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Satan,' then you don't have to address the specifics of their arguments"). It is time for evangelicals to mature, she concluded, especially by "putting behind us old formulas and old dichotomies."

A European Perspective

Finally, in the most intellectually stimulating message of the conference, British evangelical Os Guinness offered a European perspective on American evangelicalism (see article, p. 22). He compared this moment in American history to the evangelical hour in 19th century Britain, which saw an opportunity for authentic revival and social reform. The American concern for religion is not superficial but deeply rooted. Evangelicals can play a strategic role if they maintain the

Christian faith's two major strengths, the lordship of Jesus Christ over every sphere of life and the challenge of being Christian in the world while living in tension with it. Are today's evangelicals doing this? No, Guinness maintained. They are compromising the gospel to gain "success" and conforming to American culture. "Even if we win all the 'right' Christian issues, we may lose America's soul." Will God be God to evangelicals, or will they turn away to idols? "Ascribe glory to the Lord before the darkness falls," he concluded in a somber challenge.

The complete texts of all the presenters' remarks will be printed and published by Eastern College and Seminary before next year's Roundtable, which will focus on "The Sanctity of Life."

A Shared Evangelical Heritage

by Timothy L. Smith

It is a splendid kindness to be asked to comment on an aspect of American and British evangelicalism which has rarely been noticed by commentators or historians: its amazing non-sectarianism. Sectarian competition that once existed within and between various evangelical communities and traditions has steadily declined. Scores of conferences involving many evangelical movements and their supporting denominations take place with almost no expression of sectarian rivalry. Onlookers will find this amazing, since the legend, both in historical accounts and among recent secular observers, is that ecumenicity is a trait of liberal Christianity and sectarian strife a principal feature of old-time Protestantism.

Why is this degree of good fellowship and mutual cooperation possible? It arises from the broad agreements among evangelicals that date from their beginning as a self-conscious Christian movement two hundred and fifty years ago in Scotland, England, Germany, and America. An evangelical, historians can now perceive, is one who, since the time of John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and August Francke, has believed that his or her religious life should rest fully upon the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures; that the center of those Scriptures is the promise of moral and spiritual rebirth through faith in Jesus Christ and the gift of God's Holy Spirit; and that, on both these accounts, believers should be devoted to evangelism, that is, to persuading lost persons to trust in Christ, and in that faith be born again.

These central affirmations informed American Protestantism throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1740, for example, the greatest Puritan pastors of Boston invited George Whitefield to his first evangelistic engagement there. He preached in nearly all of their pulpits and a great religious awakening followed. What prompted them was the reprinting in Boston of several of Whitefield's sermons, including his discourse preached in England three years before on *The Nature and Necessity of the New Birth*.¹ Another example: the first Lutheran pastors in Pennsylvania and New York and southward to Virginia and the Carolinas were Pietists. They came chiefly from the missionary institution at Halle, Saxony, in response to the pleas of Lutheran lay people already in America. They forwarded their petitions through a graduate, Henry M. Muhlenberg, who became the great organizer of colonial Lutheranism.²

American Methodism's vitality stemmed from the same three commitments. Methodism came to America on the eve of the War of Independence, while still a spiritual community within the Church of England. It decisively influenced what became the Virginia and Ohio dioceses of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Though the Methodists separated from their parent communion in 1784, Wesley's followers grew rapidly and by 1850 had become the largest Protestant sect in the United States and Canada.³

Meanwhile, a similarly evangelical Baptist movement emerged out of the most revivalistic wing of Connecticut Puritanism and, through American and English immigrants, in the maritime provinces of Canada.⁴ Transferred to the South by two of its young men who had studied theology at Yale, it began spreading among the plain people of that section, both slaves and free, like a benevolent plague. Though both Methodist and Baptist communions were divided during the long controversy over slavery, the Southern Baptist Convention eventually replaced the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, as America's largest Protestant group.⁵

The followers of Alexander Campbell, a Presbyterian evangelist from Scotland who was briefly a Baptist, now form three denominations: the Churches of Christ, Disciples of Christ, and Churches of Christ and Christian Churches. Congregational independence and adult baptism by immersion have always been as important to them as to Baptists. The nineteenth century forebearers of all three groups rest their faith on the same evangelical principles, though they emphasized reason more in explaining the process of one's embracing the faith by which he or she was born again.⁶

So with the multitude of nineteenth-century Protestant denominations organized among immigrants from Northern Ireland, Scandinavia, Germany, and central and eastern Europe. Without reference to the much-vaunted American frontier environment and often in conscious rejection of some notions that were popular among older American denominations, they formed themselves into religious communities that drew deeply upon British and continental understandings of these same three evangelical ideas.⁷

Likewise, when American Blacks won the freedom to establish their own congregations—a right that white southerners granted them only after the Civil War—they became mostly Methodists or Baptists. Black Christians were not only one hundred per cent American Protestants, as has often been pointed out, but they were and have remained overwhelmingly evangelical, preaching a Bible-centered gospel of the

Timothy L. Smith is Professor of History at Johns Hopkins University. This material was originally presented at the Evangelical Roundtable June 4-6, 1986, and is used by permission.

new birth and steadily evangelizing their fellow Blacks.⁸

The growing awareness of twentieth-century American and Canadian evangelicals that they are united on these larger issues—a unity only recently rediscovered by the mass media of communication and by some conservative Christians as well—has caused them to think of their movements as compromising the religious majority instead of a disparate body of minority sects. True, they all know that the literary, scientific, and business culture of our times is still moving in a secular direction, and that the clergy in old line denominations are still deeply affected by various kinds of theological liberalism. But evangelicals in all traditions draw together around the three historic principles. Their contest with religious modernism for the soul of America has helped to harden that unity.⁹

were important pioneers in promoting social reforms in England and America. Few realize, however, that multitudes of social reformers were rooted in Puritan, Continental, or Scotch-Irish Calvinist ideas; that Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopal or Anglican, and churches of Christ or "Christian" ministers were in the past deeply concerned about social justice; and that small denominations such as the Seventh-day Adventists, German Baptists, and the many kinds of Mennonite and Scandinavian free churches emphasized particular social ministries. Moreover, to ponder the tremendous communities of Black Christians, now organized mostly into various Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal denominations, is to be reminded that these peoples, like Puerto Rican Pentecostals and Mexican-American Roman Catholics, have not needed a "social gospel" because they always understood the gospel to be both social

Probably at no time since the Reformation has there been less sectarian feeling among a broad and diverse community of Christians than now exists among Bible-believing Protestants.

Except for extremists in each tradition, probably at no time since the Reformation has there been less sectarian feeling among a broad and diverse community of Christians than now exists among Bible-believing Protestants. With our Pentecostal brothers and sisters leading the way, we have managed to reach out in fellowship and thought about the Holy Spirit to those Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians who share the current religious awakening.¹⁰ We have rejoiced in the steady multiplication of pastors and congregations in the old line Protestant denominations who accept and promote the evangelical movement, often seeding those denominations with young clergymen trained in evangelical theological seminaries like Fuller, Bethel, Gordon-Conwell, and Southwestern Baptist.¹¹ Evangelical ministers of every denomination and none, and professionals who support them in colleges and welfare institutions, nearly all read *Christianity Today*, the world's largest non-denominational journal. Most of them are members or adherents of the vast umbrella organization called the National Association of Evangelicals.¹²

Looking back, we can see that one of the self-deceptions of the modern ecumenical movement is that because of its emphasis on biblical doctrines, traditional and evangelical Protestantism helped to divide Christianity into a multitude of warring sects. Self-proclaimed ecumenists have freely offered their description for that strife: jettison orthodox Christian doctrines and adopt a program of social action that is adapted to modern ethical demands and rooted in the perceptions of modern culture.¹³ In response, ironically, modern evangelicals, particularly the fundamentalist party, have sometimes believed this libel, and acted as though one's orthodoxy is certified by abrasive dogmatism in theology, silence on social issues, and advocating nationalistic and economic doctrines shared by the most conservative secular politicians.¹⁴

The shared heritage of evangelical social concern, however, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, exposes the modernist self-deception for what it often is: an excuse to lay aside the old-time religion, to reject biblical Christianity. For in historical fact, the concern for social justice has been a major contribution of evangelical faith to modern culture. And it has sprung in various ways from every one of the religious traditions that today contribute to the evangelical movement. To this aspect of the historic consensus I now direct your attention.

Most literate Christians know that Wesleyans and Quakers

and spiritual.

True enough, the several Wesleyan denominations that flourished in the nineteenth century, along with small but earnest communities of Quakers, deserve much credit for their promotion of peace, the liberation of women, the abolition of slavery, justice to native Americans, and the crusade against the manufacture and sale of liquor (which they considered a social blight spread by the greed of brewers and saloonkeepers). Moreover, they usually championed the cause of poor people in British and American political contests.¹⁵

However, I wish to stress here, the role of non-Wesleyans and non-Quakers in promoting social justice. The Lutheran Pietists in America, the New England Puritans, the Scotch-Irish and other Presbyterians, the German Peace-church people, the Baptists, and the Scandinavian Christians, of both Lutheran, Covenant, and Free Church backgrounds helped shape the Christian heritage of social concern in America. And though I do not have the space to underline it, the same can be said of the social convictions of many Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians as well, especially whenever the evangelicals among them turned their attention to biblical ethics. In short, no one spiritual tradition in Christianity, but all of them, whenever they became preoccupied with trying to follow Moses and the prophets, Jesus and the apostles, developed not only an individual ethic of righteousness and love, but a social one as well.

The story begins with the Protestant Reformation and the proliferation of evangelical movements that followed in its train. John Calvin's hopes for a Christian social order in sixteenth-century Geneva, Switzerland, helped to shape a Scottish Presbyterian culture and to provoke the Puritan revolution in England. That revolution made English Puritanism a model for all kinds of religious movements of social transformation, including the establishment of the Puritan Commonwealth in New England. Later, that Puritan tradition encouraged nineteenth century Congregationalist and Presbyterian pastors to embrace the goal of building the kingdom of God on earth.¹⁶

Less perhaps can be said about Martin Luther, but Lutheran scholars now stress the Reformer's teaching, especially in his later years, that Christians must live a life of holy deeds, and that these are not human works but the fruit of divine grace.¹⁷ The step from that understanding to a commitment to charity, mercy, and justice toward all persons is a small one, and Lutheran pietists of all descriptions often took it, both in Europe

and America. Hence the multitude of orphanages, homes for the aged, and schools that they founded under the leadership of August H. Francke and Henry M. Muhlenberg.¹⁸ Pastors who came from Germany in the nineteenth century to serve relatively recent immigrants brought a similar consciousness of social obligation to many German-American evangelicals. Typical, for example, was the role that Gustav Niebuhr played in the mixed Lutheran and Reformed Synod that nurtured his two sons, H. Richard and Reinhold Niebuhr, famous ethicists in the generation that preceded our own.¹⁹

after, the Southern Baptist Convention furthered the idea of the sovereignty and independence of each congregation, even while it was making Southern culture overwhelmingly Baptist.²⁴

Out of these early commitments to social idealism emerged the nineteenth century evangelical passion to build God's kingdom on earth. The spark of the social flame was no doubt the emergence of hopes for the near onset of the millennium, the biblical thousand years of peace on earth. Scholars often attribute the millennial idea to Jonathan Edwards, even though

The concern for social justice has been a major contribution of evangelical faith to modern culture.

Continental backgrounds of the tradition of social reform are also evident from the work of Mennonites, Brethren, Moravians, and other German "Peace Christians," as they were called. True, many Mennonites championed the idea of "two kingdoms," one divine and the other human, to both of which Christians belonged; and they tended across the years toward increasing preoccupation with the relationship of their own "separated" congregations to the kingdom of God.²⁰ All these groups, however, were committed to an ethic of non-violence. They refused to serve in armies, bear arms, swear oaths in courts of law, or otherwise to give the heart's allegiance to a worldly kingdom—an attitude still evident in the well-known encounters of the Amish Mennonites with the state. They have kept alive the idea that Christianity is a counter-cultural religion, and point out that a merely civil or public faith allows all kinds of corruptions of Christian ethics in the name of national patriotism.²¹

Anglican traditions of social justice contributed much to the American scene as well, from the colonial period forward. True, the Church of England's record on slavery in the colonies was a sad one. After some uncertainty in the seventeenth century, they surrendered to the insistence of colonial planters that the new spiritual status of converted slaves did not free them from their bonds. During that century also they abandoned much of their dream of evangelizing and educating the native Americans or American Indians, as many still call them. The story of the Anglican effort to educate the poor English-speaking children, however, both in the Old World and the New, is part of the background of George Whitefield's orphanage in Georgia and, indeed, of much else in the humanitarian bent of Whitefield and the Wesleys.²²

John Wesley's Methodists, of course, took a much sturdier stand against slavery, both on England's Caribbean sugar islands and in the new American nation. In the United States, forty years of Southern resistance to that stand eventually frustrated Bishop Francis Asbury's effort to build an antislavery communion. During the early years of Methodism in America, however, Southern whites set their slaves free on becoming church members. Later on, when freeing one's slaves became illegal, Bishop Caspers of South Carolina, one third of whose members were Black, carried on an impressive ministry of evangelism and oral education for slaves.²³

Meanwhile, in Britain and America, that wing of the Baptist movement which took its stand for the sovereignty of the congregation, for adult baptism by immersion, and for the separation of church and state led the way in resisting the power of the political authorities to impose their will on the churches. They gave sturdy support to the independency of New England Baptists before and after the Revolution. There-

the Northampton pastor got only a few lines into print about it during his lifetime. The idea's first great American advocate was Samuel Hopkins, Puritan pastor at Newport, Rhode Island, during the decades following the American War for Independence. His widely circulated lectures on the millennium, like a half-dozen of John Wesley's later sermons, gave a rational and biblical basis for expanding Christian hopes.²⁵ However, these hopes sprang as much from the popular optimism generated by the settlement of a new and now republican nation composed of peoples from many European and African lands. Christians on both sides of the Atlantic believed God was moving forward the timetable of human destiny, in response to worldwide evangelism. Clergymen in all nations urged believers to seek an outpouring of the Spirit of God that would prepare the kingdom for the King.²⁶

Thus in the late 1770s, millennialism sparked the organization of the New York and Connecticut Missionary Societies. Both were modeled on recent British examples and aimed at supporting ministers on the frontiers of western New York and Pennsylvania.²⁷ The philosophy and aims of the missionary movement were, then, international from the start. Witness the close association of millennialism with overseas missions, first in Scotland and England and shortly afterward in America, where both were joined in the famous "Haystack prayer meeting" conducted in 1812 by students at Williams College in western Massachusetts. From that point forward the missionary idea drew deeply upon the internationalism that pervades the New Testament Scriptures. These declare that the teaching and ministry of Christ and the apostles were not the announcement of a new faith but an extension to all peoples of the promises God had first made to Abraham and his descendants.²⁸

As with John Wesley's millennial views, faithfully understood and reproduced in the preaching of generations of his British and American followers, so with those of Lutheran and Reformed evangelicals of the nineteenth century: in our modern sense they were neither premillennial nor postmillennial. Rather, they declared that the Christian churches must seek the evangelization of the whole world amidst an outpouring of the Spirit, and so hasten Christ's return. His coming would make the hoped-for thousand years of peace a social reality. In that day, they were convinced, and increasingly as it drew near, justice would roll down from the mountains, the burdens of poverty would be lifted, and all forms of oppression, including slavery, war, ignorance, and exploitation, would pass away.²⁹

Millennial hope, then, underlay all aspects of nineteenth century social idealism. I did not understand this fact when I wrote my first book, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, and made

the chapter on the anticipation of Christ's kingdom the last and climactic one, rather than, as I should have, making it the first and foundational one.³⁰ One of my early graduate students, Garth Rosell, now academic vice-president at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, later taught me what reading broadly in the evangelical literature of the first two decades of that century has fully confirmed: millennialism is a parent to the nineteenth century revivalism, not its offspring.³¹

effort to regulate private morality.³⁸ Only after the adoption of that amendment, when enforcement of the Volstead Act fell upon individuals, did publicists and politicians who opposed Prohibition convince a majority of American voters that the hope to regulate morality had in fact motivated temperance reformers. After fifteen years of capricious enforcement, the nation turned against Prohibition.³⁹ Historians have ever since neglected the true story of the "noble experiment."

Advocates of the Marxist notion that evangelical Christianity is an opiate against privation, that it so focuses converts' minds on heaven that they are of no earthly good, should consider the Blacks. Thousands of them became Christians while yet under slavery, and their hopes for heaven sustained both their submission and resistance to terrible injustice.

Moreover, millennialism pervaded the nineteenth century peace movement. About this I also knew little, and felt less, during the period when I was writing that book. The association of the two ideas, I now see, was close and widespread. Edward Hick's famous painting, "The Peaceable Kingdom," showed all kinds of lions lying down with the lambs. Not only Quakers, Mennonites, and German Brethren, but New England Congregationalists and Southern Presbyterians were regional leaders.³² A small but significant minority of American Methodists, in Canada and all parts of the United States, kept alive the revolutionary commitment to non-violence, though here as elsewhere in the nineteenth century radical Christian pacifism was rare.³³ Moreover, the several wars fought by the United States, from the Mexican to the Spanish-American, each muffled for a time the rhetoric of peaceableness.³⁴

But concern for peace was so strong that on the eve of the Civil War deeply anti-slavery Christians like the Methodist lay evangelist, Phoebe Palmer, suppressed their abolitionist feelings out of fear that they might help drive the nation into civil war. William Lloyd Garrison championed both abolitionism and peace. He argued throughout his life for peaceable secession by the North.³⁵ When the nation drifted into the bloodiest war of the century, freeing the slaves was not its first aim, but the preservation of the union. Only in retrospect can we view Lincoln's wartime emancipation of the slaves still under Confederate rule as a "good" outcome. "Good," that is, if one disregards the alternative of peaceable and compensated emancipation. Such a politically realistic policy might have overcome the stubbornness of the most radical pro-slavery Southerners.³⁶

The temperance movement was equally important to nineteenth century evangelicals. It eventually succeeded after one hundred years of political agitation. The movement sprang up during the first decade of the nineteenth century, when the protest against New England manufacturers and sellers of rum became an important expression of the evangelical desire to save the poor from exploitation by the wealthy. By the late 1820s, New England Congregationalist pastors were turning against all use of alcohol, and Charles G. Finney was making total abstinence, like peace and anti-slavery, the obligation of all Christians. It was a centerpiece of the social reforms he advocated during the 1830s in his New York City congregation as well as at his college at Oberlin, in Ohio.³⁷

The principal thing to understand here is that right down until the passage during World War I of the Eighteenth Amendment, which enabled Congress to ban the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, the movement seemed to its sponsors a crusade for social justice, rather than simply an

The "common school" movement, later called the campaign for free public schools, was even more important to nineteenth century Christians. Poor children rarely had access to the private schools conducted by either entrepreneurial teachers or religious congregations. In the new settlements of the West, struggling congregations were usually unable to maintain schools at all. Though on the northern sector of successive frontiers, from New York to Oregon, settlers from Puritan New England led the way, there and in most of the Ohio and lower Mississippi valleys the great diversity of denominations, all wishing to educate children, was a formidable obstacle.⁴⁰

Clergymen and laypersons gradually realized that the moral values essential to both democracy and Christian faith could be taught to all children in common, without favoring the doctrines of any one sect. Often Eastern churches sent out educational missionaries to the West, directing them to organize non-denominational "common schools" in frontier towns which had none, then to do gospel work on Sundays in church buildings belonging to one or another denomination.⁴¹ From the experience of many persons, then, the conviction emerged that free and tax-supported education for poor children was the social obligation of all Christians.

Little wonder that the public schools were so infused with the spirit of Protestant evangelical faith. At times, they became suspect to both Jews and Roman Catholics, the one wishing them to be less Christian and the other, more Catholic. After some slight modifications in larger cities, however, the campaign for free, and later for compulsory, public schooling moved ahead. One of its major themes was social justice for poor children.⁴²

Likewise, the anti-slavery movement won favor among a broad company of evangelicals. The story of widespread religious support of it has been told in a number of volumes, including my own, but I wish to stress here three neglected aspects of that story. First, the opposition of Black Christians to slavery, even when expressed by nothing more than flight, gained strength from their identification with the enslaved Hebrews, whom God liberated under Moses. Advocates of the Marxist notion that evangelical Christianity is an opiate against privation, that it so focuses converts' minds on heaven that they are of no earthly good, should consider the Blacks. Thousands of them became Christians while yet under slavery, and their hopes for heaven sustained both their submission and resistance to terrible injustice. Neither before nor after Civil War do we find any pro-slavery Black Christians; almost none made compromises with the institution that were not forced upon them. Escaped slaves who became pastors of free Black

churches in the North, such as the notable Presbyterian W.J.C. Fennington, author of *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, expressed an understanding of Christianity that scholars have only recently begun to appreciate.⁴³ Once the Civil War liberated them, an amazing number of Black church organizations moved above-ground in every part of the South. They became the centers of Afro-American education and communal life precisely because Christianity had won such deep loyalty among the enslaved.⁴⁴

Second, the support many white evangelicals gave to colonizing slaves in Africa—a grand piece of wishful thinking or, as some steadfastly believe, a substitute for dealing honestly with the problem of the free Negro in America—drew in some cases, at least, upon three reasonable notions. It seemed to its evangelical proponents a way of helping to Christianize African societies, an act of restitution of having torn Black persons from their homelands, and a means of hastening through both these means the dawn of the millennium.⁴⁵

Third, Black education both before and after the Civil War was a major evangelical concern. After state law made it illegal to teach slaves to read and write, Methodists in South Carolina carried on for thirty years an extensive program of oral education, aimed at helping Black people to learn all they possibly could without knowing how to read. Secretly, of course, and in very large numbers, Blacks taught one another to read; and, in defiance of the law, a few whites taught their slaves to do so. After the Civil War, when missionaries from the North began to pour into the South, their first preoccupation was the education of Black people. They founded scores of academies and a few struggling colleges like Hampton Institute. A multitude of small and primitive church buildings served as schoolhouses on weekdays, well into the twentieth century. Long before this educational crusade became a campaign to reconstitute the culture of the South in ways that both secular and religious persons supported, a vast program of education, both rural and urban, had been set in motion. It combined white missionary zeal with the social aspirations of Black Christians.⁴⁶

Since Black education, like the abolitionist agitation that preceded it, focused attention upon the poverty and social need, the freed slaves developed an understanding of Christianity that made compassion and social justice central. Toward the end of the century, when whites developed various forms of social Christianity, Black religion showed little change. They had always considered the gospel to be as much concerned with social as with individual ethics.⁴⁷

But for whites, the emergence of a socially concerned Christianity was a great leap forward. Robert H. Bremner believes the discovery of poverty in the United States took place only with the arrival of vast numbers of penniless European immigrants in the 1880s. Evangelical Christians discovered it, however, in the three decades preceding the Civil War. By the 1840s, groups of pastors and lay people were organizing volunteers to visit weekly the destitute families in each block of every sizeable city in America, looking for cases of illness, hunger, or cold that required immediate help.⁴⁸ After several years, interdenominational city missionary societies came into existence in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, then in smaller cities. Their organization fell chiefly to Congregationalists and Presbyterians, although many others assisted. They have survived down to the present day, as did many of the mission institutions organized just after the War, in emulation of Jerry Macaulay's famous one in New York City.⁴⁹

During the same period, Christian movements to aid the impoverished masses in Britain and Canada caused many Anglican and most Methodist leaders to support various pro-

grams of social and political reform. These gave rise at last to a full-blown Christian socialism.⁵⁰ In less dramatic ways, Bernard Semmel has pointed out, Methodists there also helped reshape the personality and morals of people who must for the foreseeable future live in industrial cities and learn the self-reliance that free enterprise capitalism demands.⁵¹

At the end of the nineteenth century, when German Baptist Walter Rauschenbusch accepted a pastorate in New York City's "Hell Kitchen," his ministry to the poor, initially a thoroughly evangelical one, was simply the most socially radical of a multitude of missionary and institutional church ventures which aimed to show gospel compassion to the masses.⁵² The 1890s witnessed an immense expansion of the English-born Salvation Army and its offspring, the Volunteers of America, in this country. Evangelicals organized myriads of social service agencies— orphanages, rescue homes for unwed mothers, and employment bureaus, for example—to help poor people whose migration to the city had produced not success but abject failure.⁵³

That providing medical care for the needy should have followed in the train of all of these endeavors is no surprise. The deaconess movement, as I pointed out earlier, gave early leadership to it. Lutheran and Methodist organizations gave the deaconess name to some of the finest hospitals in the nation. Many of these began as nursing homes. So with the Baptist hospitals that dot both northern and southern cities.⁵⁴ Even small sects, thought to be concerned only with spiritual matters, got into the act. Seventh-day Adventists established "sanitariums" in many states.⁵⁵ The first piece of printing by Phineas F. Bresee's infant Church of the Nazarene in California was a small card announcing the opening of services in Redmen's Hall, Los Angeles. On the back, the card announced that the daughter of Bresee's co-founder, Joseph P. Widney (a prominent physician and president of the infant University of Southern California) had drawn together a group of practical nurses, who offered to provide free medical care for the poor in the neighborhood.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, of course, every immigrant people was developing a sense of solidarity and mutual aid that reflected both its religious traditions and its understanding of the call of Christ in the modern world. The World Parliament of Religions, at the Chicago Exposition of 1893, gave a great boost to such social idealism; so did the Men and Missions Movement twenty years later.⁵⁷ Dutch immigrants, for example, pondered deeply the meaning of the socially concerned Calvinism of Abraham Kuyper, a religious and political leader in Holland who became prime minister of that country in 1901. Kuyper rejected all views of evangelical Christianity that would deny the believer's responsibility to help Christianize the culture. Both at Hope and Calvin Colleges, in central Michigan, his ideas inspired three generations of Dutch-American Christians. At Calvin, they helped to spark the evangelical denomination called the Christian Reformed Church. At one crucial point in its early history, the latter group opted for Prohibition, even though beer-drinking had been customary in Dutch culture. The persuasive argument was that the Bible commanded that we should love our neighbors as ourselves. Since evangelical religion aimed to teach Christians how to live by that standard, the strong must help the weak by forswearing alcoholic beverages, and thus encourage total abstinence among poor people!⁵⁸

Conclusions

First, today's Evangelicals for Social Action, World Vision, Sojourners, and the Evangelical Roundtable are not signs of surrender to modern liberal influences but, rather, marks of a

revival of the old-time religion. Although today certain modern ideologies, whether those of liberal democracy, of liberation theology, or of either Christian or Marxian socialism, aim also at social justice, they are much less originators than imitators of an evangelical renewal that has gone on since Wesley's day. True to its several traditions, earnest Christianity roots compassion in the Old and New Testaments.

Second, since the day when John Fletcher tried to mediate the labor grievances of the poor miners in England's Severn Valley, evangelicals have declared that the pursuit of social justice is best carried on by non-violent and moral means. That is true whether Christians champion women's rights, the access of children both born and unborn to a decent existence, or the needs of the poor in Brazilian barrios, Nicaraguan vil-lages, and Ethiopian deserts. It is also true of today's tragic divisions in the Union of South Africa. There, Black and Colored peoples are now rejecting any substitute for a just access to the wealth and opportunities of their beloved country.

Third, spiritual Christianity, living on daily instruction and inspiration from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, is, as it ever has been, the source of that moral power by which many evils in society can be done away. The chief explanation for repeated outbursts of reforming zeal in our several evangelical communities has not been political ideology, but the ethics of Moses and Jesus. St. Paul was doubtless thinking of both of them when he wrote that all of the moral law is summed up in the words "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." That some evangelical Protestants refuse to accept this simple lesson from Scripture, in an age when Philippine and Polish Roman Catholics seem to have grasped it, is beyond my comprehension.

¹ The sermon is being reprinted in my volume, *Whitefield and Wesley on the New Birth*, fall, 1986 (Zondervan Publishing: Grand Rapids, Michigan) the introduction to which spins out the evidence for the preceding points.

² Henry M. Muhlenberg, *The Journals* . . . , trans. Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Dobestien (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1942, 1950), I, 85, 8, 121, 141-2, 145.

³ Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America* . . . (3rd. ed.; New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1981), 179-81; Emory Stevens Bucke, ed., *The History of American Methodism* (3 vols.; Nashville, Tenn.: The Abingdon Press, 1964), I, 115-20, 131, 141-4, 187, 223-5, 238, 296-301; Donald S. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 28-38.

⁴ C.C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962); George A. Rawlyk, *Ravished by the Spirit* (Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queens University Press, 1981).

⁵ Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 22-8.

⁶ Alexander Campbell *The Christian System* . . . (4th ed.; Cincinnati: H.S. Bosworth, 1866), 15-23, 30-32, 34, 149-53; Robert E. Hooper, *Crying in the Wilderness: A Biography of David Lipscomb* (Nashville: David Lipscomb College, 1979), 30-3, 123-25, J.W. McGarvey, *Autobiography* . . . (Lexington, Kentucky: College of the Bible, 1960).

⁷ Timothy L. Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," *The American Historical Review*, 83 (December, 1978): 1155-1185. cf., for examples, Milton L. Rudwick, *Fundamentalism and The Missouri Synod* . . . (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), 1-86; James D. Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in America* . . . (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984), 1-82.

⁸ Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Owen D. Pelt and Ralph Lee Smith, *The Story of the National Baptists* (New York: Vantage Press, 1960).

⁹ Timothy L. Smith, "The Evangelical Kaleidoscope and the Call to Christian Unity," *The Christian Scholar's Review*, 15 (Spring, 1986): 125-40 (reprinted, with minor revisions from *Midstream*, 22 (July/October, 1983): 308-25; Mark Noll, "Evangelicals and the Study of the Bible," and George Marsden "Introduction," in Marsden, ed., *Evangelicalism in Modern America* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984), vii-xix, 103-21.

¹⁰ See the essays by Athanasios F.S. Emmert, Walter J. Holweger, Donald L. Gelpi, S.J., J. Massynberde Ford and Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., in Russell P. Spittler, ed., *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976).

¹¹ Thomas C. Oden, *Guilt Free* (Nashville, Tennessee: The Abingdon Press, 1980), 80-137, is an example. George C. Marsden's forthcoming history of Fuller Theological Seminary will chronicle its influence upon the Baptist and Presbyterian denominations, especially in the Far West.

¹² Joel A. Carpenter, "From Fundamentalism to the New Evangelical Coalition," and Richard N. Ostling, "Evangelical Publishing and Broadcasting," in Marsden, ed., *Evangelicalism*, 3-16, 46-55.

¹³ Even such a neo-conservative ecumenist as Richard John Neuhaus, in his *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984), 22. Cf. James Luther Adams, *Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science, and Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), 1-3, and *passim*.

¹⁴ Richard V. Pierard, "The New Religious Right in American Politics," in Marsden, ed., *Evangelicalism*, 161-74; David O. Moberg, *The Great Reversal: Evangelism versus Social Concern* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1972), 8-45.

¹⁵ James M. Gustafson, *Christ and the Moral Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968; reprint, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 70-83, analyzes Wesleyan ethics. See also, Leon O. Hynson, *To Reform the Nation: Theological Foundations of Wesley's Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Francis Asbury Press, 1984); and Sydney V. James, *A People Among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963).

¹⁶ Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 11-5, 70-121; Gary Scott Smith, *The Seeds of Secularism: Calvinism, Culture, and Pluralism in America, 1870-1915* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985), 141-57.

¹⁷ Paul Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: The Fortress Press, 1972); Gustafson, *Christ and the Moral Life*, Chaps. 3-4.

¹⁸ Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965).

¹⁹ William G. Crystal, "'A Man of the Hour and the Time': The Legacy of Gustav Niebuhr," *Church History*, 49 (December, 1980): 416-32.

²⁰ Richard McMaster, *Land, Piety, and Peoplehood: The Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America, 1685-1770* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1985); James C. Juhnke, *A People of Two Kingdoms: The Political Acculturation of the Kansas Mennonites* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1975).

²¹ Wes Michaelson (of the Sojourners Community), "Evangelicals and Radical Discipleship," Ronald Sider (of Evangelicals for Social Action), "Evangelicalism and the Mennonite Tradition," and C. Norman Kraus (of Goshen College), "Anabaptism and Evangelicalism," in C. Norman Kraus, ed., *Evangelicalism and Anabaptism* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1979), 63-82, 149-68, and 172-82.

²² John Butler, "Enlarging the Body of Christ: Slavery, Evangelism, and the Christianization of the White South, 1690-1790," in Leonard I. Sweet, ed., *The Evangelical Tradition in America* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1984), 87-112; Frank J. Klingberg, *Anglican Humanitarianism in Colonial New York* (Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society, 1940).

²³ Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 138-201, updates the same author's *Slavery and Methodism, a Chapter in American Morality, 1780-1845* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), 1-87.

²⁴ Rufus Spain, *At Ease in Zion: Social History of Southern Baptists* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967); essays by Gardner Taylor, Wilfred H. Peterson, Charles G. Adams, and Edwin Scott Gaustad, in James E. Wood, Jr., ed., *Baptists and the American Experience* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: The Judson Press, 1978), 39-53, 57-71, 95-118.

²⁵ Samuel Hopkins, *A Treatise on the Millennium* (Boston, 1983); Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 52-136.

²⁶ James W. Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth-Century New England* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1977), 122-75; Nathan Hatch, "Millennialism and Popular Religion in the Early Republic," in Sweet, ed., *Evangelical Tradition*, 113-30.

²⁷ Richard Pointer, *Pluralism in Early America: Diversity and Religion in Eighteenth-Century New York*, forthcoming at The University of Indiana Press.

²⁸ Timothy L. Smith, "Missions and Millennialism," in Jan Shipps, ed., *Revising America*, forthcoming at The University of Indiana Press; Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation*, 82-5.

²⁹ John Wesley, "The General Deliverance," "The General Spread of the Gospel," and "The New Creation," are in his *Works* (14 vols.; New York, 1872; reprinted, Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1978), 241-52, 277-95.

³⁰ Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform on the Eve of the Civil War* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1957; reprint: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 258, confesses this and other shortcomings in an "Afterword."

³¹ Garth Rosell, "Charles Grandison Finney and the Rise of the Benevolence Empire," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Minnesota, 1971.

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³⁵ Aileen Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850* (New York: Random House, 1969) chapter 4; James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and Slavery* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 30-1, 88-95, 165-6; Charles E. White, *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian*, forthcoming, Zondervan Publishing House.

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³⁷ Anne C. Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 130-58; Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1981).

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³⁹ Paul A. Carter, *The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel . . . 1920-1940* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1954).

⁴⁰ Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 17-102.

⁴¹ Timothy L. Smith, *Uncommon Schools: Christian Colleges and Social Idealism in Midwestern America, 1820-1950* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society, 1978); David Tyack, "The Kingdom of God and the Common School," *Harvard Educational Review*, 36 (1966): 447-69.

⁴² Timothy L. Smith, "Protestant Schooling and American Nationality, 1800-1850," *The Journal of American History*, 53 (March, 1967): 679-95; Cremin, *American Education*, 148-85.

⁴³ Timothy L. Smith, "Slavery and Theology: The Emergence of Black Christian Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century America," *Church History*, 31 (December, 1973): 497-512; Vincent Harding, "Religion and Resistance Among Antebellum Negroes, 1800-1860," in John M. Mulder and John F. Wilson, *Religion in American History: Interpretive Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1978), 270-87.

⁴⁴ James M. McPherson, *The Abolitionist Legacy: From Reconstruction to the NAACP* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975), 143-60, and *passim*, recounts the evangelical legacy, both black and white.

⁴⁵ Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals*, 213-6. Cf. P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

⁴⁶ McPherson, *Abolitionist Legacy*, 161-295, spells out the long story. See above, note 23; and Cf. Timothy L. Smith, "Progressive and Americanism Education, 1880-1920," *The Harvard Educational Review*, 31 (Spring, 1961): 168-93.

⁴⁷ Ronald S. White, Jr., and Charles Howard Hopkins, *The Social Gospel: Religion and Reform in Changing America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976).

⁴⁸ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City: The New York City Mission Movement, 1812-1870* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971). Cf. Robert H. Bremner, *From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 1956).

⁴⁹ Smith-Rosenberg, *Religion and . . . the City*; and Aaron I. Abell, *The Urban Impact upon American Protestantism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1943).

⁵⁰ Robert T. Handy, "The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America, 1900-1920," *Church History*, 21 (1952): 39-54.

⁵¹ Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 96-110, and *passim*.

⁵² Robert T. Handy, ed., *The Social Gospel in America, 1870-1920: Gladden, Ely, Rauschenbusch* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

⁵³ Norris, Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1977). Cf. Ross L. Finney, *Personal Religion and the Social Awakening* (Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern, 1913), 1-35.

⁵⁴ Ruth Fritz Meyer, *The Role of Women in the Church From Bible Times Up To and Including a History of the Lutheran Woman's Missionary League . . .* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1967).

⁵⁵ Leroy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, D.C.: Seventh-Day Adventist Publishing House, 1971).

⁵⁶ Flyer, dated October, 1895, in Bresee Archives, Point Loma Nazarene College, San Diego, California.

⁵⁷ Gary S. Smith, *The Seeds of Secularism*, 142-45.

⁵⁸ Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America*, 73-4.

The Black Contribution to Evangelicalism

by James Earl Massey

The evangelical faith has meant, and continues to mean, much to Black Americans. At this time when Evangelicalism has re-emerged as a potent presence in American life, I want to discuss what Black Americans have contributed to this mosaic-like spiritual grouping and movement.

It has been difficult to trace those contributions. Almost since the beginning of the black presence, in this land, blacks have been receiving from a biblically-based message, testing and proving the viability of that message, sharing their spiritual experiences, and passing on the evangelical heritage with concern, creativity, and gusto.

I

Foremost among the many contributions blacks have made to evangelicalism is the *development of black evangelical churches*.

In speaking about "black evangelical churches," I am referring to those congregations and denominations which took their rise in history under the evangelical witness and work of alert and intense black preachers. More often than not, these were servants of the Lord who found no full welcome in white churches because of racist barriers against open fellowship.

Black religious separatism was not initially something that evangelical blacks desired. Historian Albert J. Raboteau, assessing the black experience in American Evangelicalism during and after slavery, commented:

The opportunity for black religious separatism was due to the egalitarian character of evangelical Protestantism; its necessity was due, in part, to the racism of white Evangelicals.¹

But something more must be said. The separateness forced upon black evangelicals became a vehicle for the full assertion of black independence and black pride. The very fact that blacks became and remained Christian in the face of racist barriers against them was proof that the essence of Christianity was not the white man's creation or property. When black believers designated their groupings as "African Methodist" or "African Baptist," it was their way of affirming themselves while staking their claim in a distinctive system of spiritual life. The existence of black churches allowed blacks a spiritual home, a meaningful social setting, and a political base from which to engage the forces of a racist society.²

The majority of black churches across our nation are rooted in the evangelical faith. There are some critics who seek to dispute this fact. Having identified some evident weaknesses within black churches—i.e., a seeming self-preoccupation, a lack of historical perspective regarding the wider Church, and the presence of a strong folk religion culture at work in black

belief—some critics have questioned whether an adequate biblical frame of reference still informs and controls black faith.³

The truth is that a strong commitment to the gospel message still pervades the majority of black church groups. The black churches still insist on a biblically-based faith, still teach that the revelation of God is in Jesus, and that Scripture is the Word of God for all of life. There is still strong concern among black believers to accent the saviorhood, lordship, and "onliness" of Jesus Christ. The biblical message is still being proclaimed in black pulpits about the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit, the expected return of the Lord, and final judgment of history by a just God. These faith tenets I have mentioned are some of the theological factors which mark evangelicalism.⁴ Black evangelicals are not deficient in their theology, even though they often differ with white evangelicals over what should be understood as the social implications of the faith.

II

A second contribution blacks have made to evangelicalism is a *musical tradition that encourages self-expression in worship*. It is a tradition that not only honors biblical faith but personal experiences of life as well. This musical tradition allows the whole self to be expressive in the public worship of God.

This tradition of personal expressiveness in worship dates back as early as the slavery era, when black slaves created such Spirituals as "Nobody Knows De Trouble I See," "Steal Away to Jesus," and "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" to name a few,⁵ but it became increasingly evident to others through the traditional Gospel music that developed and flourished in the black urban churches. The many compositions of the Rev. Charles Albert Tindley (1851?-1933) fall into this category. Tindley was a famous black United Methodist preacher and song-writer, and his soul-stirring musical works became widely known and used. Tindley's style and focus on personal experience heavily influenced the later development of the sacred Gospel Songs under such composers as Thomas A. Dorsey (b. 1899), the "Father of Gospel Music." This later style was characterized by a piano (or organ) improvising on the melody and harmonics of a song while the singer(s) improvised on the words.⁶ Tindley's work also influenced Lucie Campbell (1885-1963). Campbell wrote "I Need Thee Every Hour" and "He'll Understand, and Say 'Well Done!'" Still further development in the Gospel Music tradition took place under Sallie Martin (b. 1896), who wrote "Just a Closer Walk With Thee," and W. Herbert Brewster, Sr. (b. 1899), who wrote "Surely, God Is Able." Martin and Brewster added to the tradition by giving it a stronger flavor from secular rhythms, a less formal use of religious themes, a more entertaining flair, and the use of gospel groups that catered to "Paid Admission" audiences.

While these additional changes in the Gospel Music style after the 1940s still involved words about personal religious

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