

Week 12: Monday, November 15, 2021 REVISED
CHRISTIANITY IN THE MODERN ERA (1880–1960, Cont'd.)

Lecture 2 Becomes 12.1

Topic: The Evangelical Reaction to New Theology, the Period of Polarization (1910–1930)

Due: Noll, 364–397

Lecture 1 Becomes 12.2

Topic: The Evangelical Reaction to New Theology, the Period of Reorganization (1930–1950)

The Fracture of the American Evangelical Consensus (1950–Present)

The Evangelical Reaction: The Period of Organization

Review

What happened in the 1920s is the result of the progressive deterioration of theology following two things:

First, in American theology, the gradual loss of the doctrine of original sin, spiritual death, and the belief that all humans are born sinners, and the only solution is the penal, substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Second, the impact of Kantian epistemology on both sides of the Atlantic, but primarily in Europe which exported it to America by the late 1850s. By 1880s this was enhanced by the inclusion of naturalistic worldview impacting the sciences view of Darwin and historical geology; psychology via Freud, economics via Marx, and sociology via Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer.

As a result, those who held to a traditional, Bible-based theology saw these innovations as destructive of Christianity. By the 1920s this produced splits in the major denominations, leaving the liberals in control of the money, land, colleges, mission agencies, seminaries, buildings, and the conservatives had to decide whether to attempt to remain in the denominations as witnesses in a compromised environment where they would be at odds with denominational leaders, policies, and theology or to leave and begin anew.

From the 20s it became clear that a complete restructuring was necessary.

3. The attempt at reorganization, an era of conservative restructuring (1930–50).

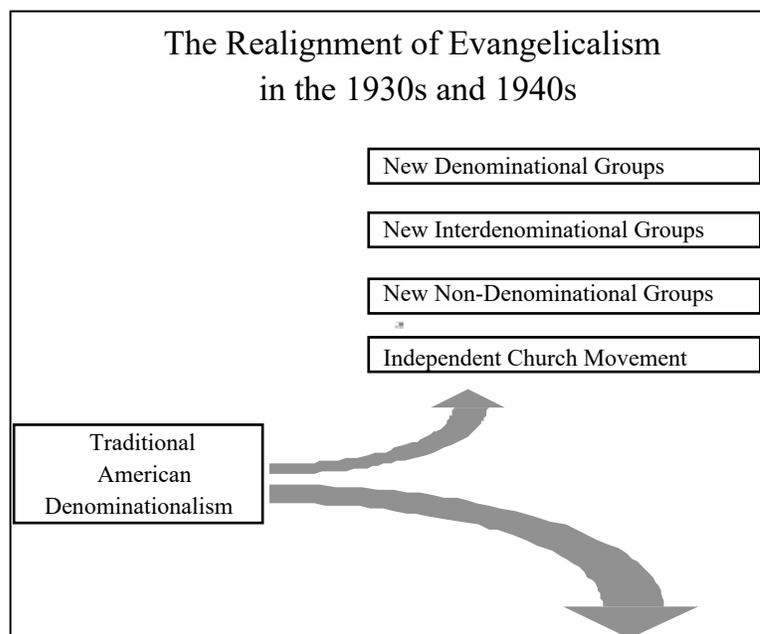
From that point it became increasingly obvious that the historic mainstream denominations would be much more tolerant of theological heresy than before. With increasing tolerance toward liberal rejection of the exclusivity of the fundamentals of the faith came less willingness to

tolerate conservatives. As a result, more groups separated and formed separatist denominations or established independent churches. These separatists groups argued that they indeed were the true heirs grounded on the historic views of the Bible and their denominational confessions.

We must recognize that this was a very difficult decision for many due to personal, financial, and emotional ties to their historic churches. Many conservatives chose to stay while others chose to leave.

For the many who chose to leave, the task to rebuild seemed almost insurmountable. That is the focus of this lesson: The reorganization and restructuring of the conservative, biblically orthodox believers who exited from their denominational homes.

- a) Introduction: The aftermath of the 1920s.
- Evangelicalism was now expressed in new ways
 - The more conservative ones were now identified as “fundamentalists” which gradually took on negative overtones and the caricature of the “fighting fundies” which was a horrific distortion.
 - The development of new interdenominational agencies and parachurch organizations, new non-denominational groups, new denominations, and the rise of the independent church movement.



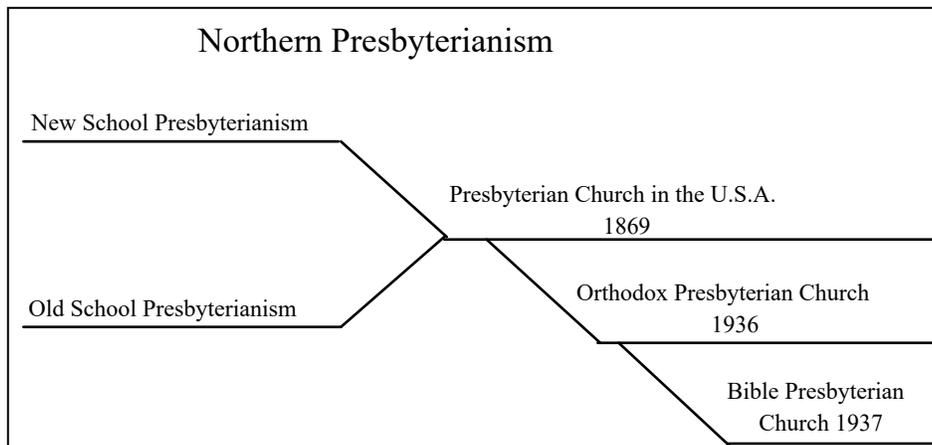
- b) The organization of new denominational groups.
- (1) New Presbyterian groups.

In the context of the debate over the foreign missions program of the church and the establishment of the independent board of missions, along with the publication of the report “Rethinking Missions”, (1932) which was then published fully in 1933 with 7 volumes published by Harper, funded by John D. Rockefeller. No fewer than 7 mission organizations. This had two parts passed on a fact-finding mission, suggested new ways for missions and rejected old ways. In essence, promoted spiritual idealism, social brotherhood, economic brotherhood, and cultural unity. To think of this as only the great commission as too narrow, the proclamation of the gospel, a new mission was needed which represented the realities of the twentieth century.

Pearl S. Buck (1892–1973) was a significant figure in American culture as a writer and novelist. She had been reared in a missionary home in China and was herself a missionary. She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in literature (1938). She rejected the deity of Christ, the questionable atonement of Christ, and the inerrancy of Scripture. She resigned as a missionary due to her heretical views. In the 1960s she asked the Israeli government to grant clemency to Adolf Eichmann, the notorious architect of the “Final Solution” to annihilate the Jews in the Holocaust.

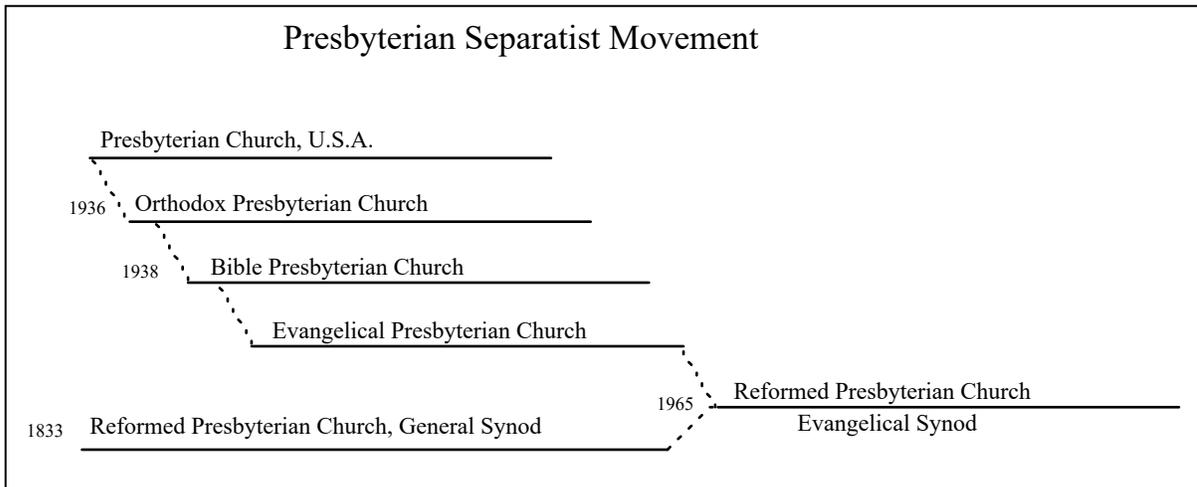
Machen wrote a 110-page pamphlet against this. In 1933 he formed an independent board of missions. This led to his ouster from the Presbyterian Church.

Machen saw this as a denial of the gospel. His opposition led to being disbarred from the Presbyterian Church.



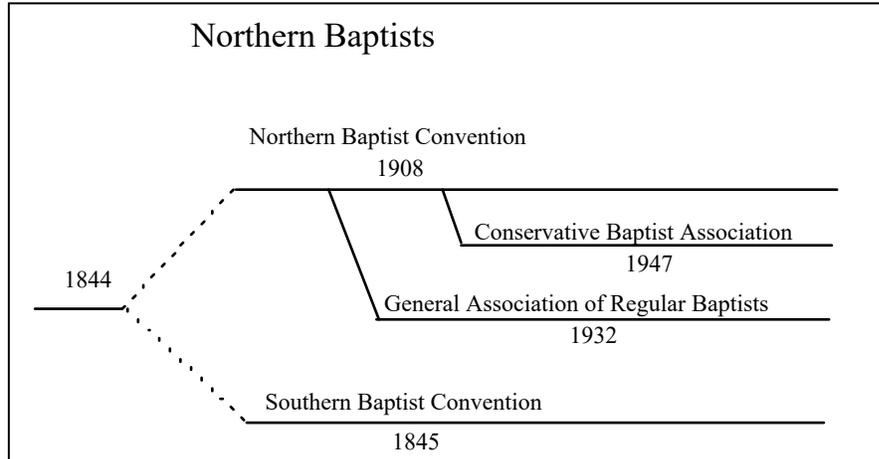
- (a) The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937).
- (b) The Bible Presbyterian Church (BFC) and Carl McIntire (b. 1906).

(c) The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPC, ES) and J. Oliver Buswell.



(2) New Baptist groups.

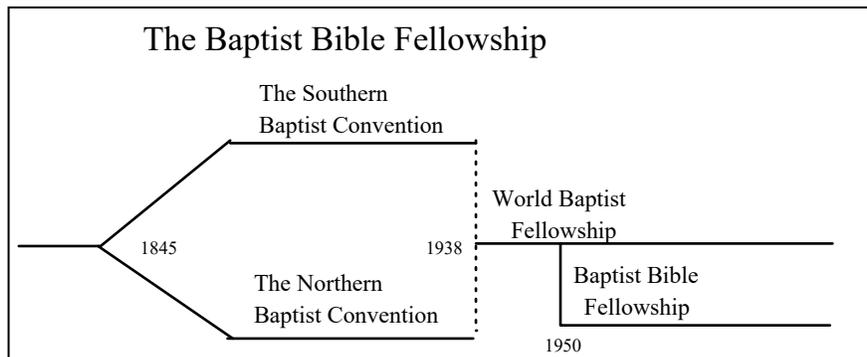
(a) (The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC)).



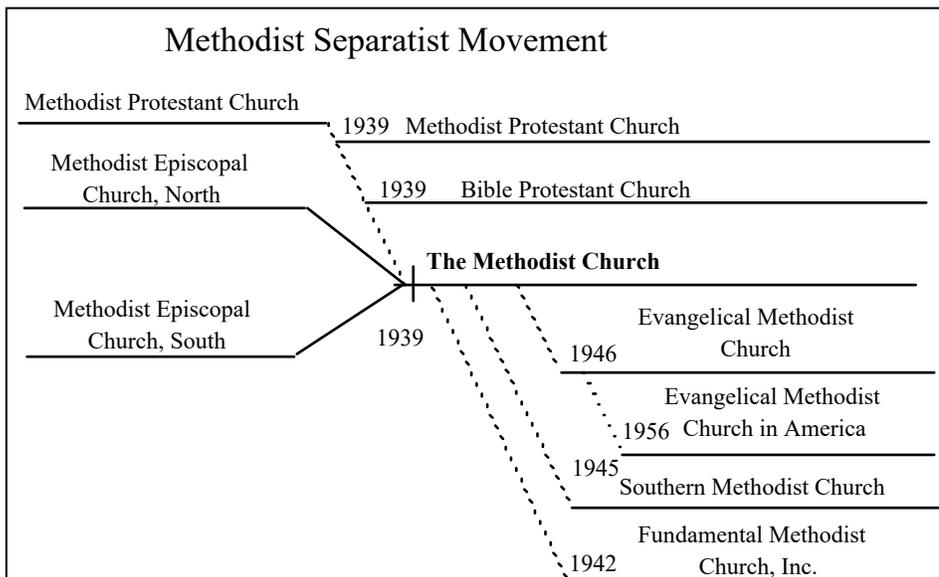
(b) The Conservative Baptist Association (CBA).

Basic GARBC and CBA differences
 Separation
 Organizational structure
 Relationship to schools and mission organizations
 Eschatological toleration

(c) The Baptist Bible Fellowship (BBF).

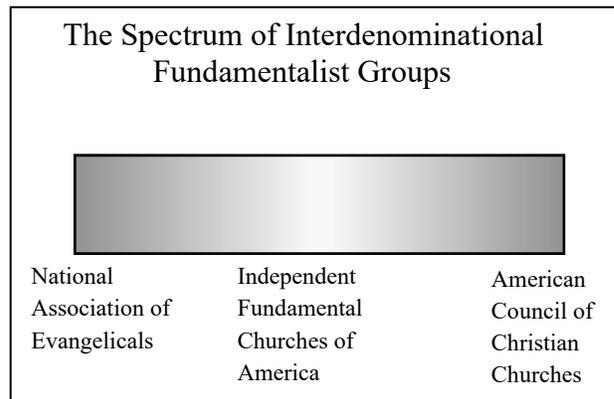


(3) New Methodist groups.



(4) Schism in the Restoration Movement

c) The organization of new interdenominational groups.



(1) The American Council of Christian Churches and Carl McIntire (b. 1906).

Formed in September 1941 to combat “soul destroying modernism”. Antithesis of the National Council of Christian Churches. Formed of “extreme conservative bodies”. Leader: Carl McIntire (1906–2002). Wanted to rally Christians to challenge Modernism’s claim to be the mouthpiece of American Protestantism.

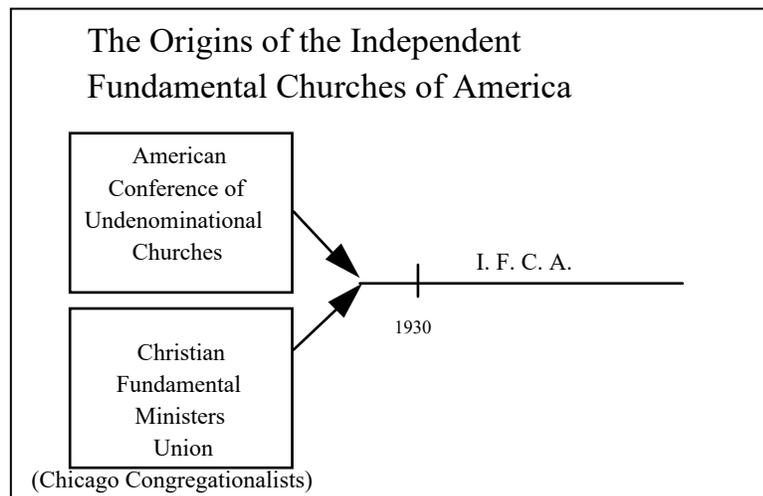
(a) His early years and education: (1906–36). Born in Ypsilanti, Michigan of rigid Presbyterian parentage, educated at Park College in Missouri (1927), Princeton Seminary, and Westminster Seminary (1931).

(b) Religious Leader of Right Wing Fundamentalism (1936–48). Defrocked as was Machen. Formed the Bible Presbyterian Church (1937), Faith Seminary, *Christian Beacon* (1936), and the 20th Century Reformation Hour. Pastor—Collingswood Presbyterian Church (New Jersey). In 1948 he initiated the International Council of Christian Churches, as a counter measure to the ecumenical W.C.C. in Amsterdam.

(c) Politico–Religious Patriot of Fundamentalism (Since 1948).

(2) Independent Fundamental Churches of America. Organized in Cicero, Illinois (1930), it is a loose federation of

ministers and churches which subscribe to an evangelical statement of faith.



- (3) National Association of Evangelicals (1942). Not all agreed with McIntire’s policies, so that a group met in Chicago to found an organization “that was doctrinally correct” but not “reactionary”, “negative”, or “destructive”.

They disagreed with the American Council of Christian Churches in two ways:

- Members were not required to separate from groups associated with the Federal Council.
- Opposed the vitriolic attack on the F.C.C. for they felt it was more harmful than beneficial.

d) The organization of non-denomination groups.

(1) Youth Work.

- (a) Youth For Christ – In 1942, Roger Malsbray, a youth leader in Indianapolis, organized a movement he called “Youth For Christ”. He employed Torrey Johnson under whom the movement officially began in 1945. Johnson shared his dream with Billy Graham who became the first field representative of YFC, after pastoring in West Springs, Illinois.
- (b) Word of Life was started by Jack Wyrzten (b. 1913), an ex-insurance salesman and dance-band musician.

- (c) Young Life (1938) was founded by Jim Rayburn, he was a student at the time at Dallas Seminary.
- (2) College Work.
- (a) Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship was started in Britain (1870s) and reached America in 1940. Its major sponsors were H. J. Taylor (Club Aluminum Company president) and C. D. Wyerhauser (Lumberman).
 - (b) Campus Crusade for Christ was founded by William Bright in 1952.
- (3) Radio Work.
- (a) *Old Fashioned Revival House* – founded by Charles E. Fuller (1925), first Gospel Radio Program.
 - (b) *Back to the Bible* – T. Epp - Lincoln, Nebraska.
 - (c) *Radio Bible Class* – M. R. DeHaan.
 - (d) *Hour of Decision* – Billy Graham (1955).
- (4) Independent Bible Church Movement

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CHRISTIANITY IN THE MODERN ERA (1880–1960, Cont’d.)

Lecture 1 *Becomes* 12.2

Topic: The Evangelical Reaction to New Theology, the Period of Reorganization (1930–1950)
The Fracture of the American Evangelical Consensus (1950–Present)

Introduction

In this lesson we will look at the next stage, the fracture of the American Evangelical Consensus since 1950. This is where we get into what some of us have witnessed in much of our lifetime and over the last few decades. The difficulty with this is that we usually need some time distance to be able to assess what is going on. And in light of the last decade so much is going on that it hasn't all quite settled down yet.

This is a time covering the last seventy years. The next four weeks will see us cover many trends that lead up to the current chaos in Christianity.

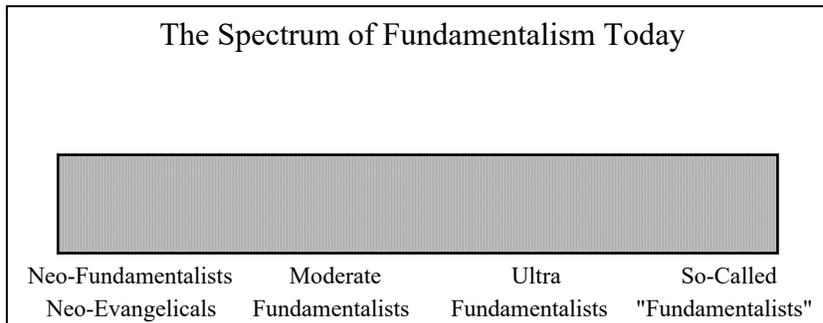
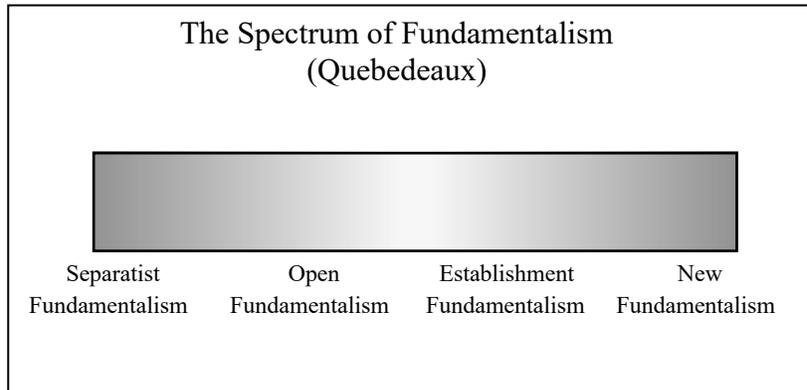
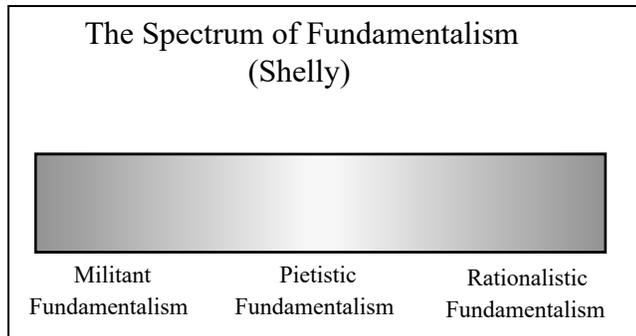
In this section we are using the word “evangelical” in a way that generally reflects a sound, mostly biblical movement that reacts against the move toward liberalism. I know the term has many problems and has come to have such a broad meaning that it is virtually useless. It is broad enough to include most of what we would put under the charismatic umbrella as well as the most separatist fundamentalists to the broad mainstream of those who are defined more by what they reject, than by what they positively believe. You will find many different attempts to define their belief system. *George Marsden calls it a movement of co-belligerence as conservative Bible-believing people reacted to liberalism as it began to emerge in the last decades of the nineteenth century; it spilled over into open confrontation and polarization in the 1920s.*

The broadest are those surveys which identify a person as an evangelical if they claim they are one. That would yield a rather large number, maybe 50 million Americans or more. The George Barna view set forth some nine beliefs including inerrancy, substitutionary atonement, total depravity, virgin birth, literal second coming, and others. This yields a much smaller group of maybe 8–9 million, a number that is decreasing.

The stages of development since the 1900s.

1. The period of conception as it begins to coalesce and organize in the late 19th century and early 20th.
2. The period of conflict, which is largely confined to post-World War I in the 1920s. That period of polarization within the mainline denominations. The conservatives lost, which led to the need for reorganization. This led to new denominations, missions organizations, and other ministries.
3. The Fracture of the American Evangelical Consensus (1950–Present)

4. The Structure of the Evangelical Movement since 1950. **Second part of 12.2**



There is a very strong tendency among most historians and historians of Christianity that are from the evangelical ranks, to not only diminish the contributions of the historic fundamentalists, but to denigrate them as backward and anti-intellectual. The author of your textbook is one of these. Though he says little about them in his book we are using, it is because he does precious little to evaluate these movements on the basis of their theological systems. This is one reason I chose it, he does a fairly decent job of not only recounting the history of the various Christian groups, but also fitting them within their timeframe historically. However, if you check his CV, you will notice he spent much of his career teaching at Wheaton, which is arguably on the left end of the evangelical spectrum and then finished out his career at Notre Dame.

In the 1990s he published a book called, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Minds*. One of my colleagues quipped when it came out, “For Noll, the scandal is the evangelical mind.” He is not kind to the historic fundamentalists. Noll claimed that fundamentalism “undercut the possibility for a responsible intellectual life.” (127) He has also been “especially critical” of the fundamentalists support of Israel (167). And in a book co-authored with John Woodbridge and Nathan Hatch, opined that, “In contrast to Puritan teaching that Christians must build moral principles into society and to the message of reform in the days of Finney, Fundamentalists began to argue that Christian involvement in society actually denied rather than fulfilled the gospel.” (*The Gospel in America*, 1979, 241).

Others defined the historic fundamentalists as reactionary, backward, uncaring, anti-intellectual, and irresponsible socially.

However, Jim Owens provides a close analysis from primary sources which shows just the opposite.

a) Introduction: the matter of definitions.

When I speak of the “historic fundamentalists” I follow the guidance of Jim Owen, *The Hidden History of the Historic Fundamentalists: 1933–1948*, where he does this in order to distinguish them from the later fundamentalists.

1) Historic Fundamentalists

- (a) Did not follow the post-millennial, optimistic, utopian scheme but were dominated for the most part by pre-millennial and dispensational theology. (xxxi)
- (b) They held to the following key doctrines: the fall of man and Adam’s original sin, the incarnation, the virgin birth, the miracles of Christ, the crucifixion, the bodily resurrection and ascension of Christ into Heaven to the right hand of the Father, His penal, substitutionary atonement for the sins of the human race by His death on the cross, the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, the personal visible, return of Christ to the earth before He will establish His Kingdom. The vast majority believed in an imminent return of Christ in the clouds at the Rapture of the Church prior to the seven years of the Tribulation.

They did not expect a gradual progression of improvement in the social order on this earth toward the complete evangelization of the world in this age. Neither did they anticipate cessation of war, poverty, or triumph of social reform prior to the Second Coming of Christ.

Instead, they looked to an increasing apostasy in the visible church prior to the Rapture of the Church.

They were also composed of those who were Philo Semitic and sought to warn FDR and the US government of the

intent of the Nazis to annihilate the Jewish people. They were also supportive of the Zionist vision to enable the restoration of the Jewish people to their historic homeland.

- (c) During this period the terms evangelical and fundamentalist were virtually interchangeable.

2) The critique

The historic fundamentalists are often indicted for removing themselves totally from the culture around them and retreating into a focus on personal spirituality, debating a variety of prophetic theories, and ignoring pressing social needs and political involvement. The 30s and 40s were thus viewed as a “dark age” of social neglect and political abstinence.

3) The truth

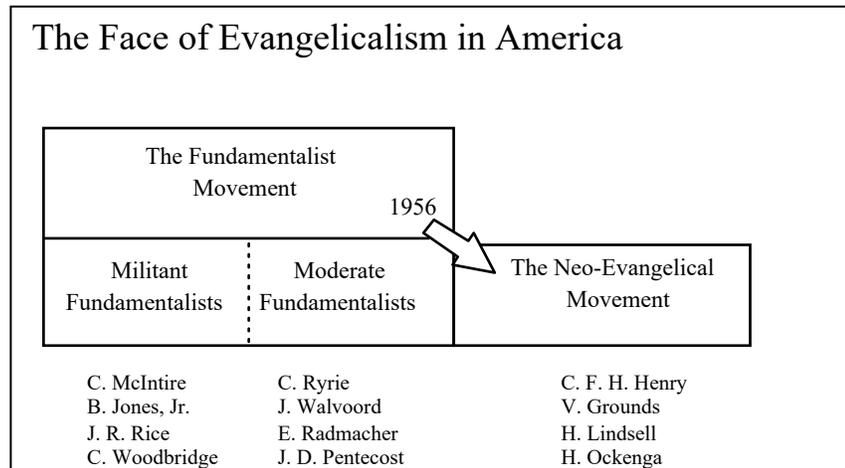
Some of any caricature has some basis in truth. But this was not an either-or situation. On the one hand, the historic fundamentalists did focus on theology, including prophecy, and their spiritual life, because they rejected the presuppositions that undergirded the move to the social gospel, social justice, and progressivism. But on the other hand, they were engaged in inner city missions, soup kitchens, education, and trade education for the unemployed, and a desire to aid those who were left destitute by the Great Depression.

In the late 19th century, the view of both moderate evangelicals and the more liberal wing had adopted forms of progressivism which understand that by “Christianizing” the institutions of America (in terms of their new redefinitions) they could advance the Kingdom of God on earth, develop “social justice” for the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed. The majority of evangelicals in the 19th century were strongly devoted to forms of postmillennialism. They were committed to advancing this kingdom through social and political involvement. In fact, many of the postmillennial theologians who influenced this had, from a biblical standard, a false view of God, man, Jesus Christ, the cross, and the gospel. For example, Owen points out that even William Jennings Bryan, the evangelical opponent of evolution at the Scopes’ Trial, held to an “almost Pelagian view of man’s nature and a postmillennialism that supported an upward progress of human history.” (Owen, 7)

In reality, the historic fundamentalists were from middle- and working-class families, and included among them those where well educated, professionals, lawyers, judges, doctors, teachers,

professors, business executives who all held to a conservative, biblically grounded faith.

- b) The rise of Neo-Evangelicalism, the shattering of Evangelical unity. Prior to the fragmentation, the terms “evangelical,” “fundamentalist,” and “conservative” meant the same thing.
- (1) The discontent among some Evangelicals.
 1942 – establishment of the National Association of Evangelicals.
 The beginning of the fragmentation. Generally, there was a complaint that the movement had been too negative in outlook.
 Complaints about a lack of social involvement.
- (2) The emergence of Neo-Evangelicalism.



- (a) The term.
- Harold John Ockenga (1905–85), new president of Fuller Seminary. Probably coined the term “neo-evangelicalism” in his presidential address at the opening of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.
- Fuller was supposed to be the flagship seminary of the new movement. It seemed to quickly succumb to liberal views of the Bible.
- (b) The beginning.
- The opening of Fuller Seminary.
 - Henry’s *Uneasy Conscience of a Modern Fundamentalist* (1947). This became the mandate for the emerging movement. Strong concern over the lack of social involvement, and also charges of not being

intellectual enough. Usually, “intellectual” referred to accepting some ideas from the left related to historical criticism, Darwinism, or progressivism, or some version of bringing in the kingdom.

- The 1956/57 New York Graham Crusade.
 - The beginning of *Christianity Today*.
- (c) The early leaders. Each of these were friends with one another. The movement was heavily financed by J. Howard Pew (1882–1971).
- Harold John Ockenga (1905–85).
 - William Franklin, “Billy” Graham, Jr. (b. 1918–2018).
 - Carl Ferdinand Howard Henry (b. 1913–2003). Involved in the founding of the NAE, Fuller Theological Seminary, and *Christianity Today*. Wrote a fine four-vol. work on *God, Revelation, and Authority*.
- Other leaders included Bernard Ramm (1916–1996), Edward John Carnell, the second president of Fuller Theological Seminary, Harold Lindsell (1913–1998), also on the Fuller faculty and succeeded Henry as editor of *CT*.
- (d) The general characteristics.
- A disdain for “old Fundamentalism”. This was the main focus, to separate from the negative image of conservative fundamentalism. The terms fundamentalist and evangelical became distinct. This led to the rise of militant Fundamentalism which was distinct from historic Fundamentalism.
 - A re-opening of the subject of biblical inspiration.
 - A friendliness toward contemporary science.
 - A willingness to re-examine beliefs concerning the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - A tolerance toward various eschatological positions.
 - A shift away from so-called extreme dispensationalism.
 - A growing willingness of evangelical theologians to converse with liberal theologians.

- A more definite recognition of social responsibility.
- An optimistic attitude toward reaching the nonconservative.
- An increased emphasis on scholarship and apologetics.

The neo-evangelical movement was a movement of second-generation men from a fundamentalist conservative heritage who felt that the fundamentalist movement, while it was a good movement, struggled against liberalism and its beginning was fine. But it became a movement twenty years or so later that needed new direction and new orientation if it was to speak effectively to a post-World War II generation. All did not share that approach, so there's a further fracturing of fundamentalism into militant fundamentalism (a moderate position) and a neo-evangelical movement.

c) The rise of militant Fundamentalism, the reaction of defense.

(1) Introduction.

(2) The leaders.

(a) John Richard Rice (1895–1985).

Began with two pastorates in Texas. Southern Baptist. Decatur Baptist College in Baylor, two years Southwestern Theological Seminary. Began as an evangelist. Founded the *Sword of the Lord*. Early supporter of Billy Graham but turned critical of him after the New York Crusade.

(b) Charles J. Woodbridge (b. 1912–d. 1995).

Charles Woodbridge was born of American parentage in China and educated at Princeton University, where he took three degrees. He was an exchange student in Germany in the 1920s, did graduate study at Berlin in Marburg University, and did further study at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1932. After missionary activity in French Cameroon and pastoral activity in America, he earned his PhD from Duke University; a highly respected missionary, professor, a scholarly sort who was one of the original members of the faculty at Fuller Seminary.

(c) Bob Jones, Sr. (1883–1968)

Minimal education. Evangelist.

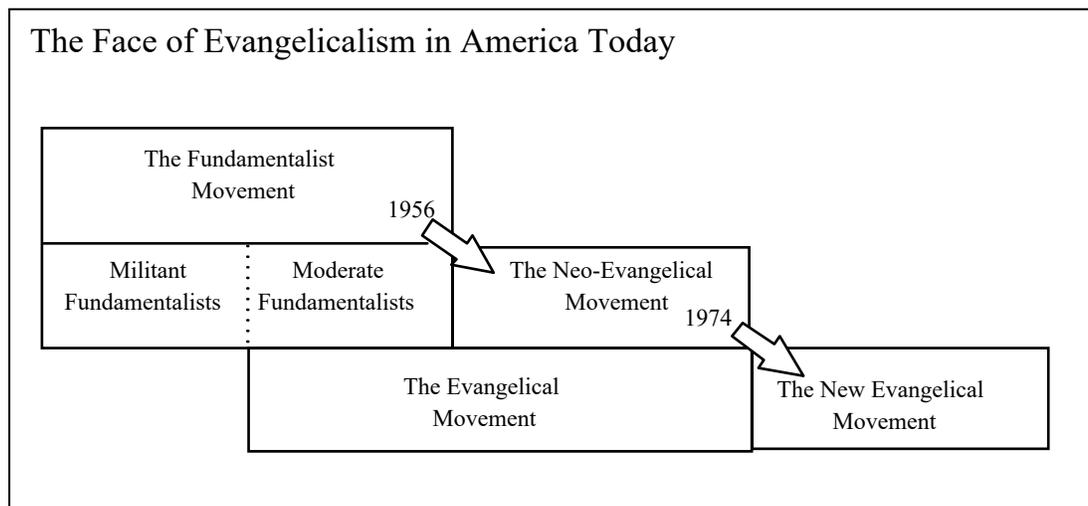
Founded Bob Jones University (in 1927) name changed in 1947.

- (d) Carl McIntire (b. 1906–d. 2002).
Trained at Princeton, left in 1929 for Westminster.
Called the “Collingswood Warrior” for his church was in Collingswood, NJ.
Established several right-wing organizations: colleges, conference center, American Council of Christian Churches, the International Council of Christian Churches, and a national radio program.
Primary mover for the Bible Presbyterian Church and Faith Theological Seminary.
Crusader against Roman Catholicism, communism, WCC, and ecumenism.

(3) The characteristics.

- (a) Distrust for higher education; stress on Bible school emphasis.
- (b) Sense of outrage against liberalism.
- (c) Exclusivistic, separation from believers who would disagree at any point in theology or practice.
- (d) Belligerent, sometimes hateful, attitude (oft-times little evidence of biblical love) to any who would disagree.
- (e) Lack of ethical sensitivity in ministry and relationships.
- (f) A belief that they are the true remnant of historic Fundamentalism.
- (g) Belief in the sufficiency of the preached Word to the neglect of personal discipleship.
- (h) A belief in the conspirational interpretation of America’s history – post-World War II era a communist instigated plot through deceived liberal church to rob us of our freedom.
- (i) Strict identification of ultra-fundamentalism as the ideals of patriotism. An ideological union of church and state.
- (j) Manifestation of ethical absolutism.
- (k) Absence of mutual trust, a spy-ring mentality.

- (l) An over occupation with negatives, not the positive conquest of new horizons.
 - (m) Characterized by movement around (formed) a strong prophetic voice.
 - (n) Premillennial – Pretribulational.
- d) The rise of the New Evangelical, the inerrancy debate within the Evangelical Movement.



- (1) The origins of the movement.
- (2) The characteristics of the movement.
 - (a) There is serious deterioration in their view of biblical inspiration.
 - (b) There is a serious disinterest in the importance of doctrine and theology with a stress on psychological and sociological wholeness.
 - (c) There is a strong disdain (hatred) of dispensational theology.
 - (d) There is a strong dislike for the foreign and domestic policy of the United States government.
 - (e) There is a strong idea that the responsibility of the church rests in its involvement in social reform and social action.
 - (f) There is a strong stress on the “how” of Christian discipleship.

(g) There is a stress on cooperation, even merger, with religious liberals, Marxists and Romanists.

(3) The effect on the movement on Evangelicalism.

