioned evangelical Christianity's need for a counterpart to *Christian Century*, although neither the vision nor the resources for such a venture was then in view."⁴¹

The vision for what would become *Christianity Today* was Billy Graham's. It was on Christmas Day 1954 in the home of his father-in-law that Graham articulated his perceived need for an evangelical magazine that would be the rival of the liberal *Christian Century* magazine. The two men talked about this venture and in the ensuing days their excitement and expectation of it becoming a reality took shape as Bell made

⁴⁰ Ibid., 56.

⁴¹ Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 144.

contact with “almost a thousand” evangelical leaders. One significant contact who at first was only marginally interested was J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil. Pew would become a major factor in the launching of *Christianity Today*.⁴²

Christianity Today was a part of a “broader effort of a group who called themselves the “new evangelicals to reassert a conservative Protestantism as a cultural force.”⁴³ With the success of Fuller Seminary, NAE and ETS, Graham’s vision of an evangelical magazine that would rival the *Christian Century*, became a key component of the effort of impacting the broader culture.

As Henry recounts the events that led up to his becoming the founding editor of *CT*, a friend and colleague played an instrumental role. Wilbur Smith was first approached about taking the editorship of this new venture. Smith was then on the faculty of Fuller and a colleague of Henry’s. Smith eventually declined the offer and then discussions about possible editors included Henry. While looking for a founding editor Graham and Bell went to meet with Pew. Pew offered \$150,000 for two years to get the magazine going.⁴⁴

Henry was eventually approached by Harold Lindsell, apparently as an emissary from Bell or Graham, about his possible interest as an associate editorship. Henry had earlier been asked about being a contributor editor. In that earlier conversation Henry noted that if the venture was not “theologically compromised the magazine could prove to be a boon to the evangelical cause. If the magazine would be (a) transcontinental, (b)

⁴² Ibid., 145.

⁴³ Eric J. Miller, “Carl F. H. Henry and Christianity Today: Responding to the ‘Crisis of the West,’ 1956-1968” (M.A. thesis. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1994), 144.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 145.

interdenominational, (3) theologically affirmative, (d) socially aggressive, and (e) irenic” it would be exactly what was needed for the hour of the day.⁴⁵

Things progressed throughout 1955 with discussion leading to the forming of a board of directors. Graham was the leading force during this time. In April of 1955, Graham was conducting a crusade in Scotland. After meeting with Scottish clergy and hearing of their widespread disenchantment with liberal theology and of their renewed interest in biblical theology, Graham stressed the need for this new magazine to be intellectually competent and evangelical. The name *Christianity Today* had been on Bell’s letterhead was now being used as a permanent title in all discussions and official correspondence from Bell.

Graham wrote Henry from Europe in July of 1955 inquiring about his possible interest as the editor. Henry responded and said that upon his return, he would discuss the matter with Graham. On Labor Day of that year Henry met with Graham and others in New York. Aside from Henry and Graham, other prominent businessman and potential board members were at the meeting as well. It was during this meeting that Henry was elected as the founding editor by the board of directors, (which that earlier that day had been constituted). The first publication date was set for October 1, 1956. The initial objective was to reach 200,000 clergy in American and the English speaking world.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 146–49. From the very beginning the seeds of discontent were planted. Henry wanted total editorial control. The differences that Henry and Bell had over editorial responsibility would continue during the entirety of Henry’s tenure. Additionally, J. Howard Pew, whose generous contributions enabled the venture to go forward was insistent that the magazine be a vocal advocate of capitalism as the only representative economic model that a Christian could recognize as biblically faithful. Furthermore, Pew wanted to be involved in determining editorial policy. From the very beginning, Henry was equally as insistent on editorial freedom. For a more succinct summary see Hutchens, “Knowing and being in the context of the fundamentalist dilemma,” 68–69; Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 161–63. Here Henry

Henry was a man of vision. His ability to diagnose the problem and then chart a remedy was a key character trait of his. Henry had consistently shown his ability to be at the epicenter of evangelical developments in the 1940s and 1950s. His early theological works detailed a critique of modern thought and culture. In this critique Henry also brought his discerning eye to his own theological tradition. Having shown where fundamentalism went wrong, Henry had charted a course correction in two significant works, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* and *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*. He also had been actively involved in evangelical institutional developments (i.e., NAE, ETS, Fuller Theological Seminary). However his most significant activity to date would be his editorship of *Christianity Today*. *CT* was a bold venture filled with great expectations and problems as well. But even after a difficult first year at *CT*, and considering a potential return to Fuller after a one-year sabbatical by 1958 Henry became convinced that he had been called by the Lord to Washington and *Christianity Today*. Consequently, by the third year of its publication, *CT* had more than doubled the circulation of its liberal rival the *Christian Century*.⁴⁷

speaks of the editorial interference initiated by Pew. In protest of the interference from Pew and others on the Board of Directors, Henry and the editorial staff sent the following letter to the Board of Directors:

To The Board:

In submitting this copy for Board approval, the Editors feel that their sense of professional dignity is lowered to half mast. Men who bear in the sight of the public the responsibility for the published content cannot long be deprived of a commensurate authority without either deterioration of spirit or a departure to other work. In coming to *Christianity Today*, the Editors did not regard themselves salaried propagandists under censorship but as principled men under divine constraint. In championing the freedoms which *Christianity* bears to men, they can only protest against the compromise (here involved) of the liberties which inhere in a free evangelical press.

This letter was sent to the Board of Directors even before the first copy came off the press. This letter and the explicit threat that Henry would resign if advance notice of editorials had to be cleared by select members of the Board, set off a flurry of activity. Billy Graham and several other Board members supported the Editors' position and opposed Pew. For the moment the issue of editorial freedom was settled.

⁴⁷ Hutchens, "Knowing and being in the context of the fundamentalist dilemma," 69–70. "The first year at the magazine was fraught with disagreements over editorial freedom, format, readership and finances" (p. 69).

In February of 1954 Wilbur Smith wrote Billy Graham a letter bemoaning the fact that there was no vehicle for conservatives to carry their message to the larger culture:

There is no prophetic voice for the conservatives in our country today, and no agency binding them together, which is a tragedy. Such a paper as you have in mind would do it, and someone ought to undertake this at once, one who has the confidence of the conservative force of our land.⁴⁸

Graham et al. would under take that challenge. Smith had been offered and refused the editorship of the magazine that would become *Christianity Today*. Within two years, in October of 1956, the first issue of *Christianity Today* rolled off the press. For the next twelve years, Carl Henry would sit in the editor-in-chief's chair. From that vantage point Henry would enter into a stage of his career that would see him began to propagate his vision of evangelicalism.⁴⁹ These twelve years would consist of innumerable articles, lectures and talks, one significant theological volume (*Christian Personal Ethics*, 1957) and many memorable events, chief of which was the Berlin Congress on Evangelism.

Henry's work at *Christianity Today* represented a bold experiment in theology that cost him a great deal of personal time and energy. Because of his own sense of responsibility, however, he made the effort for twelve years. What was he trying to accomplish? Though it is unsigned, the first editorial in the magazine's history expressed Henry's goals and those of the other original editors. Without question, they were very lofty goals. The editorial states that the magazine "has its origin in a deep-felt desire to express historical Christianity to the present generation." Believing that liberalism had failed to meet the needs of modern men and women, the editors wrote: *Christianity Today* is confident that the answer to the theological confusion existing in the world is found in Christ and the

⁴⁸Miller, "Carl F. H. Henry and *Christianity Today*: Responding to the "Crisis of the West," 1956–1968," 27.

⁴⁹House, "Remaking the Modern Mind: Revisiting Carl Henry's Theological Vision," 13. "To summarize this era in Henry's life, I offer the following four observations. First, by this time Henry had formed a coherent philosophical vision that took reason and human sinfulness into account. Second, he had crystallized his doctrine of full biblical authority and defended it as the most complete answer to the human dilemma. Third, he had outlined what he considered evangelicalism's ethical and theological responsibilities. Fourth, he had committed himself to disseminating evangelical theology as widely as possible, for he considered Christian theology *the* expression of God's plan for the human race. This last point is crucial for understanding Henry's next career move."

Scriptures. There is evidence that more and more people are rediscovering the Word of God as their source of authority and power. Many of these searchers for the truth are unaware of the existence of an increasing group of evangelical scholars throughout the world. Through the pages of *Christianity Today* these men will expound and defend the basic truths of the Christian faith in terms of reverent scholarship and of practical application to the needs of the present generation.

Further, the editors promised that the “doctrinal content of historic Christianity will be presented and defended.” They pledged to “apply the biblical revelation to the contemporary social crisis by presenting the implications of the total gospel message for every area of life.” They hoped to “supplement seminary training with sermonic helps, pastoral advice, and book reviews by leading ministers and scholars,” and they desired to counteract the “dissolving effect of modern scientific theory” by setting forth “the unity of the divine revelation in nature and Scripture.” Finally, they endeavored to do all this while upholding and stating constructively “the complete reliability and authority of the written Word of God.” In other words, Henry hoped to take academic theology to the masses. He wished to have a literate and informed clergy. He also desired to have one journal that would unite evangelicalism around theology and practice. In fact, he saw this magazine as part of a grand scheme for evangelical penetration. Besides the magazine, he thought that the movement required continued evangelistic breakthroughs like those represented by the Billy Graham Crusades, sufficient textbook literature to challenge liberal thought, a breakthrough in Christian social action, and a community of Christian scholars thinking and working together on significant projects. Such ministries would in turn benefit the local church (see *CT*, 205).⁵⁰

Henry’s reputation even by those that were across the theological aisle was “one who represented a sophisticated and irenic theological conservatism.”⁵¹ His standing as a first rate scholar would enable him to enlist a broad range of evangelical scholars who would serve as contributing editors.⁵² Henry’s vision for the new magazine would be to further the evangelical agenda and respond to “the crisis of the west.” This vision can be encapsulated in three broad aims: to win the liberals, to unify and mobilize evangelicals,

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

⁵¹ Miller, “Carl F. H. Henry and *Christianity Today*: Responding to the “Crisis of the West,” 1956–1968,” 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 30. A sampling of these scholars included Frank E. Gaebelin, Roger Nicole, Bernard Ramm, and Gordon H. Clark.

and to transform culture.⁵³ These three objectives embodied the precise goal that was stated in the 1954 Labor Day meeting: “to articulate historic Christianity and its contemporary relevance primarily for the clergy and incidentally also for the thoughtful lay leaders.”⁵⁴

4.4 Evangelical Success

The 1940s and 1950s saw the foundation being laid for evangelical advancement. The 1960s and 1970s saw the house being erected and the occupants moving inside. 1976 was designated as the “Year of the Evangelical.” A Gallup Poll was conducted in August of 1976. Based on the findings of that survey, Gallup discovered that “one person in three (34 percent) has been born again— that is, has had a turning point in his or her life marked by a commitment to Jesus Christ. This figure works out to nearly 50 million American adults.”⁵⁵ Bearing witness to the Gallup findings of the success of the evangelicals one could see their growing churches, expanding church campuses and vibrant youth ministries. Evangelicals also showed phenomenal success in publishing and other media ventures. Evangelicals even have their version of pop culture celebrities, born again celebrities such as Charles Colson, Johnny Cash, Anita Bryant, and Jimmy Carter.⁵⁶

Gallup maintained that in 1976, according to his data, the United States was the most religious country in the world among advanced nations. This claim of “most

⁵³ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁴ Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 148.

⁵⁵ Richard Quebedeaux, *The Worldly Evangelicals* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1976), 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 3.

religious country” is a nuanced one. Gallup cites in addition to large numbers of people who claim to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, attend church and in general find that a relationship with God through his son Jesus Christ is a vital part of their everyday experience, the United States as a whole is only superficially religious. Factors that contribute to the superficiality of the United States are criminal victimizations, consumer fraud, political corruption, tax cheating, bribery and other evils.⁵⁷ Even with that qualification, Quebedeaux makes the following comment about evangelicals in the mid 1970s:

Evangelicals decided to enter the world to change it—a world that could no longer take the message and lifestyle of fundamentalism seriously, if it ever did in the past. They began to affirm the Christ who *transforms* culture. The evangelicals knew that to influence the world for Christ they would have to gain its attention in a positive way. In a word, they would have to become *respectable* by the world’s standards. And in this effort the evangelicals have been the most successful.⁵⁸

4.5 Henry and The Reformed Approach to Christianity and Culture

As stated before Henry was a man who thought and acted strategically. Henry was driven by the Biblical mandate of cultural engagement. In *Personal Christian Ethics* Henry quoted Archibald Alexander:

Our view of God and of the world, our fundamental *Welt-Anschauung*, cannot but determine our view of man and his moral life. In every philosophical system from Plato to Hegel, in which the universe is regarded as having a rational meaning and ultimate end, the good of human beings is conceived as identical with or at least as included in the universal good.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid., 4–5.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 13. In the remainder of the book Quebedeaux goes on to expound what he means by successful according to the world’s standards. Given the complexity of the evangelical makeup it is not a given that many who call themselves evangelicals would find comfort in the fact that they have succeeded according to the world’s standards.

⁵⁹ Carl F. H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics*, 188.

In this passage and throughout the whole book, Henry echoes the influence of James Orr. Henry recounted the influence of Orr in his classes at Wheaton: “It was James Orr’s great work, *The Christian View of God and the World*, used as a senior text in theism, that did the most to give me a cogently comprehensive view of reality and life in a Christian context.”⁶⁰ Henry followed what is generally referred to as a “Reformed approach to Christianity and culture, which stresses the unity of truth and the Christian’s responsibility to confront all spheres of human endeavor with that truth and its subsequent application.”⁶¹ A quick note of clarification is warranted at this point:

It must be made clear that Henry’s adapting of Reformed thought was not made wholesale. Henry possessed an expansive understanding of the history of philosophy and theology from which he drew to formulate his conception of Christianity and evangelical strategy. His ‘evangelicalism’ also bore the unmistakable imprint of nineteenth century American revivalism.⁶²

In *Evangelical Affirmations*, a book on which Henry served as the editor, Harold O. J. Brown writes of the sixteenth century Reformers insistence on the need for a

⁶⁰ Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 75. In the following quote Orr summarizes his book *A Christian View of God and the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954): “He who with his whole heart believe in Jesus as the Son of God is thereby committed to much else besides. He is committed to a view of God, to a view of man, to a view of sin, to a view of Redemption, to a view of the purpose of God in creation and history, to a view of human destiny, found only in Christianity. This forms a ‘Wletanschauung,’ or ‘Christian view of the world,’ from which stands in marked contrast with theories wrought out from a purely philosophical or scientific standpoint” (p. 4).

⁶¹ Miller, “Carl F. H. Henry and Christianity Today: Responding to the “Crisis of the West,” 1956-1968,” 119–29. Miller notes three streams of Reformed influence: (1) American Presbyterians as influenced by Princeton Theological Seminary under the leadership of Archibald Alexander. One of the impacts of Princeton Theology was the idea that Christianity has wide-spread cultural implications and that the Christian has a responsibility to become engaged culturally according to his abilities and calling, (2) Through the Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company the works of twentieth century British evangelicals were made available to an American audience. Even though James Orr was Scottish, his influence on Henry was unmistakable as already noted, (3) The third stream was Dutch Reformed thought as particularly articulated by Abraham Kuyper. Personal influences on Henry were Cornelius Van Til and Henry Jellema. In addition to a “heritage of serious academic work and philosophical reasoning . . . they took for granted full Christian participation in artistic and cultural life” (p. 122).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 125. Henry was deeply influenced by Reformed thought and this influence could be seen in his selections of essays and arguments as they articulated the Christian mandate for cultural engagement.

Christian society. Luther, Calvin and the other leaders of the Reformation made valiant efforts to foster consistent Christian living. Calvin was not alone in his use of civil and church discipline to create a pattern of community life that was consistent with Scripture.⁶³ As Henry would say in *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration*, “an authentic Christian social ethic begins with surety of the self-revealing God as creator, redeemer and judge of all, and of the soul as a *sensorium* of the eternal supernatural world in contrast to merely world-affirming secular ethics which shrivels the realm of reality.”⁶⁴ Henry would go on to flesh out this authentic evangelical ethic in terms of personal conformity to the likeness of Jesus Christ, personal inclusion in the regenerate body of Christ, and understanding that the church as the redeemed remnant of mankind whose calling is first and foremost the obedient worship of the Crucified and Risen Lord, the One Who by the Spirit indwells and renews his followers.⁶⁵

Henry’s cultural engagement follows naturally as outgrowth of thoroughgoing biblicism. Much as Luther said his conscience was held captive by the Word of God at the Diet of Worms, albeit in a different context, so too was Henry’s conscience held captive by the Word of God. “Luther’s theological thinking presupposes the authority of Scripture. His theology is nothing more than an attempt to interpret the Scripture.”⁶⁶ Likewise Calvin was driven in his work by the self-revealing God of Holy Scripture. Timothy George would write of Calvin’s approach to theology. We can express these in

⁶³ Harold O. J. Brown, “Evangelicals and Social Ethics,” in *Evangelical Affirmations* (ed. Carl F. H. Henry and Kenneth S. Kantzer; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 260–62.

⁶⁴ Henry, *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration*, 48.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (trans. by Robert C. Schultz; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 3.

terms of a positive and negative admonition. Positively, true theology is reverent reflection on the revelation of God in the Bible, which is absolutely sufficient (i.e. normative, for belief and conduct). Negatively, theology must not wander into ‘vain speculations’ but stick closely to those things we may legitimately know, namely the data of revelation in the Scriptures.”⁶⁷ Henry would become a modern champion of the authority and trustworthiness of the Word of God standing in the stead of Luther and Calvin. Henry may be best remembered for his unwavering defense of the authority of the Word of God and the self-revealing God.

It is upon this self-revealing God that next two chapters will focus upon. Chapter Five will look at the *magnum opus* of Carl Henry’s *God, Revelation and Authority*. Henry’s theological method of revelational epistemology will be examined as well as constituent elements of propositional revelation and inerrancy. Chapter 6 will highlight Henry’s critique of non-rational views of revelation, principally Karl Barth and Neo-orthodoxy.

4.6 Conclusion

Chapter 4 examines the problem of evangelical definition and the role that new forms of evangelical institutions played in that developing definition. Henry, as one of the primary architects of evangelicalism, was concerned from the outset about defining proper boundaries of belief and practice. As one commentator wrote, in one way or another, everything that Henry wrote was in some way related to defining evangelicalism. Henry ensured, through his many volumes and innumerable articles for *CT*, that evangelicalism would be orthodox, engage the culture and the academy.

⁶⁷ Timothy George, *The Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), 193–194.

Henry envisioned that evangelicalism would be comprised of five programmatic emphases: (1) the new evangelicalism aims to clarify the philosophical implications of Biblical theism, (2) relates Christianity to the pressing social issues of the day, as well as to individual salvation, (3) reacts against the division of evangelicals over secondary and tertiary points of prophetic detail, (4) is alert to the possibility of a Biblical ecumenicity, and (5) is finding its way back from systematic theology to Biblical theology.⁶⁸

The institutional development of Henry's et al. vision was seen in the birthing of several new entities: NAE, Fuller Theological Seminary, ETS and *CT*. In a most remarkable way, Henry was strategically involved in each of these pivotal institutions. Henry was present at the charter meeting for the NAE. The NAE was criticized at the outset from the right and left. The NAE was a landmark development in that it was a concerted effort of the "irenic fundamentalists" to widen the net in order to engage the culture in a biblically faithful way.

Henry was a founding faculty member of Fuller. Fuller was intended to be the flagship seminary of a revitalized and intellectually respectable fundamentalist commitment to scholarship. Fuller sought out those conservative scholars that had earned doctorates from highly respected academic institutions. Henry was a leading figure of this cadre of young academics, and provided leadership both in administration, the classroom and in publishing respected academic works.

In addition to providing the name for the ETS, Henry was instrumental in setting the tone for its temperament and commitment to excellence in scholarship. The establishment of the ETS was a seminal move in evangelicalism's distancing itself from fundamentalism. At this pivotal time in the development of evangelicalism there arose a

⁶⁸ Mohler, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response," 114.

sense among the rising evangelical scholars of the need for an association of scholars who shared evangelical presuppositions, to meet and work together to promote conservative theological literature. In a bit of irony, two related issues were at play in the founding of the ETS: (1) distancing from modernist/liberals; (2) separation from the fundamentalists. In separating from the fundamentalists, the neo-evangelicals had criticized the fundamentalists for their separatistic proclivities, and now they, were themselves, separating from the fundamentalists.

The launching of *CT* with Henry as the founding editor, was as influential, if not more so, than the other institutional innovations. Henry had made some early notations on the essentials of a magazine of this type: if the venture was not “theologically compromised the magazine could prove to be a boon to the evangelical cause. If the magazine would be (a) transcontinental, (b) interdenominational, (3) theologically affirmative, (d) socially aggressive, and (e) irenic” it would be exactly what was needed for the hour of the day.”⁶⁹

CT was more successful than anyone had imagined. By the third year, the circulation of *CT* had more than doubled the circulation of its liberal rival, the *Christian Century*. During Henry’s years at *CT*, the magazine, evangelicalism, and Henry’s reputation all grew exponentially. Henry’s writings and the guest editorials from a diverse group of academically respected scholars enabled Henry’s vision of a robust, academically credible magazine to come to fruition.

During Henry’s years at *CT*, he articulated a modified Reformed view of engaging society with the goal of emulating the sixteenth century Reformers insistence

⁶⁹ Miller, “Carl F. H. Henry and Christianity Today: Responding to the ‘Crisis of the West,’ 1956-1968,” 145.



on the need for a Christian society. In defending this view, as opposed to the cultural withdrawal and inherent pessimism demonstrated by the fundamentalists, Henry would become a modern champion of the authority and trustworthiness of the Word of God standing in the stead of Luther and Calvin. Henry may be best remembered for his unwavering defense of the authority of the Word of God and the self-revealing God. It would be the publication of *GRA*, that Henry would leave as the capstone to his theological legacy.