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Evangelical Theology

Daniel J. Treier and Euntaek D. Shin

Subsequent to the ‘evangelical counsels’ of the Middle Ages (which encouraged Christian believers to pursue poverty, chastity, and obedience), the adjective ‘evangelical’ has attached to ‘theology’ in various ways. Thus, ‘evangelical theology’ potentially refers to: (first) a commitment to norm theology by the Christian gospel (*euangelion* in Greek); (second) European Protestantism, particularly in Germany, where Lutheran churches are called *evangelische*; and (third) a global network of Christians, parachurch organizations, and Protestant churches. This article addresses evangelical theology in the third, most common, sense. After addressing various challenges of definition with reference to David Bebbington’s widely-referenced ‘quadrilateral’ of characteristics, the article profiles six historical streams that have contributed to evangelical theology. Then the article sketches four consensus doctrines and four continuing debates that are most prominent. Finally, the article surveys six contemporary contexts of evangelical theology – considering five global regions along with approaches of evangelical theology to culture and society.

Keywords: Evangelicalism, Evangelism, Pietism, Protestantism, Puritanism, Sola scriptura, The gospel, Worldwide Christianity

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1 Challenges of definition

1.1 Disciplinary approaches

Evangelical theology can be delimited using several disciplinary approaches. A sociological approach involves statistics (e.g. World Christian Encyclopedia), polling, and qualitative elements such as interviews or participant-observer studies. A historical approach traces three centuries or more of an evangelical movement (e.g. InterVarsity Press' History of Evangelicalism series). In both cases, delimiting evangelical theology would consist in analysing the beliefs of the set(s) of people thus identified. Yet evangelical 'theology' may also be delimited theologically (e.g. Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology), prioritizing doctrines more than adherents. Whereas the first two approaches tend to be descriptive, a theological approach tends to have prescriptive elements. The ensuing tension can be productive. If evangelical theology simply becomes a matter of description or self-attestation, then the label can become too plastic. Yet prescriptive approaches can deny the complexity of history, marginalizing certain contributions to the evangelical movement and ignoring the inescapable changes in theological traditions over time. Prescriptive approaches can also treat church life more cognitively, and theology more formally, than many evangelicals are comfortable with. The global growth of 'pentecostal' Christianity over the last century adds further challenges, since many adherents have evangelical connections or similar beliefs yet do not identify themselves with respect to a historically Anglo-American heritage.

1.2 A standard definition

David Bebbington's (1949–) description of modern British evangelicals has become a standard reference point for defining evangelicalism in general: conversionism (emphasis on being 'born again'), biblicism (emphasis on the Bible's authority), crucicentrism (emphasis on the saving significance of Jesus's death) and activism (emphasis on all believers sharing the gospel in word and deed). Of course, shorn of context these descriptors apply beyond plausibly evangelical boundaries – for example, to St. Francis of Assisi (ca. 1181–1226). Nevertheless, this fourfold characterization remains helpful, once the ensuing networks' origins are located historically in the Anglo-American revivals of the 1730s (Bebbington 1989: 2–17).

1.3 Supplemental nuances

Beyond acknowledging its historical context, scholars supplement the 'Bebbington quadrilateral' with additional nuances. Bruce Hindmarsh (1962–) emphasizes that distinct eras have shaped evangelicalism. Hindmarsh's narrative begins with a general spiritual awakening in the seventeenth century – geographically spreading from central Europe to the British Isles and North America. The eighteenth century witnessed personal

conversions and communal revivals on North American, Scottish, and Irish soil. This transatlantic movement, led by John Wesley (1703–1791) and Charles Wesley (1707–1788), George Whitefield (1714–1770), and Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), was international and interdenominational. Eighteenth-century awakening was followed by a ‘Methodist era’, and then in the middle to the late nineteenth century a ‘Holiness era’ ensued. The early twentieth century produced a ‘Fundamentalist era’, followed by a ‘Pentecostal-Charismatic era’ toward the end of the century. By then, evangelicalism was no longer merely transatlantic but a truly global phenomenon, represented in at least a hundred and fifty nations. Across these eras, seeking ‘true religion’ is at the heart of evangelical continuity. Accordingly, evangelicalism takes shape more like a dynamic movement than an enclosed organization (Hindmarsh 2017: 290–292).

Timothy Larsen (1967–) incorporates more Pentecostal and charismatic Christians by adding to Bebbington’s quadrilateral a fifth emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the empowerment for evangelical conversionism and activism. The Spirit leads people toward conversion, which can occur gradually or, frequently, with a specific emotional experience. The Spirit continues to work in the Christian life after conversion, fostering intimacy with God that leads to activism. Hence evangelical clergy and laity have energetically pursued both social justice (e.g. abolishing the slave trade) and evangelism, both locally and globally, hoping for the conversion of those who hear the gospel (Larsen 2007: 10–12).

1.4 Theological approaches

In stemming from a diffuse movement, evangelical identity is inevitably contested in practice. Major theological approaches to evangelical fellowship – fundamentalist, confessional, postconservative, and generic – are represented in a recent collection (Naselli and Hansen 2011).

(1) The fundamentalist approach begins with commitment to ‘minimal’ Christian fellowship rooted in the ‘fundamental’ beliefs of the gospel. For fundamentalists, the church is ultimately an invisible reality but strives for a form of visible, earthly unity. People may not have to know explicitly all of the gospel’s fundamental truths in order to receive salvation, but denying a fundamental truth means implicitly denying the gospel. Going beyond minimal fellowship in pursuit of more maximal unity, milder fundamentalists (often overlapping with ‘conservative evangelicals’) ascribe different levels of importance to various doctrines. Thus they can cooperate with some Christians despite disagreements. Yet fundamentalists generally expect that separation among professing Christians will be necessary, primarily from liberal theology but perhaps even secondarily among those who agree on fundamental truths. Stauncher fundamentalists reject broader evangelical attitudes toward doctrinal and practical disagreements. They view such evangelicals

as lacking discernment in refusing to separate from non-Christians or compromised Christians (Bauder 2011: 19–49).

(2) Confessional evangelicalism acknowledges that evangelical identity is essentially contested while insisting that doctrinal criteria remain essential. A confessional approach focuses on continuity with Protestant Reformation doctrines, insisting that evangelical identity should be 'bounded' (setting boundaries) and not just 'centred' (appealing to a shared core of beliefs). Theological triage distinguishes between first-level (i.e. Trinity, full divinity and humanity of Christ, justification by faith alone, and authority of scripture), second-level (e.g. meaning and mode of baptism), and third-level (e.g. eschatology) doctrines. Differences over the first level are fundamental, while at the second level they are church dividing but acceptable amid evangelical cooperation. Third-level difference is possible within ongoing congregational fellowship. The goal should be to avoid the collapse of first-level doctrines and schism over third-level doctrines. Second-level doctrines are therefore the most difficult to address (Mohler 2011: 68–96).

(3) As articulated by Roger Olson (1952–), postconservative evangelicalism focuses not on defined boundaries but only on a centred set. As a movement, evangelicalism has a core but cannot have boundaries, whereas particular organizations will define some boundaries. Beyond simply identifying evangelicals within a set of boundaries, conversionism is interested in the direction of their movements toward or away from a centre. *Sola scriptura* (scripture alone as theology's final authority) means that evangelicals reserve the right to reform historic orthodoxy even if they respect it. Because active piety remains primary, some postconservatives will categorize a group that formally rejects creedal Christology (e.g. 'oneness' Pentecostalism) as evangelical, while other, officially 'orthodox', groups fall afoul of orthopraxy criteria and count as nonevangelical (Olson 2011: 161–187).

(4) In a sense, generic evangelicalism lacks a proper adjective, suggesting instead that the alternatives share the same mistake: they provide definitions that fit themselves best, inadequately accounting for others. The aspiration of evangelical theology is simply to be Christian theology in tenets, affections, and practices; evangelical theology stems from missional initiatives, pursuing church renewal on a different level than denominations or broader traditions. Evangelical theology is inherently radical, pursuing a return to basic roots and reform at particular times or places. The Bebbington quadrilateral – activism, biblicism, conversionism, crucicentrism – here gains an additional factor: transdenominational cooperation. Evangelicals are not simply conservative Protestants who hold certain beliefs; they pursue spiritual and missional interaction across denominational lines. Orthopraxy, not just orthodoxy, is at issue. The priority should not be answering the historical or definitional question of recognizing authentic evangelicalism

but, instead, discerning the propriety of cooperation with regard to certain people or groups (Stackhouse 2011: 116–142).

1.5 Important distinctions

Given these complexities regarding the term *evangelical*, some distinctions are important for delimiting *evangelical theology*. (Portions of sections 1 and 4, especially 1.4–5 and 4.1–3, have been adapted from Vanhoozer and Treier 2015 with the permission of InterVarsity Press.)

First, a distinction is needed between *the theology of particular people who secondarily share the evangelical ethos* and ‘evangelical theology’ as the doctrinal conversation (broadly) or consensus (narrowly) among those who primarily identify with the evangelical movement. So, for instance, Herman Bavinck’s (1854–1921) theology may fit the evangelical ethos in a European sense. Yet his self-consciously Dutch Reformed theology was not primarily identified with the evangelical movement. By contrast, figures like Carl F. H. Henry (1913–2003) and Donald Bloesch (1928–2010), whether affiliated with a particular denomination (Bloesch) or not (Henry), wrote with ‘evangelical’ as their primary identification.

Second, a distinction can be made between *elite or formal* and *pastoral or popular* discourse(s). Historically, evangelical theology has had a kerygmatic focus – concentrating on lay audiences (Hindmarsh 2017: 290–292). Hence, as a fuzzy characterization of popular tendencies in the movement, ‘evangelical theology’ may reflect more unified commitments and trends than academic outliers or critics suggest. By contrast, scholarly theology generates written evidence that is easier to analyse, sometimes making evangelical variety more apparent than unity.

Third, a distinction can be made between *broad coherence* and *comprehensive agreement* (or even consensus) within a tradition. For many, evangelical theology has too much internal debate or unacknowledged diversity to count as an intellectual tradition. Nevertheless, in Alasdair MacIntyre’s (1929–) well-known account of traditions, they are socially embodied arguments across time, even arguments about the basic goods that adherents share. Competing accounts of evangelical theology’s historic and contemporary parameters may actually demonstrate the movement’s vitality. The push and pull between classic Protestant orthodoxy and holiness-oriented piety, between formal dogmatic rigour and nonformal Bible reading, etc., reflect competing interests that should be expected in a ‘tradition’ of evangelical theology.

Returning to the complex distinction between evangelical theology and theology done by evangelicals, certainly the evangelical movement has no mechanisms of formal dogmatic discipline. Thus, ‘evangelical theology’ designates broadly and narrowly. Broadly, it

comprises in principle all the theology done in the evangelical network(s), with discernment required in practice to distinguish between exceptional and typical cases. Narrowly, evangelical theology coheres as an ecumenical Protestant tradition of orthodox, pietist, biblical teaching – but an ‘essentially contested’ one (see, e.g. Abraham 1984: 72–76).

2 Contributing streams

Given its essentially contested character and contemporary cultural pressures, evangelical theology faces increasing perceptions of fragmentation. Briefly profiling major streams of evangelical theology puts these perceptions in historical context. (Small portions of section 2 have been adapted from Treier 2019 with the permission of Baker Academic.)

2.1 Pietism

Evangelical theology has arisen from, and seeks to guide, Protestant movements of personal and communal renewal. These renewal movements pursue spiritual affinities across churchly boundaries. The scholarship of W. R. Ward (1925–2010) leads some to root evangelicalism’s origins earlier than Bebbington does, or at least to note Pietist influences from continental Europe – such as Johann Arndt’s (1555–1621) *True Christianity* regarding Christ’s work in, and not just for, his children; Philip Jakob Spener’s (1635–1705) *Pia Desideria* that initiated organized Pietism; August Hermann Franke’s (1663–1723) Halle orphanage; and Count Ludwig Nicholas von Zinzendorf’s (1700–1760) Moravian partial break with Lutheranism (Noll 2010: 24). Regardless of exactly how ‘transdenominational’ activity delimits evangelicalism’s origins, these Pietist precursors exerted subterranean influence upon evangelical theology.

John Wesley’s Aldersgate experience, during which the reading of Martin Luther’s (1483–1546) preface to Romans about saving grace strangely warmed his heart, certainly echoes Luther’s story. It also bears the marks of continental Pietism. The First Great Awakening (c. 1731–1755), fostered the spiritual renewal of church members. The Wesleys and Whitefield, despite secondary Arminian versus Calvinist differences over salvation, embodied quintessential evangelical theology in itinerant preaching ministries – made necessary by both the American frontier and the Church of England’s resistance to their ministries of renewal. They maintained the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith while paying zealous attention to good works as a manifestation and catalyst of Christian assurance. Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection, involving not absolute sinlessness but hearts completely full of love for Christ to the exclusion of intentional sin, underscored the evangelical possibility and necessity of holiness. For Wesley, holiness and happiness went together as twin benefits of Christ’s pardoning and cleansing work. This tandem of happiness and holiness likely manifests Moravian influence. In the subsequent Holiness tradition, some Methodists and other groups like the Nazarenes intensified the Wesleys’ emphasis on the higher pursuit of holiness rather than allow Methodist institutionalization

to squelch it. This Holiness tradition has been central to the evangelical movement, although sometimes marginalized in accounts of evangelical theology. Hence Donald Dayton's (1942–2020) complaint a generation ago (see, e.g., Dayton 1988; Dayton and Johnston 1991) has elicited attempts to recover its influence.

A notable recent volume (Olson and Collins Winn 2015) demonstrates the scope and influence of classic Pietism beyond the Holiness movement, tracing Lutheran and other branches of this fruitful tree. Among the twentieth-century evangelical thinkers who can be associated with Pietism are Donald G. Bloesch (1928–2010) from the United Church of Christ; the Baptist Stanley Grenz (1950–2005); and the Quaker Richard Foster (1942–), whose celebration of classic disciplines fostered a revival of attention to spiritual formation. A fourth twentieth-century theologian with Pietist impulses is Jürgen Moltmann (1926–), who is not evangelical in the same sense but has influenced many evangelicals, especially in Holiness and Pentecostal traditions as well as the Global South.

2.2 Puritanism

Evangelical theology has also arisen from, and seeks to guide, Protestant movements of ecclesial renewal. These renewal movements pursue corrective actions that generate and perpetuate churchly boundaries. Jonathan Edwards, a Puritan (albeit with some ecclesiological modification), is often dubbed America's greatest theologian. Typifying evangelical impulses, he blended revivalist piety with staunch Calvinist theology as he cooperated with Whitefield and others. He sought to discern marks of true revival, defending it against external critics and internal dangers. His activism is apparent in his eventual mission to Native Americans. His conversionism is apparent in his unpopular opposition to the Half-Way Covenant as he sought to require more than baptism (associated with the civil privileges of church membership) for admission to communion. Perhaps his biblicism goes without saying, but his interest in typology and the history of redemption led to experiments with less 'dogmatic' theological forms.

Edwards also typifies proto-modern aspects of American Puritanism. He interacted with early Enlightenment thought. He pursued natural philosophy, the scientific observation undertaken by pastors of his day. His theology reflects distinctive aesthetic interests. He focused on the soul's inwardness in relation to God and church membership, with this broadly Augustinian spirituality having some early modern inflections. Accordingly, Puritanism may well be Pietism in a Calvinist mode.

Like Wesley and Whitefield, Edwards typifies the sermon's foundational significance as a form for early evangelical theology. Even a book like his *Religious Affections* has a sermon's expected structure of an announced biblical text, initial comment, an extended doctrinal exposition, and ultimately a concluding application of the text's doctrinal theme to hearers' lives and contemporary issues. Edwards' infamous sermon 'Sinners in the Hands

of an Angry God' reflects a preoccupation with the glory of a sovereign God and contains striking images of peril for sinners facing divine judgment. But much of the sermon, like much evangelical theology, communicates the wonder of God's mercy for those who have ears to hear. If the Puritans' Calvinism fosters an ecclesial distinction from Pietism, perhaps that focuses on the connecting order between, and the disciplining order within, local congregations: ecclesial renewal is at stake. In recent times, the Calvinistic Anglican J. I. Packer (1926–2020) has been a noteworthy evangelical champion of Puritan theology.

2.3 Protestant orthodoxy

Another stream of evangelical theology focuses on doctrinal renewal. The Lutheran, Reformed, and other Protestants in this stream find it most important to perpetuate the Reformation's material commitments regarding justification by faith alone and formal commitments regarding scripture alone as the final authority over faith and practice. They have been among the earliest and most consistent evangelicals at fostering academic biblical interpretation and formal doctrinal systems. Without identifying precise historical relationships between post-Reformation scholasticism and evangelical origins, at minimum it is important to mention the eventual influence of 'Old Princeton' theology.

Some nineteenth-century heirs of Protestant orthodoxy found American evangelical religion to be deeply distressing, while others persisted in shaping evangelical theology. The 'Mercersburg' theology of Philip Schaff (1819–1893), who emigrated to the USA from Europe, and John Williamson Nevin (1803–1886) offers a prime example of distress over 'unchurchly subjectivism' (Schaff 2017: 98–121) as reflected in revivalist measures and minimal emphasis upon catechesis, Word (Bible), and sacrament. While studying in Germany, Charles Hodge (1797–1878) of Princeton Theological Seminary encountered Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), a descendant of Pietism who is often labelled the father of 'liberal' or 'modern' theology. Although chiding Nevin at points, Hodge shared his worries over the revivalism of Charles Finney (1792–1875) and the more optimistic anthropology of Horace Bushnell (1802–1876). Hodge's three-volume systematic theology has had enduring evangelical influence from a Reformed perspective. An eventual successor of Hodge, Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851–1922), further articulated the doctrine of the verbal plenary inspiration of scripture and defended its full inerrancy in ways that shaped generations of evangelical theology.

The Princeton theologians were positive toward scientific inquiry, seeing it as strengthening rational faith. For example, while rejecting Darwinism as leading to atheism (because it broke the connection between design and Designer), Hodge did not straightforwardly reject evolutionary science. Indeed, the early twentieth century's 'fundamentalists' – authors of the pamphlet series *The Fundamentals* – varied among themselves regarding scientific matters. Fundamentalists defended foundational

doctrines such as the divinity, virgin birth, miracles, and resurrection of Christ, along with the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture, against 'modernist' denials and 'liberal' reinterpretations. Often they did so without extensive panic or *ad hominem* attacks, focusing calmly on expounding traditional views and defending against major objections. In the USA, of course, the Scopes Trial of 1925 changed the cultural situation regarding the Genesis creation narratives and evolutionary science, while denominational defeats at modernist hands led to fundamentalist retrenchment (Carpenter 1997; Marsden 2006). Nevertheless, the Princeton theologians, along with some fundamentalist compatriots, exert enduring intellectual influence in sectors of evangelical theology.

2.4 Revivalism

Still another stream of evangelical theology focuses on promoting evangelism and spiritual transformation. The Wesleyan/Holiness, Baptist, and other Protestants in this stream find it most important to pursue the salvation of the lost and the holiness of the saved. They have been among the earliest and most consistent evangelicals at fostering evangelistic missions and practical ministries of social justice, as well as leadership opportunities for women and other marginalized groups. Revivalism is a particular extension of Pietism; despite considerable overlap they are not identical. For instance, some prominent revivalists like Charles Finney emerged from New School Presbyterianism rather than Pietist/Holiness roots. Finney had a legal background, from which he turned his powers of persuasion toward gospel proclamation. He insisted that a revival is no miracle but involves human agency. Using tried and true measures including lay prayers, lay exhortation, 'anxious meetings', and the 'anxious seat' (reserved for encouraging those who were feeling spiritual trouble to seek help) could make revival virtually automatic. Obviously, Finney's appraisal of human ability to respond to the gospel differed from the Calvinist tradition.

A noteworthy Holiness revivalist, Phoebe Palmer (1807–74), focused less on initial conversion or the renewal of professing Christians and more on calling believers to deeper sanctification – founding the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness. She conceded that preparatory acts could get in the way of holiness; holiness might come indirectly, and doubts might linger. Yet the truthfulness of scripture meant that we could trust God enough to 'lay our all upon the altar' – to give God what is due. Hers was a less rationalistic ministry than Finney's, with more concrete pastoral appeals to the Bible, but despite its different focus her theology exerted significant influence in both the USA and the UK. Thomas Oden's (1931–2016) introduction to her writings identifies her as the missing link between Methodist and Pentecostal spirituality (Oden 1988: 16). Palmer defended the ministry of women and influenced other prominent leaders, male and female, including Catherine Booth (1829–90) of the Salvation Army. The Wesleyan/Holiness and revivalist traditions certainly pioneered the acceptance of female preachers; thus, at least

until the middle of the twentieth century, evangelicalism was a far more welcoming sphere in which women could minister than were mainline Protestant denominations.

The revivalist stream has exerted lasting social influence. Finney led Oberlin College in Ohio. Another abolitionist, Jonathan Blanchard (1811–1892), founded Wheaton College, which had the first female college graduate in Illinois. The Keswick Convention exerted a century of influence over evangelical spirituality in the UK and influenced a movement of Bible conferences in the USA. Palmer led a missionary society in a New York City slum. Hannah Whitall Smith (1832–1911), a Quaker proponent of Higher Life teaching about sanctification, was active in the temperance and female suffrage movements. In the twentieth century, Nazarene theologian Mildred Bangs Wynkoop (1905–1997) followed the leadership trail blazed by Palmer and female revivalists. Thus, in wide-ranging ways, Holiness revivalism particularized Pietist commitments to promote sanctification in new times and places.

2.5 Fundamentalism and neo-evangelicalism

Twentieth-century American evangelical theology emerged from ‘fundamentalist’ institutional retrenchment. These ‘neo’-evangelicals retained the doctrinal commitments of ‘The Fundamentals’ but shed cultural isolation in favor of societal re-engagement. While this re-engagement included entrepreneurial evangelists like Billy Graham (1918–2018), pastors like Harold John Ockenga (1905–85), and radio personalities like Charles Fuller (1887–1968), its leading ‘theologians’ were Carl Henry and Bernard Ramm (1916–92), although Henry was actually trained in history and journalism.

The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism (Henry 1947) confronted fundamentalist embarrassments: lack of a social programme; anti-ecumenical isolationism; emotionalism; a lost evangelical heritage of humanitarianism and an individualistic anthropology; culturally rather than biblically determined personal ethics; and undue pessimism. Later, as editor of the magazine *Christianity Today*, Henry would champion culturally-engaged yet theologically conservative evangelicalism. His six-volume opus, *God, Revelation, and Authority* (1976–1983), focused on theological prolegomena and the doctrine of God. Henry vigorously defended a rational account of divine revelation, holding that the human fall into sin affected the will more than reason. Yet human reason is not a creative source of truth but a God-given instrument for recognizing truth. Against the ‘personal’ view of divine revelation from Karl Barth (1886–1968), Henry championed the ‘propositional’ view that divine revelation is comprised of truth claims communicated in the inerrant Bible. Henry was less strident in his treatment of Barth than was Cornelius Van Til (1895–1987) of Westminster Theological Seminary (the conservative successor of Princeton after its modernist shift), but clear battle lines were still drawn. Perhaps ironically, Henry’s citations of scripture tended to be relatively brief.

While Ramm's and Henry's commitments were similar, Ramm's concerns about Barth were not as great. Ramm was more willing to acknowledge rhetorically that revelation was personal as well as propositional. He also reflected a commitment to wider cultural engagement in his approach to science (Ramm 1954), with which he criticized hyper-orthodox evangelicals for exacerbating disharmony. Given the distinction between revelation and interpretation, Ramm insisted that science needs the light of revelation yet the interpretation of biblical revelation needs the perspectives of science.

As the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (and its resulting Chicago Statement from 1978) reflects, American neo-evangelicals who affirmed scripture's verbal inspiration and full inerrancy did not always agree about where the boundaries of changeable versus unchangeable interpretations lay. Indeed, some – associated (for instance) with Fuller Seminary or Holiness traditions – did not subscribe to the Bible's full inerrancy but limited its sphere of infallible revelation to matters of faith and practice. Despite such variety, the neo-evangelicals shared a commitment to re-engage cultural institutions, to attain scholarly credentials (initially focusing on biblical studies, philosophy, and history; see, e.g., Noll 1986), and to 'integrate faith and learning' across academic disciplines.

2.6 Lausanne and beyond

Finally, evangelical theology has also arisen from beyond the transatlantic realm. Historical scholarship increasingly recognizes the extent to which 'Pentecostal'-like movements were already emerging outside 'the West' before the twentieth century. Hence they were often independent of the Azusa Street Revival (1906), which birthed American Pentecostalism, and the World Missionary Conference (1910) at Edinburgh, which birthed the modern ecumenical movement. Despite being active in global missions, during ensuing decades American evangelicals were preoccupied with the fundamentalist-modernist controversy.

A galvanizing event for the globalization of evangelical theology was the first International Congress on World Evangelization (ICOWE), which convened in 1974 at Lausanne, Switzerland, under the leadership of Billy Graham and John R. W. Stott (1921–2011). Here Stott expanded the reach of neo-evangelical thinking beyond the historical scope of American fundamentalism, and his Langham Trust continues to support the global development of evangelical leaders today. The 1974 Congress gathered 2,300 leaders representing 150 countries with the resulting Lausanne Covenant for world evangelization (see Tennent 2014: 45–55 and Lausanne.org). Diverse perspectives were represented: American missiologists such as Peter Wagner (1930–2016) and Ralph Winter (1924–2009) emphasized 'unreached peoples'; European leaders such as Church of England pastor Stott emphasized holistic mission; Latin American theologians such as René Padilla (1932–2021) emphasized social justice in the face of cultural imperialism. The latter

perspectives were critical of American evangelicals for losing the inextricable link between evangelism and social action (e.g. Padilla 2010: 26).

Lausanne II convened at Manila, Philippines in 1989. It represented 173 nations and 4,300 evangelicals, reflecting more of the church's diverse cultures. Stott, the elder statesman, stood between American pragmatism and non-Western social radicalism; Pentecostals and charismatics were present, yet not a primary influence. Since the congress focused on the '10/40' window with the goal of evangelizing the entire world before 2000, in the eyes of global leaders like Samuel Escobar (1934–) Lausanne II fell short of the holistic mission articulated in Lausanne I (Hunt 2011: 84).

In 2010, a third congress in Cape Town, South Africa, involved over 4,000 Christian leaders representing 198 countries. Its Cape Town Commitment called for strategic action amid changing contemporary realities. Voices from the Majority World were more fully heard. Thus, positively, three of the twenty-two multiplexes addressed issues of globalization, ecology, and economic polarization (Padilla 2011: 86). Yet some would still say that regions like Latin America were underrepresented (Steuernagel 2014: 115–138), and the Commitment's distribution on the fifth of the conference's seven days prevented extensive reflection by participants – perpetuating an implicit dichotomy between evangelism and social responsibility (Padilla 2011: 87). Alternatively, some from Korea raised concerns about the lack of evangelism's primacy in the Commitment (e.g. Ahn 2015: 143–170), despite appreciating the emphasis on social action as evangelical and not an infiltration from the World Council of Churches (e.g. Park 2013: 38). Cape Town's reaffirmation of Lausanne and Manila, along with the diverse evaluations it has garnered, suggests that the Lausanne movement has simultaneously fostered global evangelical engagement – perhaps expressing a measure of uneasy consensus – and reflected ongoing internal tensions. Thus, along with the preceding streams, Lausanne helps to make historical sense of evangelical theology's inherent polyphony.

3 Consensus doctrines

Naturally, any doctrinal consensus among evangelicals is modest in both breadth and depth. Nevertheless, it is possible to generalize about evangelical theology having a formal principle and basic material commitments that align with Nicene orthodoxy as inflected by the Bebbington quadrilateral. (Significant portions of section 3 have been adapted from Treier 2011, copyright © 2011 Cambridge University Press and reproduced with permission.)

3.1 Trinitarian and christological orthodoxy

Most, arguably all, evangelicals embrace the trinitarian and christological content of the classical Christian creeds, although many are non-credal in their ecclesiastical structures.

Thus, evangelicals – with possible exceptions such as ‘oneness’ Pentecostals – worship one God existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, consistent with the trinitarian rule of faith embodied in the Nicene Creed. Similarly, the content of conciliar Christology appears in evangelical textbooks, which affirm the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ as one person, the Incarnate Son of God, existing in two natures – fully divine and fully human. However (as noted by Webster 2007), such Chalcedonian Christology has not elicited much dogmatic contemplation from evangelical theologians until recently, instead having become enmeshed in apologetics with regard to biblical criticism and historical Jesus research (see Biblical Criticism and Modern Science). Periodic controversy has also surfaced among some American evangelicals over the potential incoherence or latent subordinationism of the ‘eternal generation’ of the Son.

Beyond the basic affirmation of ‘orthodox’ doctrines, evangelical trinitarianism and Christology have become quite diverse. ‘Social’ forms of trinitarianism that emphasize the distinctness and relationality of the three divine Persons have been popular in recent evangelical theology; modified ‘kenotic’ Christology has grown in popularity due to newfound emphasis upon Jesus’s full humanity. Yet increasing evangelical presence in patristics scholarship and interest in the ‘Great Tradition’ have elicited new defences of classical theism and conciliar Christology against such modern alternatives.

3.2 Augustinian anthropology and soteriology

Evangelical anthropology is broadly Augustinian in the sense that it rejects Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism, acknowledging human depravity apart from redemptive grace. While Arminians reject Calvinist claims about ‘irresistible’ grace, they affirm the need for ‘prevenient’ grace as people exercise faith in response to the gospel; while Calvinists reject Arminian construals of free will, their doctrine of ‘total depravity’ involves the comprehensiveness of sin’s effects and is not a claim about absolute wickedness. In line with ‘conversionism’, the person – the ‘self’ in relation to God – receives much evangelical attention, although a more traditional notion of humans being ‘in the image of God’ has come under recent critique for being too individualistic and rationalistic.

Evangelical soteriology is also broadly Augustinian yet increasingly variegated. In line with ‘crucicentrism’, evangelicals generally follow the magisterial Protestant Reformers in focusing on how persons may be ‘right with God’ based on Christ’s atoning work. While Pietist and Protestant orthodox groups may have differing theories or emphases, they share a soteriological interest in the cross that corresponds to the necessity of redemptive grace.

3.3 Sacrificial atonement and justification by faith alone

Martin Luther, tormented in conscience over whether he could co-operate sufficiently with sacramental grace, longed for assurance of divine favour. Based on his reading of Romans, he came to view justification not as being made righteous but as being declared righteous; not as the infusion of Christ's righteousness into his being but as the imputation of that righteousness through his relation to Christ in faith. So the evangelical textbooks suggest, with basic accuracy. Hence justification is 'by faith alone', because faith looks to Christ for assurance rather than evaluating moral change in oneself based on internal reception of Jesus' merit.

In line with this account of justification, atonement is objectively rooted in Christ's crucifixion as a sacrifice 'for' us. Evangelicals typically proclaim some version of substitutionary atonement, although some non-Reformed scholars increasingly criticize 'penal' substitutionary theories as historically alien to their traditions, ethically underdeveloped (especially with a possible correlation to violence), and legally rather than relationally focused. Some likewise criticize the specific Lutheran-Reformed architecture of justification by faith alone, finding the imputation of Christ's righteousness to be a dogmatic imposition upon scripture that minimizes the need for sanctification. At the same time, evangelicals have nearly always insisted that, while justification is by faith alone, the faith that justifies is never alone. Hence 'activism': good works do not merit divine favour but follow as its gift, a consequence of forgiveness that leads people to obey out of gratitude.

3.4 Inspiration of scripture

Evangelical 'biblicism' similarly reflects a basic consensus yet generates doctrinal elaboration and dispute. Evangelicals maintain the classic Protestant commitment to 'scripture alone', which means not that the Bible is theology's sole source but rather that it is the final authority over all others. Evangelicals interpret the 'inspiration' of scripture (as described in passages like 2 Tim 3:16–17) to mean that, although composed via human activity, together the biblical texts count as divine speech. Most evangelicals affirm that inspiration is 'verbal' (i.e. including the particular words used, not just the message communicated) and 'plenary' (i.e. involving the entirety of what the words convey).

4 Continuing debates

Since doctrinal consensus is modest, intra-evangelical debate is extensive, even concerning whether a theological consensus is necessary or has ever existed. A key point of contention has been whether evangelical parameters are articulated in excessively elite and 'Reformed' terms, yet debates about evangelical identity do not fall simplistically along theological lines. Calvinist and Arminian thinkers have differed among themselves, not just with each other. Some like the Methodist Oden and the Calvinist Packer have defended an evangelical consensus (Packer and Oden 2004), whereas others like

Calvinist Michael Horton (1964–) and Arminian Olson have joined Dayton in viewing the impetus for (re)birthing the current form of evangelicalism in the 1940s as largely political, not theological. Accordingly, continuing evangelical debates concern how to deploy the formal principle of biblicism without jeopardizing a basic material consensus about God and the gospel.

4.1 The gospel

Although ‘evangelical’ literally refers to ‘gospel’, evangelical theology has debated its content. First, from roots in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, debate has continued concerning the gospel with regard to social justice. For instance, many American evangelicals, shaped by fundamentalism, felt wary of Lausanne’s commitment to social action as an integral aspect of Christian mission.

Second, in the 1990s debate became acrimonious over the Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) dialogue. *ECT II*, a statement on the gospel’s content, affirmed basic agreement between evangelicals and Catholics on ‘justification by faith’. Leaders of Amsterdam 2000, an initiative for united global evangelism, signed the statement, whereas conservative Reformed leaders criticized such agreement with Catholics. In return, non-Reformed academics criticized the Amsterdam document for including Reformed distinctives (e.g. Christ’s ‘active obedience’) as essential and/or excluding ‘nonexclusivists’ (regarding possible salvation for non-Christians).

Third, aspects of religious diversity have generated increasing evangelical debate. Attitudes toward the possibility of salvation for Roman Catholics relaxed dramatically within the last generation. Consistent with sociological indicators, related shifts appear when catalogues from evangelical publishers advertise diverse viewpoints on the nature of hell or the fate of the unevangelized.

Fourth, a growing chorus of Arminians and Anabaptists highlight that their traditions have not always accepted a penal substitution theory of atonement. Controversies have ensued in evangelical circles over publication of such perspectives. Debates over justification by faith did not abate in the wake of ECT but morphed into controversies over the so-called New Perspective on Paul, especially the work of biblical scholar and Anglican bishop N. T. Wright (1948–). Traditionalists welcome the correction of stereotypes regarding Judaism and Catholicism as teaching ‘salvation by works’, but do not see these nuances as overturning classic Protestant teaching about justification by faith alone and substitutionary atonement. Scholarly trends and certain traditions, however, champion more communal and less ‘contractual’ accounts of Christ’s saving work, highlighting the emphasis of the biblical Gospels on the kingdom of God. If various wings of evangelicalism once agreed on ‘conversionist piety’ centred on a ‘crucicentric’ biblical message, more than ever they now disagree about its language, its logic, and its necessity for eternal salvation.

4.2 God

Debates over the gospel intersect with the doctrine of God. Debate between Calvinists emphasizing divine sovereignty and Arminians emphasizing human freedom has been longstanding, but open or freewill theism became newly controversial in the 1990s. On this view, God does not have exhaustive foreknowledge, which would interfere with ‘libertarian’ human freedom by determining events in advance. Rather, God has foreknowledge only of what God has promised to do unilaterally and ultimately; otherwise, God undertakes the ‘risky’ project of give-and-take with free human agents. Open theists’ appeals to plain-sense readings of the Bible were quickly deemed acceptable by some leading evangelical institutions, despite the self-proclaimed departure from classic Christian theology. Some traditionalist responses were reactionary, even excessively so, while others struggled to find a mainstream evangelical publisher.

Substantive debate has died down as positions have entrenched themselves, but related formal issues have arisen. The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), for instance, had to discern whether there is an appropriate degree of doctrinal discipline for a Christian scholarly society to practice. The operative implications of *sola scriptura* concerning respect for Christian tradition became pressing. The ‘Hellenization thesis’ – concerning church fathers’ supposed fall from a simpler, Jewish, biblical gospel into Greek philosophical abstraction that treats God as the Most Perfect Being – suddenly had poignant implications for evangelical theology. Broad appeals to patristic orthodoxy could no longer suffice; evangelicals now had to address the authority of a classical theistic consensus with regard to the limits of contemporary theological creativity.

4.3 Theological ‘method’

Hence, particularly in the USA, debate ensued over theological ‘method’ and approaches to the Bible. After the rise of Old Princeton theology and the fundamentalist-modernist conflict, fresh controversy arose in the 1960s over Fuller Theological Seminary’s removal of required faculty adherence to full biblical inerrancy, and the rise of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School as an inerrantist intellectual alternative to Fuller. In the 1970s Harold Lindsell’s (1913–98) ‘battle for the Bible’ and the ‘Chicago’ councils on biblical inerrancy and hermeneutics ensued. Jack Rogers (1934–2016) and Donald McKim (1950–) argued for the viability of scripture’s partial inerrancy (limited to matters of faith and practice) from Reformed roots, which elicited a vigorous historical response from Trinity’s John Woodbridge (1941–). Then, in the 1980s, Robert Gundry’s (1932–) commentary on Matthew controversially asserted that it was consistent with biblical inerrancy for parts of the Gospel to be fictional ‘midrash’ rather than historically factual.

In the late 1990s, debates over biblical authority again gained steam. On the right, the popular systematic theology of Wayne Grudem (1948–) coincided with a resurgence of

conservative biblicism in the Southern Baptist Convention. Moving toward the evangelical left, theologians like Stanley Grenz saw Grudem as epitomizing rigid traditionalism. Grenz traced competing streams in evangelical theology, one from Henry through Millard Erickson (1932–) to Grudem, and the other from Ramm through open theist Clark Pinnock (1937–2010) to open theist John Sanders (1956–). Among the factors distinguishing these two streams would be openness to revising traditional understandings of scripture as well as engaging positively with non-evangelical sources and contemporary culture.

In contrast to Grenz's two-party account that positioned an evangelical centre toward the more open left, others have sought to uphold the possibility of a centre, or perhaps a remnant, in between the left and right parties. Critiquing Grenz from the right centre is D. A. Carson (1946–), who cofounded the Gospel Coalition (see, e.g., Carson 2002). Another illustration of the complexity involves Ramm's legacy. Grenz claimed him for a 'postconservative' evangelical theology focused on a centre rather than boundaries. Yet others like Kevin Vanhoozer (1957–) appealed to Ramm as being both appreciative and critical of Karl Barth, while even using 'postconservative' (though not in Olson's sense) to refer to themselves. Such thinkers defended the value of a nuanced form of biblical inerrancy (which Grenz affirmed, but with less enthusiasm) while being (like Carson) more appreciative of Henry and more inclined to see open theism as out of bounds. Like Grenz, such scholars have participated actively in broader academic theology as well as dialogue with British and other global theologians. Concerning evangelical theology's ethos, then, no single set of issues – biblical inerrancy, classic tradition, postmodernism, open theism, or the like – provides the definitive key for a map. Indeed, some scholars are traditionalists on certain issues and reformists on others.

4.4 Science

A fourth area of recurring evangelical debate, again primarily in the USA, concerns the relationship of biblical creation narratives to modern evolutionary science. While the earliest evangelical responses to Darwin's work varied in degrees of caution and openness, the Scopes Trial and the fundamentalist-modernist controversy galvanized 'creation science' and periodic controversy ever since. Three issues are interrelated: the interpretation of Genesis 1–3; the historicity of Adam and Eve; and the effects of the human fall into sin. Amid many complexities, four approaches are dominant (1) young-earth creationism (at the right end of the spectrum; represented by groups like Answers in Genesis and the Institute for Creation Research); (2) theistic evolution (at the left end of the spectrum, in a narrow sense of this term, which critics perceive as deistic); (3) progressive (old-earth) creationism (in the middle but somewhat conservatively; represented, e.g., by Reasons to Believe); (4) evolutionary creationism (more recently and somewhat less conservatively; represented, e.g., by BioLogos).

American evangelical debate over creation will continue, intersecting with other debates over divine sovereignty and the Bible's theological authority. Young-earth creationists, along with others who feel bound by the Council of Carthage (418), think that the biblical gospel requires at least a historical Adam and Eve with a historical fall into sin. Others think that evangelical credibility requires positive engagement with evolutionary science, striving for genuine integration of the 'two books' of biblical and natural revelation, in a way that may allow for much more 'literary' and less 'literal' approaches to Genesis.

As indicated by the active faith of Francis Collins (1950–), the founder of BioLogos who has led the Human Genome Project and now directs the National Institutes of Health in the USA, there are increasing numbers of evangelical practitioners in the natural and social sciences. Some of these scientists operate in mainstream universities, while others (in America and elsewhere) hold teaching positions in evangelical colleges. Evangelicals have typically been consumers more than contributors in 'science and religion' discussions, but their participation in recent endeavours such as the Templeton-funded 'Creation Project' (at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) has begun to change that.

Obviously, beyond family resemblances highlighted in the Bebbington quadrilateral, evangelical consensus is modest. It would be possible to trace numerous other debates, as various textbooks do (e.g. IVP's Spectrum Multiview and Zondervan's Counterpoints series; Boyd and Eddy 2009). The four highlighted here – the core content of the gospel; the doctrine of God; the theological authority of the Bible; and the biblical doctrine of creation as it relates to contemporary science – have been especially persistent.

5 Contemporary contexts

Bebbington's standard definition focused on evangelical origins in the Anglo-American revivals of the 1730s, even if that definition became much more widely useful (and sometimes misused). Until recently, evangelicalism's contributing streams have mostly flowed within Anglo-American contexts. Even continental Pietists influenced Anglo-American revivalists; and the Lausanne movement, as truly international as it has now become, owes much to the neo-evangelicalism of Graham and Stott. Likewise, central debates in evangelical theology bear 'Western', typically American, marks. Thus, the preceding sections exemplify the inevitable reality that all theology is contextual. Yet 'non-Western' (or, better, 'Majority World' or 'global South') and other 'marginal' voices frequently, even wearily, point out that evangelical theology struggles to acknowledge its contextual character, especially in the USA.

The Christian faith's centre of gravity has been shifting to the global East and South (Hoang and Johnson 2016: 709–713; see also several works by Philip Jenkins). This global shift is driven by evangelical and 'Pentecostal' churches (Yong 2014: 37). Hence

contemporary evangelical theology is increasingly diverse, as exemplified in the Majority World Theology series (edited by Green, Pardue, and Yeo) and other edited volumes (e.g. Spencer and Spencer 1998; Ott and Netland 2006; Greenman and Green 2012). Given contextual power disparities, many contemporary theologies go beyond acknowledging that they are inevitably contextual to becoming intentionally contextual – treating some cultural aspect(s) as a leading theme with which to speak of God and the gospel. Among the issues highlighted in such theologies, poverty and oppression, cultural identity, and religious plurality have global pride of place. While these issues intersect with each other, textbook summaries suggest that poverty and oppression are especially important in Latin America, cultural identity in Africa, and religious plurality in Asia. Evangelical theology has a recent history of engagement with these global contexts as well as cultural issues like race and sexuality in Anglo-American contexts. As the following profiles indicate, non-Western evangelical theology preceded Lausanne in some contexts, even if the later twentieth century presented new theological opportunities after decolonization. In Anglo-American contexts, evangelical theology did not address race and sexuality in a timely fashion, but theological anthropology has now begun to receive more of the attention that it deserves.

5.1 United States

Since both contributing streams and continuing debates are dominated by the American context, there is no need to expound additional history here, but only to take brief notice of current events. The conservative resurgence among Southern Baptists has generated an influx of newly-labeled ‘evangelicals’ (see Kidd 2019: 121–143 [ch. 6]). While some identify with the legacy of Carl Henry, others were historically fundamentalist or did not identify with (Northern) ‘evangelicalism’ at all. Hence this influx makes it hard to distinguish regional civil religion and quasi-fundamentalism from genuinely evangelical theology. Likewise, increasing overlap between evangelical and ‘Pentecostal’ identities, which formerly were more distinct (for good and ill), adds further complexity. To those developments can now be added the seemingly unprecedented controversies of twenty-first century American politics. Although the high percentages of ‘evangelical’ support for the presidency of Donald Trump were probably inflated by pollsters’ inclusion of nominal churchgoers, the phenomenon has still revealed and intensified deep divides between intellectual elites and the populace as well as between various high-profile leaders. The USA’s situation is not altogether unique, however, as the case of Brazil illustrates: there a remarkable upsurge in ‘evangelical’ adherents as a percentage of the total population has coincided with a ‘conservative’ political shift (Polimédio 2018).

5.2 Britain and Europe

Given the transatlantic ministries of the Wesleys, Whitefield, and others, British, European, and American evangelicalism initially had significant overlap (see Holmes 2007). In the UK, though, evangelical theology involves both a 'wing' within the Church of England and 'dissenters' from that established church. Abolitionist leaders like William Wilberforce (1759–1833) established an evangelical legacy of societal impact. Eventually, distinct arrangements of church, state, and university affected how British evangelicals stood for biblical 'authority' without entering into the American controversy over biblical inerrancy. While periodic controversies belie any straightforward consensus regarding penal substitutionary atonement, the British history suggests that proclamation (or not) of Christ's saving blood was a watershed distinction between evangelical and more liberal theologies.

If fewer British names surface as leading twentieth-century evangelical theologians, nevertheless biblical scholars, like F. F. Bruce (1910–1990) and I. Howard Marshall (1934–2015), exerted profound influence. Also influencing contemporary evangelicals have been several theologians, whatever their precise relation to the adjective 'evangelical'. These have included T. F. Torrance (1913–2007), Colin Gunton (1941–2003), and John Webster (1955–2016). From a more clearly evangelical perspective, Alister McGrath (1953–) of Oxford has been a significant voice addressing theology and science, along with doctrines like justification by faith. As the Torrance family's legacy indicates, Scotland has been a theological hub for evangelicals, including (for instance) Presbyterian James Orr's (1844–1913) involvement with 'The Fundamentals', Presbyterian James Denney's (1856–1917) defence of penal substitution, and Congregationalist P. T. Forsyth's (1848–1921) 'kenotic' and proto-Barthian Christology.

In continental Europe, the long reign of communism in Eastern Europe left non-established evangelical churches navigating complicated relationships with Orthodox and national churches. In western Europe, the Dutch Reformed tradition shapes evangelical theology through the neo-Calvinism of Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) and Herman Bavinck. In the Netherlands and elsewhere, evangelicalism remains a minority phenomenon, although the Frenchman Henri Blocher (1937–) has had a measure of theological influence and the German Thomas Schirrmacher (1960–) is a leader in the World Evangelical Alliance.

5.3 Latin America

Latin America was perhaps the earliest region in which formal evangelical theology arose outside the Anglo-American context. That region's Protestant thinkers focused on poverty and oppression even before Catholic liberation theology. Yet the Roman Catholic Church looms large in the cultural surroundings of Latin American evangelical theology. Prior to Vatican II, Catholic theology sought to justify the 'divine right of kings' while Protestants were defending religious freedom. Thereafter the Protestant focus shifted to poverty

and social unrest, with the number of Catholics beginning to decrease while evangelical adherents have increased.

The Other Spanish Christ by John A. Mackay (1889–1983; see Mackay 2001) highlighted the need for spiritual reform. With Mackay, earlier evangelicals confronted Catholic hegemony and championed personal faith in Christ. They shared the Reformation *solas* – grace alone, faith alone, scripture alone, Christ alone – along with a vocation of spreading the gospel and establishing churches committed to making intentional disciples of Jesus.

After the 1959 Cuban revolution, the 1960s comprised a revolutionary situation. Liberation theology emerged through the ISAL, Church and Society in Latin America. Although consisting of both Protestants and Catholics, the movement became known for progressive Catholic theology. A Protestant figure like Justo L. González (1937–) stood between two poles: the American fundamentalism of the Scofield Bible, and the revolutionary socialism of Sergio Arce Martínez (1924–2015). Instead of ignoring or stopping revolution, González argued, Christians are called to engage with revolution. Human revolutions should not be equated with God’s purposes, but Christians are to be vehicles of God’s action on behalf of victims.

The Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL) arose in 1970 as an ‘evangelical renewal’ movement committed to contextual theology. Affirming scripture’s authority, FTL theologians emphasized both orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Theologians such as Orlando Costas (1941–1987) argued that quantitative growth, which Protestant churches were experiencing, must be accompanied by qualitative growth – in relationships among church members, understanding of the faith, and service to the world. Similarly, W. Stanley Rycroft (1899–1993) and Samuel Escobar (1934–) maintained that the gospel must affect all of life, addressing both personal and social dimensions.

As noted above, René Padilla (on whom much of this summary depends, from Padilla 2007: 259–273) was among the leading influences upon the Lausanne movement, calling evangelicals worldwide to ‘integral’ mission. Padilla identifies the global context of Latin American theology in terms of neoliberal capitalism that has widened the chasm between the rich and the poor. Integral mission calls for solidarity with those who are thus oppressed.

5.4 Africa

It would be inappropriate to apply a pre-defined evangelical theology to the continent of Africa, ignoring its vast ethnic and cultural diversity, with the resulting label ‘African evangelical theology’ (Tiéno 2007: 213–224, which shapes this summary). In one sense, African theology dates back to Christianity’s earliest days, and influentially so, as Origen’s school and Athanasius’s bishopric at Alexandria epitomize. However, European Christians

enslaved much of the continent, and this great evil created a shared 'African' identity rooted in oppression. Then nineteenth-century European and American evangelization gave the mistaken impression that Christianization requires Westernization (Tiéno 2017: 35). Thus, the decolonization of the 1950s and 1960s initiated a quest to restore African culture and religion, so that issues of cultural identity became dominant. After initial debate among both Protestants and Catholics, the conclusion became widespread that African Christians must seek to be both Christian and African. How to do so, though, elicited diverse evangelical responses.

Byang H. Kato (1936–1975), an evangelical 'pioneer' (Ferdinando 2004: 169), represents a more conservative approach. His published dissertation, *Theological Pitfalls in Africa* (1975), confronts universalism and syncretism, championing Christianity as the only true faith. Because religion is so embedded, discernment is necessary to wrest non-Christian religion from culture. Christian faith must become indigenous; yet, although culture can be 'baptized', if Christianity is baptized in culture, syncretism results. Where the needed discernment is impossible, culture must be abandoned so that Christianity is not compromised (Kato 1975), a conviction that Kato retained until his death (Kato 1976: 143–152). Thus, while some see Kato as contextualizing evangelical theology (e.g. Palmer 2004: 3–20), others argue that Kato downplayed African culture and religion too strongly.

Manasseh Kwame Dakwa Bediako (1945–2008), who was critical of Kato, represents a more emphatically contextual approach. Under the supervision of Andrew Walls (1928–), a British historian of mission, Bediako wrote a dissertation that was published as *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa* (1992). He compared early Christians' interaction with Hellenistic culture to modern African theologians' appropriation of their cultures. For Bediako, culture must be converted rather than rejected or neglected. Theology must always address culturally-rooted questions in the process of Christian self-definition. Bediako's interest in how Christianity might take 'African flesh' led to establishing the Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission, and Culture, which publishes the *Journal of African Christian Thought*.

Tite Tiéno (1949–), a theologian of mission, has written important surveys of African evangelical theology. He has also been a significant leader in the West, having served as Dean of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the USA. Tiéno challenges African evangelical theology to address the needs of Christians and churches in Africa fully without being obligated to comply with 'Western' or 'northern' approaches; hence he challenges Christians elsewhere to listen to African and world Christianity (Tiéno 2008: 109–124).

5.5 Asia

Some would claim that Asian Christianity is largely evangelical (so Chan 2007: 225–240, which informs this survey). Of course, as in Latin America and Africa, the label ‘Asian’ reflects Western conflation of numerous cultures and sometimes tense histories. The pronounced affinity for spirituality in some Asian people groups resonates with the evangelical emphasis on conversion. For others too, such as young Singaporeans who received an English form of education, Christianity has been intellectually attractive. In countries like South Korea, Protestant churches have evangelical roots – owing to Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries along with revivals – and mostly remain evangelical, albeit with scholarly discussions reflecting theological diversity (Kim 2002: 15). As expressed in its journal *Bible and Theology*, Korea Evangelical Theological Society (KETS) takes a moderate stance, critiquing both fundamentalism and liberalism (Lee 2009: 74–79). While debates on contextualization continue, some suggest a christological basis for the church’s recent contribution to South Korean society (Ra 2007: 72–83), which includes some of the world’s largest churches. As the location of Lausanne II attests, Manila has been another vibrant centre of evangelical activity, particularly for theological education. Still, while the number of Christians has been growing rapidly in Asia, not least in China, theological reflection remains at a relatively early stage (Gener and Pardue 2019: 1–2).

In *Grassroots Asian Theology: Thinking the Faith from the Ground Up*, Simon Chan (2014) champions an Asian evangelical theology that attends to both the Christian tradition and ‘folk’ Christianity’s vibrant, implicit theology. Placing the gospel in a new context involves translating not merely concepts but the entire gospel drama, as the local church improvises in each time and place. Scripture and tradition take priority over local expressions; otherwise the gospel becomes diluted and interreligious dialogue becomes difficult. The local church, with its primary theology rooted in the laity, participates in a living tradition of the revelation of the Triune God in Christ. Chan’s grassroots theology incorporates sociopolitical engagement while focusing on distinctively Christian character. A key theme is family, so important for personal identity in Asia, as a reflection of the divine family of the Triune God.

Asian evangelical scholars increasingly engage with contexts of religious plurality. Amos Yong (1965–), based in the USA, is among the relatively few evangelical theologians who have written at length on that subject, addressing it with a focus on the Holy Spirit. The New Testament scholar K. K. Yeo (1960–) engages Confucianism and other aspects of Chinese culture, emphasizing the gospel’s relevance for cultural identities. Lesslie Newbigin (1909–1998), the Anglican missionary whose account of the gospel and culture has been influential among evangelicals, served in India. Evangelical theologian of mission Harold Netland (1955–) served initially in Japan. Vinoth Ramachandra (1954–), another evangelical theologian who has written on religion, is Sri Lankan. Not all evangelical

reflection on religious plurality comes from Asia; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (1958–), a Pentecostal theologian from Finland who teaches at Fuller Theological Seminary in the USA, has now written a five-volume evangelical systematic theology that focuses on religious dialogue.

5.6 Culture and society

As both earlier history and contemporary contexts indicate, evangelical theology has a mixed legacy of cultural engagement. Lausanne is an important marker for a growing multicultural identity (as traced in Dyrness 2007 by evangelical theologian William Dyrness [1943–], who is notable for both theological aesthetics and projects like the Global Dictionary of Theology). Whereas ‘contextualization’ was once suspect for risking syncretism, after Lausanne it was widely embraced by evangelical missiology; eventually it faced some critique for being too conservative or hegemonic. Evangelical engagement with liberation theology beyond Latin America, even with postcolonial theory, has ensued (e.g. Smith, Lalitha and Hawk 2014). For a long time, Anglo-American evangelical engagement with culture tended to be apologetic, prioritizing the defence of personal faith. This apologetic interest, perhaps combined with American Anglophilia, enhanced the influence of popular theological writing from British figures like C. S. Lewis (1898–1963). As modern rationalism gave way to ‘late’ or ‘post’ modernity, figures like N. T. Wright filled a similar role.

Evangelical theology was slow to address race and gender constructively (but see relevant chapters in Larsen and Treier 2007; McDermott 2010). Carl Henry warned as early as the 1940s that American fundamentalism’s indifference to racial justice would mar the credibility of its gospel proclamation. Black voices like William Hiram Bentley (1870–1956) and William Pannell (1929–) struggled to gain a hearing from fellow evangelicals (as chronicled in Bacote 2020). A ‘cultural toolkit’ that prioritized individual responsibility and personal relationships left American evangelicals minimizing systemic sin and structural evil (Emerson and Smith 2001). Evangelical theologians have recently increased their attention to race, largely by borrowing external insights. Some who arose within evangelical institutions borrowed from the broader Christian tradition (e.g. Carter 2007), whereas borrowing secular tools like critical race theory has been controversial. Yong has now challenged the notion that cultural identities are only secondary to Christian identity, arguing that conversion incorporates not only turning from sin to God but also God’s redemptive transformation of the world in all its complexity (Yong 2014: 235).

After its earlier legacy of empowering women, twentieth-century evangelicalism (especially in the USA) was slow to engage the rise of feminism and to address the ‘sexual revolution’ theologically. As evangelical ‘egalitarians’ began afresh to promote women’s equality with men in marriage and ordination to pastoral ministry, strict ‘complementarians’ (here the

language functions differently than in wider philosophical circles) like Wayne Grudem and John Piper (1946–) defended notions of biblical masculinity and femininity – arguing that women are equal with men in dignity as God’s image-bearers but necessarily subordinate in the home and church. Evangelical egalitarians, while affirming the biological complementarity of male and female, respond that the ‘helper’ language in Gen 2:18 is used elsewhere of God being a helper to God’s people; as such, it does not subordinate women to men. ‘Soft’ complementarians often join egalitarians in acknowledging that gender has socially constructed dimensions, distinct from biological sex, but they still believe that biblical passages like Eph 5:21–33 and 1 Tim 2:9–1– restrict certain forms of leadership to men. Egalitarians respond by privileging the equality of male and female in Gal 3:28 as the context in which other, apparently restrictive, scripture passages should be read. Some on both sides have appealed to the doctrine of the Trinity as an analogous model for gender relations – either championing persons’ full equality (egalitarian) or indicating the possibility of equal dignity with differentiated authority (complementarian). Others on both sides have rejected such appeals, worrying about the risk of projecting human cultural elements onto God.

The paucity of female names in the preceding survey reflects women’s relative lack of opportunities for formal leadership throughout the church’s history as well as modern disciplines of biblical and theological study. In this regard, evangelical scholarship has lagged even farther behind the broader fields (see especially Creegan and Pohl 2005). But increasing numbers of evangelical women are now overcoming these extensive hurdles. For example, in biblical studies Lynn Cohick (1961–) has become a Dean or Provost of multiple institutions and now serves as President of the Institute for Biblical Research, a leading scholarly society; Cohick has particular expertise regarding women in early Christianity (Cohick and Hughes 2017), while Karen Jobes (1952–) has become a leading scholar of the Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation of the Old Testament. Among theologians, Elaine Storkey (1944–) has been an influential teacher, writer, and media commentator in the UK; the German Christine Schirrmacher (1962–) is an evangelical expert on Islam. Other noteworthy theologians include Canadian Diane Stinton, New Zealander Nicola Hoggard Creegan, and Americans Cheryl Bridges Johns, Christine Pohl, Beth Felker Jones, and Kristen Deede Johnson (here, at a more academic level, see e.g. Jones 2007; more popularly, see e.g. Hoang and Johnson 2016). To these can be added ethicists like Marva Dawn (1948–2021), pastoral leaders like Jo Anne Lyon (1940–), and learned popular Bible teachers like Beth Moore (1957–). René Padilla’s daughter, Ruth Padilla DeBorst, has become a theological leader in her own right.

Consistent with cultural patterns involving race and gender, earlier evangelical ethics lagged behind broader theological discussions, primarily borrowing post-Kantian philosophical categories. Evangelicals usually defended a deontological approach, deriving moral rules from biblical commands while opposing utilitarian or consequentialist

approaches like 'situation' ethics. As virtue ethics came to prominence, its 'neo-Anabaptist' appropriation by Stanley Hauerwas (1940–) influenced a new generation of evangelical theology in the 1990s. This 'postliberal' influence paralleled newfound engagement with theologians such as Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945). Anglican Oliver O'Donovan (1945–) added important neo-Augustinian contributions to 'evangelical' ethics and political theology. After the influence of Padilla and others upon Lausanne, the ethical visions of Hauerwas and O'Donovan have coincided with the biblical scholarship of N. T. Wright and others to increase current evangelical attention to the Gospels, acknowledging the kingdom of God as a primary theme.

6 Conclusion: The believer and the community

The history and long-debated definitions of evangelical theology highlight its contested nature. Recent controversies and growing contextual awareness have intensified perceptions of its diversity. Evangelical Protestants share an emphasis upon the 'priesthood of all believers' even as they differ in their ecclesiastical structures. Both this popular emphasis and ecclesial variety complicate the feedback loop between formal evangelical theology and the everyday practices of evangelical Christians and congregations. Evangelical traditions and regions also vary in their access to, and appreciation for, formal theological education. The age of the internet has further intensified evangelical perceptions of increasing internal conflict and biblical illiteracy. The distinctive evangelical influence of megachurch pastors and celebrity authors long preceded social media, but such technologies have extended that influence in new ways.

Without romantically ignoring cacophony, however, it remains appropriate to conclude on a hopeful note. Behind the increasing variety, even tension, stands a wider array of evangelical voices: more scholarly representation of various church traditions, women, ethnic minorities, and global cultures. Grassroots evangelical theology never was an exclusive province of white men, but sometimes it seemed to be, and elite evangelical discourse tended to be. Perusing recent literature will demonstrate that, even as 'evangelical' identity becomes more fragmented and politicized, evangelical 'theology' may be enhancing its testimony regarding the fullness of God's kingdom.

Almost paradoxically, evangelical theology has been both problematically individualistic and uniquely communal. Its individualistic cultural toolkit reflects a conversionist and crucicentrist gospel of personal salvation, as well as the fragmenting tendencies of popular biblicism. Yet few, if any, non-evangelical traditions have involved the whole people of God as fully in the task of doing theology – addressing them via sermons and textbooks, urging them to study the scriptures, and thus 'consulting the faithful' (Mouw 1994). Accordingly, a major plot within the story of twentieth-century theological education and hermeneutics has been the elite concern that popular evangelicalism has 'no place for truth' (Wells

1994) and needs profound reform in how it uses the Bible (Treier and Hefner 2017). The ensuing tensions between popular community and increasing diversity will continue to shape evangelical theology in the twenty-first century.

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