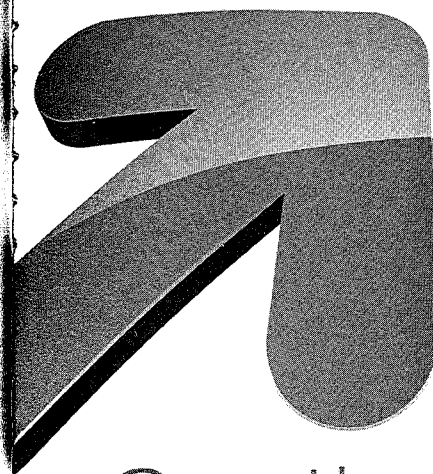


each other. Its authors possess an unfailing confidence in the power of Christ's gospel, a belief in the truthfulness of Scripture and a conviction that Christ is building His church. This book neither glosses over present problems, nor despairs that these problems are insuperable. It calls upon believers to follow Christ faithfully, to think biblically and to spread the marvelous gospel of Christ. In a word, this is an instructive, encouraging, and inspiring book—one not to miss."

—John Woodbridge, Professor of Church History
and Christian Thought, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School



edited by David S. Dockery

Southern Baptists, Evangelicals, and the Future of Denominationalism

with Ray Van Neste and Jerry Tidwell



recognition that ultimately we will be measured by how faithful we have been to God's glorious and eternal gospel. Our denominational distinctives are important, but not so much as ends in themselves, and not nearly as urgent as the gospel message that we proclaim in common with those in the wider body of Christ.

Chapter 11

Southern Baptists and Evangelicals: Passing on the Faith to the Next Generation

NATHAN A. FINN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
OF CHURCH HISTORY AND BAPTIST STUDIES,
SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Introduction

This chapter addresses how Southern Baptists and Evangelicals can pass on their faith to the next generation. I have a vested interest in this subject for a couple of reasons. As a seminary professor who teaches courses in Baptist history and American religious history, I am self-consciously attempting to pass on the faith to the next generation of ministers and missionaries. I let my students know up front that I am not a secular historian, that I am not ideologically detached from these subjects, and that although I attempt to be fair and balanced

when it comes to recounting the past, I have a definite agenda when it comes to their spiritual and ministerial formation. But as a historian in my early 30s, I also recognize that I am a participant-observer in this next generation, both an interpreter and an actor. As a member of the emerging generation, I am keenly aware of some of the challenges inherent in cultivating a strong sense of both Evangelical convictions and Southern Baptist identity among some of my peers.

Although I am excited to address the relationship between Southern Baptists and American Evangelicals, this topic is not one that lends itself to neat and tidy answers that are universally affirmed. In attempting to get my mind around this dicey subject, I have decided to follow the example of the Baptist historian Walter Shurden, who has been known to “exegete” the titles of his lectures as a roundabout and (dare I say?) *preachy* way to make a point. I have structured this chapter around two key ideas worth considering if we are to pass on a Southern Baptist and Evangelical faith to those who come behind us. First, we need to revisit the scholarly debate surrounding the relationship between Southern Baptists and Evangelicals. Second, we need to consider what it means to pass on the Southern Baptist and/or Evangelical faith to the next generation by means of catechesis and narrative. Along the way I will offer some general observations, as a participant-observer, about younger Southern Baptists and Evangelicals between the ages of 20 and 40.

Southern Baptists and Evangelicals

As Duane Litfin notes in his chapter, there are a variety of ways to define words such as *Evangelical* and *Evangelicalism*, some of which are more helpful than others. In this chapter, I will focus on how confessed Evangelical scholars and various Southern Baptist scholars have understood these terms. I will also offer my own understanding of these concepts and make some suggestions pertaining to the relationship between Southern Baptists and Evangelicals.

Evangelicals Defining Evangelicalism

Evangelical scholars argue for at least four different understandings of Evangelical identity, though some overlap exists among them. Following historians including David Bebbington and Garth Rosell, some describe Evangelical Christianity using primarily theological categories.¹ Many theologians adopt this approach, especially those with more conservative theological inclinations.² This strategy works on some levels because Evangelicals share some common convictions about biblical authority, the basic gospel message, the importance of conversion, and the necessity of missions and evangelism. But the devil is in the details: confessed Evangelicals frequently differ among themselves concerning how best to articulate these core beliefs. There are also a variety of other hotly debated issues that are not addressed in most scholarly catalogs of Evangelical beliefs, but nevertheless remain borderline foundational convictions in at least some segments of Evangelicalism. (Ongoing debates about gender roles and Calvinism versus Arminianism come to mind.). Various polls demonstrate that many professing Evangelicals are confused, or at least indifferent, about basic Christian doctrine, which further muddies this approach.³

A second approach, advanced by scholars such as Donald Dayton and Robert Johnston, underscores Evangelical diversity by

¹ See David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 3–17; and Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 26. Although Bebbington’s work focused on British Evangelicalism, his approach has been widely adopted by historians of North American Evangelicalism.

² David Wells is one recent example. See David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth: Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

³ For example, see “Americans Draw Theological Beliefs from Diverse Points of View,” The Barna Group (October 8, 2002), <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/82-americans-draw-theological-beliefs-from-diverse-points-of-view> (accessed September 25, 2009).

emphasizing activism.⁴ While those in this camp do not discount theology's importance to Evangelical identity, they nevertheless argue that one knows Evangelicals more by what they do than what they believe. At the popular level, this approach is evident among many politically engaged Evangelicals. Activists as diverse as Jim Wallis and Ron Sider, on the one hand, and Tony Perkins and James Dobson, on the other, tend to treat Evangelicalism as if it were primarily a prophetic cultural (or countercultural) renewal movement. Many journalists, particularly those transfixed on the Religious Right, frequently adopt this view and portray Evangelicals, at least those of a politically conservative disposition, as more of a political action committee than a fundamentally religious movement. For example, when *Time* magazine ran a 2007 story on "The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America," the authors so emphasized activism that at least two of those named were politically conservative Roman Catholics.⁵

Joel Carpenter and George Marsden are notable advocates of a third approach, which focuses on an affinity among Evangelicals.⁶ By this reckoning, what Marsden calls "card-carrying" Evangelicalism includes conservative Protestants who embraced Christianity at a Billy Graham Crusade, subscribe to *Christianity Today*, send their teenagers to Wheaton College, pursue ministerial training at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, and give financial support to World Vision and Campus Crusade for Christ. This understanding seems reasonable

⁴ See Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991); Timothy L. Smith, "The Evangelical Kaleidoscope and the Call to Christian Unity," *Christian Scholar's Review* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 125-40.

⁵ David Van Biema et al., "The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America," *Time* (February 7, 2005), <http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101050207/> (accessed September 25, 2009).

⁶ See Joel Carpenter, "From Fundamentalism to the New Evangelical Coalition," in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, ed. George M. Marsden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984): 3-16; and George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 4-6. Marsden has referred to Evangelicalism as a denomination of sorts. See Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, vii-xix.

enough, although at times it so focuses on parachurch ministries to the exclusion of denominational identity that some scholars, most notably Darryl Hart, contend that contemporary Evangelicalism is really a myth perpetuated by journalists, historians, and sociologists.⁷ Hart provocatively argues that authentic Evangelicalism is more or less those Protestants who still adhere to their historical confessional documents, an approach that leaves little room for those who identify primarily with parachurch ministries or nondenominational churches.⁸

A final way to understand Evangelical identity is by advocating a common Evangelical piety. Stanley Grenz is the key scholar to make this argument, which for him led to an ambitious project to rethink the nature of Evangelical theology in a postmodern context.⁹ Many self-proclaimed "postconservative" Evangelical theologians such as Roger Olson and John Franke identify with Grenz's vision.¹⁰ Key leaders in the left wing of the Emerging Church movement, particularly Brian McLaren, often cite Grenz for inspiration in their attempt to rethink what Evangelicalism should look like in the twenty-first century.¹¹

⁷ The term *parachurch* literally means "alongside the church." For the purposes of this chapter, a parachurch ministry is any religious organization that is independent of local church and/or denominational oversight that devotes its energies and resources to specialized ministry objectives.

⁸ D. G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

⁹ See Stanley J. Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology: A Fresh Agenda for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993); id., *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000); Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Post-Modern Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

¹⁰ See Roger Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming: The Postconservative Approach to Evangelical Theology*, Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007); *ibid.*, *How to Be Evangelical without Being Conservative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008); John Franke, *The Character of Theology: An Introduction to Its Nature, Task, and Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005). The cover of Franke's book describes it as a "postconservative evangelical approach." For a critique of the postconservative paradigm, see Millard J. Erickson, *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Postconservative Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).

¹¹ See Brian J. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 28-29. For recent critiques of Emergent tendencies, see Gary L. W. Johnson

But the postmodern chic among us do not possess a monopoly on a “piety-centric” understanding of Evangelicalism. Anecdotally, I would suggest that a version of this approach is the default position among many grassroots Evangelicals and Southern Baptists, even those who in theory very firmly adhere to conservative theology. Many readers of this chapter likely know Christians who do not concern themselves with too much doctrine—they just want Jesus. Whatever that means.

One thing all these approaches have in common is that they focus predominantly on white, or at least Western, believers. Yet recent scholarship indicates that the ethnic ethos of American Evangelicalism is changing. Philip Jenkins contends that over the last two or three generations the numeric center of Christian gravity has shifted from North America and Europe to Asia, Africa, and South America.¹² Church historians such as Martin Marty and Robert Bruce Mullins argue that church history should incorporate more non-Western Christian movements and contributions.¹³ Mark Noll applies a similar approach in telling the story of American Christianity.¹⁴ In a provocative recent book titled *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*, Soong-Chan Rah argues that first- and second-generation immigrant congregations from Asia and Africa are the fastest-growing demographic among American

and Ronald N. Gleason, *Reforming or Conforming? Post-conservative Evangelicals and the Emerging Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008); William D. Henard and Adam W. Greenway, eds., *Evangelicals Engaging Emergent: A Discussion of the Emergent Church Movement* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009). For attempts to constructively appropriate elements of the Emergent Church without abdicating more-traditional approaches, see Mark Liederbach and Alvin L. Reid, *The Convergent Church: Missional Worshipers in an Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009); Jim Belcher, *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009).

¹² See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); *ibid.*, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹³ See Martin E. Marty, *The Christian World: A Global History* (New York: Modern Library, 2008); Robert Bruce Mullin, *A Short World History of Christianity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008).

¹⁴ See Mark A. Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009).

Evangelicals. He asserts that American Evangelicals must break free from the “white captivity” of the church and embrace a more multi-ethnic, multicultural future.¹⁵ Whenever we think of passing on the faith to the next generation, we must understand that many of them will not identify with some of our Evangelical and Southern Baptist experiences because many of those experiences reflect our predominantly white, North American, and Southern context.

Southern Baptists Defining Evangelicalism

Southern Baptists have periodically debated their relationship to Evangelicalism since at least the 1970s. The same definitional ambiguities that characterize the aforementioned scholars also plague Southern Baptists who have addressed this issue. Reflecting both a denominational insularity and likely equating Evangelicalism with fundamentalism, Foy Valentine famously quipped in a 1976 *Newsweek* article that Evangelicalism is a “Yankee word” that real Southern Baptists eschew.¹⁶ In a 1983 book titled *Are Southern Baptists “Evangelicals”?* Glenn Hinson, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary historian, argued similarly to Valentine, while James Leo Garrett, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary theologian, countered that Southern Baptists are Evangelicals, albeit Evangelicals with a strong denominational identity. James Tull, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary theologian and moderator for this debate, remained unsure of Southern Baptists’ Evangelical credentials.¹⁷ Significantly, these Southern Baptist scholars failed to agree on an understanding of Evangelicalism. The debate continued into the early 1990s, when David S. Dockery, then Southern Baptist Theological

¹⁵ Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009), 22.

¹⁶ See Kenneth L. Woodward et al, “Born Again! The Year of the Evangelicals,” *Newsweek* 88 (October 25, 1976): 76.

¹⁷ James Leo Garrett Jr., E. Glenn Hinson, and James E. Tull, *Are Southern Baptists “Evangelicals”?* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983).

Seminary administrator, edited a collection of essays titled *Southern Baptists and American Evangelicals: The Conversation Continues*. The Dockery volume is noteworthy because it includes contributions from both Southern Baptist scholars and several “Northern” Evangelical scholars. But as with the Hinson-Garrett debate, the contributors did not have a common understanding of Evangelicalism and thus differed in their beliefs concerning how Southern Baptists relate to Evangelicalism.¹⁸

This discussion endures into the early years of the twenty-first century. In 2005, Steve Lemke, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary provost, gave an address at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary titled “The Future of Southern Baptists as Evangelicals.” Although the bulk of the paper focused on his personal concerns about the future of the convention, Lemke seemed to assume that Southern Baptists are Evangelicals in at least some sense, although he distanced the SBC from progressive trends among some Evangelicals such as egalitarianism and inclusivism.¹⁹ In 2006, Malcolm Yarnell, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary theologian, authored a “second decadal reassessment” of the relationship between Southern Baptists and Evangelicals. Yarnell was a bit more cautious than Lemke about lumping Southern Baptists with Evangelicals, although he agreed that Southern Baptists have many common beliefs with Evangelicals. Yarnell argued that Southern Baptists should both maintain a separate existence from Evangelicalism and engage Evangelicalism, all the while safeguarding our unique identity, especially concerning ecclesiological matters.²⁰

¹⁸ David S. Dockery, ed., *Southern Baptists & American Evangelicals: The Conversation Continues* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1993).

¹⁹ Steve W. Lemke, “The Future of Southern Baptists as Evangelicals.” Unpublished paper delivered at the Maintaining Baptist Distinctives Conference, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary (April 2005), 2–3, <http://www.nobts.edu/Faculty/ItoR/LemkeSW/Personal/SBCfuture.pdf> (accessed September 23, 2009).

²⁰ Malcolm B. Yarnell III, “Are Southern Baptists Evangelicals? A Second Decadal Reassessment,” *Ecclesiology* 2, no. 2 (2006): 211–12. Yarnell recently expanded his arguments in an attempt to commend a uniquely “Free Church” theological method.

So *Evangelical* and *Evangelicalism* remain somewhat ambiguous concepts that lend themselves to multiple definitions, among both professing Evangelicals and Southern Baptists. How do we wade through these murky waters? For my part, I prefer to make a distinction between the terms *Evangelical* and *Evangelicalism*. I agree with Bebbington and Rosell that an Evangelical affirms a high view of Scripture, a conversionist piety, the centrality of the cross in human salvation, and a gospel-inspired activism, especially (although not exclusively) evangelism and missions. Any piety that might be common to Evangelicals must flow from these core convictions and priorities. I believe these sentiments also characterize the growing number of American Evangelicals with non-Western backgrounds. But I do want to make what I think is an important clarification. While I certainly believe that there are many individual Roman Catholic (and Eastern Orthodox) Christians who embrace these convictions, the historian in me finds the roots of modern Evangelical Christianity in the various reform movements that rejected Catholicism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For this reason, I am hesitant to speak of Catholic “Evangelicals,” although again I think there are many Catholic believers who are sympathetic to what we might call “Evangelicalish” beliefs.²¹ Although I am thankful for the increased dialog and cooperation among some Evangelicals and some Roman Catholics in recent years, the Reformation is not over.

Having shared my understanding of what it means to be an Evangelical, I would suggest that not all Evangelicals are participants in Evangelicalism; the latter is more a movement than a set of beliefs and priorities. On this point I agree with scholars including Marsden who argue for a network of interdenominational parachurch ministries

See Malcolm B. Yarnell III, *The Formation of Christian Doctrine* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007).

²¹ This is perhaps especially true of evangelicals who convert to Roman Catholicism. See Francis Beckwith, *Return to Rome: Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008). For a larger discussion of these matters, see Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over? An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

that influence and inform the faith of many millions of card-carrying Evangelicals. But there are many Evangelicals content to live out their faith in their local churches or denominations and who remain oblivious to this movement. This would characterize many Southern Baptists, who I think Garrett rightly terms “denominational Evangelicals.” Although we Southern Baptists are normally Evangelical in our beliefs, denominational loyalty has historically run deep among us, and our ecclesiology focuses on the centrality of local churches rather than parachurch ministries. Furthermore, I agree with those raising concerns that there are some of at least questionable Evangelical convictions who identify with movement Evangelicalism.²² So while *Evangelical* and *Evangelicalism* are related concepts, they are by no means coterminous.

Southern Baptists and Evangelicals Revisited

Based on this distinction between the terms *Evangelical* and *Evangelicalism*, I would propose three ways to think about the relationship between Southern Baptists and Evangelicals. The first is *Southern Baptists as Evangelicals*. Most Southern Baptists would have no trouble affirming a list of basic Evangelical convictions about the Bible, conversion, and the cross, although like all Evangelicals we further nuance these categories in ways that clarify our beliefs. The same goes for activism; from its inception the SBC has drawn together autonomous churches for the purpose of gospel endeavors, especially missions and evangelism. We should think of Southern Baptists as Evangelicals in the sense that the vast majority of us embrace basic Evangelical sentiments about doctrine and the Christian life. This is perhaps even more the case in the years since conservatives gained control of the SBC in the 1980s and 1990s, which resulted in at least some Southern Baptists who reject or are hesitant about Evangelical

²² I am thinking particularly of the Open Theist controversy, which preoccupied the Evangelical Theological Society a few years back and caused controversy in several evangelical colleges and universities.

beliefs withdrawing from the denomination and forming new coalitions.²³ Many progressive Baptists remain suspicious of the Evangelical label. Mercer University ethicist David Gushee (himself now a self-described left-of-center Evangelical) noted in a recent op-ed piece in the progressive-friendly *Associated Baptist Press* that he is regularly reminded by some of his colleagues that “*Moderates are not to be understood as evangelicals.*”²⁴

Because we should think of Southern Baptists as Evangelicals in some sense, this means that, for better or worse, trends among other Evangelicals often influence Southern Baptists. A few examples will suffice. First, beginning in the mid-1970s, Evangelical missiologists such as Ralph Winter began calling for a re-centering of foreign missions around ethno-linguistic people groups rather than geographic national boundaries.²⁵ Southern Baptist missiologists adopted this approach, and our missionaries now focus on planting churches among people groups with minimal Christian presence. Second, during the 1970s and 1980s, many Evangelical scholars affiliated with the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy reasserted the importance of inerrancy in light of rejection of that doctrine by some Evangelicals since at least the 1960s. The group published three books and drafted the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy in 1978.²⁶ We

²³ All of the living contributors to *Southern Baptists & American Evangelicals* who raised serious concerns about identifying Southern Baptists as Evangelicals are now identified with moderate groups such as Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Alliance of Baptists.

²⁴ David Gushee, “Opinion: What is the Future of Moderate Baptists?” *Associated Baptist Press* (September 29, 2009), http://www.abpnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4439&Itemid=9 (accessed October 1, 2009). Emphasis in original. Progressive Baptists, particularly in the South, prefer to call themselves *moderates* in an effort to cast themselves as a balanced middle between their perceptions of liberalism and fundamentalism.

²⁵ Winter’s address calling for engaging unreached people groups was given at the Lausanne Missions Congress in 1974. The audio of that address is available online, <http://www.uscwm.org/about/rdw.html> (accessed September 26, 2009).

²⁶ The books were Norman L. Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978); Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus, eds., *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Academie, 1984); and Kenneth S. Kantzer, ed., *Applying the Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Academie, 1987).

Southern Baptists endured our own controversy over inerrancy during the last two decades of the twentieth century, the roots of which are also found in theological changes during the 1960s.²⁷ Finally, the so-called “New Calvinism” has become increasingly popular among many, especially younger Evangelicals, a trend that is also very much evident in Southern Baptist life.²⁸

Although Southern Baptists are Evangelicals in one sense, there are times that *Southern Baptists must be against Evangelicals*, understood in this usage as those card-carrying Evangelicals who find their primary identity in parachurch Evangelicalism. Southern Baptists are *denominational* Evangelicals, and although loyalty to our convention’s programs and initiatives seems to be on the decline, I think most Southern Baptists remain committed to primacy of the local church. This makes sense in light of our history because the Baptist movement is essentially an ecclesiological renewal movement that began among English churches of Evangelical conviction in the early seventeenth century. Our identity as Baptists centers on our understanding of the church, particularly our emphasis on voluntary local congregations of regenerate believers who have undergone believer’s baptism by immersion.

Because Southern Baptists are a movement that has historically focused on local churches, we will at times be at odds with the fundamentally parachurch nature of American Evangelicalism. The authors of *The Prospering Parachurch* claim that almost half the money Americans give to religious organizations goes to parachurch ministries rather than to local churches and denominations. This pattern reflects a supposed paradigm shift from what the authors call

²⁷ For the pre-1979 roots of the Conservative Resurgence, see Jerry L. Faight, “The Genesis Controversies: Denominational Compromise and the Resurgence and Expansion of Fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist Convention” (PhD diss., Baylor University, 1995).

²⁸ Colin Hansen, *Young, Restless, Reformed: A Journalist’s Journey with the New Calvinists* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 69–93; and C. Douglas Weaver and Nathan A. Finn, “Youth for Calvin: Reformed Theology and Southern Baptist Collegians,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 39 (Spring 2004): 19–41.

a “church-centered” model of God’s work to a “kingdom-centered” model.²⁹ In his recent study, *Faith in the Halls of Power*, sociologist D. Michael Lindsay claims that many of the Evangelical leaders he interviewed more readily identify with parachurch ministries than with local churches and invest the bulk of their financial resources in parachurch organizations. Lindsay argues that “the parachurch sector has become the fulcrum of Evangelical influence in American Society.”³⁰

As long as Evangelicalism remains a parachurch-driven coalition, Southern Baptists will remain nervous about certain types of cooperation with the broader Evangelical movement. We will continue to resist the trend among many Evangelicals to downplay ecclesiology as a tertiary matter that unnecessarily impedes Evangelical cooperation and so-called “kingdom” advance. While pan-Evangelical confessions understandably often avoid nuanced ecclesiological statements for the sake of wider cooperation, this at times gives the impression that parachurch ministries are “the church” in the same sense as local churches are “the church.”³¹ It is hoped that Southern Baptists, particularly those engaged in the wider Evangelical movement, will resist this tendency. While we can and should cooperate with other Evangelicals in a variety of worthy endeavors, such cooperation must not come at the expense of an ecclesiological downgrade that would transform us into something other than Baptists. On this point I admittedly share some of Darryl Hart’s uneasiness with Evangelicalism and resonate with his fears that the movement has replaced local churches and denominations with a product that is in many ways inferior.

²⁹ Wesley K. Willmer, J. David Schmidt, and Martyn Smith, *The Prospering Parachurch: Enlarging the Boundaries of God’s Kingdom* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), xi–xii.

³⁰ D. Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 194–95, 201, 204, 207.

³¹ Most parachurch confessional statements focus on the church universal and say little if anything about local churches. Those confessions that do focus on local churches tend to be silent or ambiguous about issues such as baptism, the Lord’s Supper, church discipline, and specific forms of polity, each of which factors significantly into basic Baptist identity.

While Southern Baptists are Evangelicals who at times must be against Evangelicals, I think we must also continue to be *Southern Baptists among Evangelicals*. Having noted my concerns, I favor continued Southern Baptist engagement with other Evangelicals, even within segments of movement Evangelicalism. I say “continued” because some Southern Baptists have been engaging Evangelicalism since the 1940s. Although the convention never took any formal action in this regard, some Southern Baptists were early participants in the National Association of Evangelicals. Southern Baptists were sometimes speakers at interdenominational evangelism, preaching, and prophecy conferences. Several Southern Baptists were part of the aforementioned International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. Individual Southern Baptists are contributing editors to Evangelical periodicals including *Christianity Today*, sit on the board of interdenominational networks such as The Gospel Coalition, advocate theological positions in organizations such as the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals and the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, teach in more broadly Evangelical colleges and seminaries, and most notably participate in the Evangelical Theological Society. In recent years, Southern, Southwestern, and Southeastern seminaries have provided ETS with several of its presidents, and the current editor of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* teaches NT at Southeastern.

As this ETS participation might indicate, considerable Southern Baptist and Evangelical interchange takes place in some of our denominational colleges and seminaries. Many Southern Baptist seminaries employ at least some professors who hail from non-SBC backgrounds and who previously were closely identified with the broader Evangelical movement. This is perhaps especially true of Southern Seminary, where several noteworthy Evangelical scholars joined the faculty after some moderate faculty members’ early retirement in the mid-1990s.³² Baptist-related universities such as Union University

³² Gregory A. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859–2009* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 541, 544–45.

and especially Baylor University have also recruited faculty members from within the ranks of Evangelicalism. Beeson Divinity School was launched in 1988 as a self-consciously Evangelical divinity school anchored to the self-consciously Baptist Samford University. All these aforementioned institutions have hosted several major conferences that included Evangelical speakers, and most Baptist-related schools periodically host guest lecturers from the broader Evangelical world. In addition, some schools normally associated with Evangelicalism such as Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Dallas Theological Seminary, Wheaton College, Taylor University, and even Reformed Theological Seminary have employed Southern Baptists (or professors with SBC roots) on their faculties in recent years.

Individual Southern Baptists have never been aloof of Evangelicalism. Timothy George notes that “the 1970s and 1980s were marked by increasing fellowship and cooperation between Southern Baptists and evangelicals.”³³ Both Timothy George and Barry Hankins have argued that Evangelical authors, especially Carl Henry and Francis Schaeffer, influenced some key leaders of the Conservative Resurgence.³⁴ Not coincidentally, growing numbers of Southern Baptists have participated in pan-Evangelical endeavors since the convention took a conservative turn. Nevertheless, recent Southern Baptist engagement has generally tended toward the Reformed, Dispensational, and/or Complementarian wings of the Evangelical movement. One could argue that over the last generation some Southern Baptists have become movement insiders within the more theologically conservative camp(s) in the increasingly diverse Evangelical movement.

³³ Timothy George, “Toward an Evangelical Future,” in *Southern Baptists Observed: Multiple Perspectives on a Changing Denomination*, ed. Nancy Tatom Ammerman (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 283.

³⁴ Barry Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservatives and American Culture*, Religion and American Culture (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2001). Although Henry was a member of a Southern Baptist church, he was more closely identified with movement Evangelicalism.

I resonate with Timothy George's call for an "Evangelical future" for Southern Baptists, one characterized by a "holistic orthodoxy" that permeates every layer of our polity and (Lord willing) results in our thinking rightly about God and our living rightly before God.³⁵ To that end, I agree with Albert Mohler that a healthy future for the SBC "lies in the rediscovery and reclamation of an authentic and distinctive Southern Baptist Evangelicalism—*genuinely Baptist*, and *genuinely Evangelical*."³⁶ This means we must recognize that we are Evangelicals who must at times swim against some Evangelical currents, nevertheless always seeking to remain in the Evangelical river. Balancing our identities as Southern Baptists, Evangelicals, and Southern Baptist Evangelicals is crucial to passing on our faith to the next generation.

Passing On the Faith

Having identified what I think are some key characteristics of the next generation of Southern Baptists and Evangelicals, the remainder of this chapter suggests what exactly it means to pass on the faith to that generation. Again, I have in mind those between the ages of 20 and 40 who will emerge as key leaders in the next decade, although I readily concede that some of my generational contemporaries already possess influential voices. Of course, if the next generation is to be a generation of *Southern Baptists and Evangelicals*, then we must win them to the faith and disciple them in that faith. They must be an increasingly diverse group in terms of ethnicity and cultural background, which will require creativity by Southern Baptists and Evangelicals. We could camp out here for a long time, but for the sake of brevity I want to focus on discipleship by commending two concepts

³⁵ George, "Toward an Evangelical Future," 295–96.

³⁶ R. Albert Mohler Jr., "A Call for Baptist Evangelicals & Evangelical Baptists: Communities of Faith and a Common Quest for Identity," in *Southern Baptists and American Evangelicals*, 238.

I think will help us pass on a robust faith to the rising generation: catechesis and narrative.

Catechesis: Passing On Our Convictions

By *catechesis*, I mean that Southern Baptists and Evangelicals must pass on our convictions in our preaching, discipleship programs, life-on-life mentoring, theological education, and parenting. Many of the convictions we must entrust to the next generation are shared by Southern Baptists and other Evangelicals. As mentioned, all Evangelicals (at least in theory) affirm the supreme authority of Christian Scripture, the need for personal conversion, the cross-centered saving work of Jesus Christ, and a commitment to evangelism and missions. But I want to move from *description* to *prescription* by digging a bit deeper on some of these points. For example, in my mind, passing on a mere intellectual commitment to biblical inspiration and authority is insufficient. We must labor to pass on a commitment to the full truthfulness of Scripture and its sufficiency in all matters of faith and practice. The sufficiency part will be especially important as we assess new trends among Southern Baptists and Evangelicals and seek to allow Scripture to shape our doctrines, priorities, and methodologies. But we must also seek to inculcate a *Christian* way of reading *Christian* Scripture, which would include reading the whole Bible as one grand narrative spanning two testaments with one Main Character, the Lord Jesus Christ. I would suggest that we point the next generation not only to the Bible battles of the late twentieth century but to the best of the wider Christian tradition, if we are to pass on a robust doctrine of Scripture. Our Patristic, Medieval, and Reformation forebears have much to teach us about how to read our inerrant Scriptures *Christianly*.³⁷

³⁷ I am encouraged by the recent move toward a "theological interpretation of Scripture" that draws on insights from the pre-critical tradition. For an introduction to this school of thought, see Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

We must also seek to pass on a robust view of the gospel. There are Southern Baptists and other Evangelicals providing helpful thoughts in this regard.³⁸ David Dockery catalogs a number of theological truths that one must expound in order to rightly proclaim the gospel, including God's creation of humanity in His image and His sovereign rule over all things; humanity's rejection of God's rule and fall into sin; God's provision for humanity's sin in the perfect life, penal substitutionary death, and victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ; God's salvation of men and women when they repent of their sins and trust in the person and work of Christ; and God's ultimate redemption of the entire created order.³⁹ In a helpful statement titled "Theological Vision for Ministry," The Gospel Coalition notes that one finds the good news both "along" the Bible as a story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration, and "across" the Bible as the true understanding of God, sin, Christ, and faith.⁴⁰ John Piper, a non-SBC Baptist Evangelical, reminds us that the gospel is theocentric and is ultimately about our reconciliation with our Creator, while parachurch leader Jerry Bridges reminds us that the gospel is not some password to enter the Christian family but is the good news that sustains us in our faith and strengthens us in times of need.⁴¹ Southern Baptists and Evangelicals must also pass on what I call a "gospel instinct," which I believe will help us to be very hesitant about aberrant doctrines that seem to undermine faithful gospel proclamation. Examples would include inclusivism, universalism, annihilationism, and hyper-Calvinism.

Developing such a gospel instinct will also help us avoid the truncated view of conversion that is rampant among many Southern

³⁸ For an excellent recent example, see Harry Poe's chapter in this volume.

³⁹ David S. Dockery, *Southern Baptist Consensus and Renewal: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Proposal* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008), 70.

⁴⁰ "Theological Vision for Ministry," The Gospel Coalition, <http://thegospelcoalition.org/about/foundation-documents/vision/> (accessed September 25, 2009).

⁴¹ See John Piper, *God is the Gospel: Meditations on God's Love as the Gift of Himself* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005); and Jerry Bridges, *The Gospel for Real Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002).

Baptists and other Evangelicals. Some Christians tend to equate personal conversion with a *mere* decision. This is particularly the case among some of those inclined toward revivalism or the church-growth movement. Were we to bring Bonhoeffer back from the grave, he would surely say that "cheap grace" has too often become the order of the day among many conservative, evangelistic, Bible-believing Protestants.⁴² Authentic conversion must include repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ and must never collapse into repeat-after-me, walking an aisle, raising a hand, attending a class, or even baptism. Salvation by sincerity is not the same thing as salvation by grace through faith, and jumping through hoops will never justify anyone. I am encouraged by the trend among many American Evangelicals, including Southern Baptists, to recover a view of conversion that is more than praying a canned "sinner's prayer" or affirming a handful of propositions about Jesus.

We must also pass on a balanced commitment to activism, including cultural engagement, evangelism, and missions. I need to tread carefully here. I for one am thankful for the broadened social conscience that so many of my generational peers have developed. I am glad that so many of them care about social justice issues such as poverty, racism, and sexism. I am glad they are committed to combating social evils such as the AIDS epidemic in Africa, worldwide human sex trafficking, and religious persecution. I am glad they are asking hard questions and attempting to develop thoughtful Christian answers for issues such as nuclear warfare, torture, and the role that humans play in climate change. And I am glad that most of them seem to embrace their forebears' commitment to the sanctity of human life, including unborn human life, and the dignity of traditional heterosexual marriage. I am encouraged by this trend, which also characterizes many American believers who hail from non-Western backgrounds.⁴³

⁴² See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 43–56.

⁴³ See Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 39–87.

But despite this encouragement, I am fearful that some of my peers, just like some of my parents' peers, are allowing these and other legitimate cultural issues to become greater priorities than evangelism and missions. When I listen to some of my students, I see a greater zeal for social justice than for the salvation of their friends and family. When I read books by some Evangelicals, I see a greater zeal for the culture wars than the Great Commission. And when I attend the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting, I sometimes hear louder shouting and endure longer ovations for Religious Right victories than gospel advances reported by our two mission boards. I wonder whether Lottie Moon would receive the same adulation that some Republican politicians have received at recent convention meetings.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not opposed to cultural engagement; again, I am in favor of Southern Baptists and other Evangelicals engaging culture, and I want to see us thoughtfully bring our faith to bear on even more issues. But I do not want to see the next generation engage culture at the expense of personal evangelism and church planting, in North America and to the uttermost parts of the earth. We must pass on a commitment to both the cultural mission and the Great Commission. We must not become like some of our fundamentalist cousins and focus only on personal morality and saving souls. But neither can we allow our social conscience to devolve into the social gospel. I believe Jesus would have us weep for the lost *and* the hungry, to share the gospel *and* clothe the poor, to speak out against all manners of injustice *and* speak out about our personal testimonies. A well-worn sermon illustration tells of the Communist politician who traveled around Eastern Europe proclaiming that "Communism will put a new coat on every man." Supposedly a Christian in the audience responded, "But only Jesus will put a new man in the coat!" As near as I can tell, the story is apocryphal, but my point is this: we need to convince the next generation of Southern Baptists and Evangelicals that the gospel should give them the desire to do both.

Southern Baptists and Evangelicals need to make sure that the faith we pass on is a distinctively trinitarian faith. I am not convinced that Evangelicals in general have always given appropriate emphasis to the triune nature of our God. The same criticism applies to Baptists, whom Curtis Freeman has provocatively charged with being "Unitarians who have not yet gotten around to denying the Trinity."⁴⁴ While Freeman probably overstates the case, Baptists have tended to assume the Trinity rather than offer robust articulations of trinitarian theology. But that has begun to change, at least in part because of an intramural discussion among Baptists and other Evangelicals about the relationship between the Trinity and gender roles. In recent years Evangelical theologians such as Millard Erickson and Robert Letham and Southern Baptist scholars such as Bruce Ware and Andreas Köstenberger have written notable works about the Trinity.⁴⁵ Timothy George has edited a collection of essays on the Trinity that includes contributors from several denominations, and recently called on Southern Baptists to retrieve the best of the wider Christian tradition for the sake of our own renewal.⁴⁶ Surely all Evangelicals, and Southern Baptists in particular, can heed his advice when it comes to the Trinity, that most foundational of Christian doctrines. As Southern Baptists attempt to pass on a trinitarian faith, we should consider following the example of the General Baptist *Orthodox Creed*

⁴⁴ Curtis W. Freeman, "God in Three Persons: Baptist Unitarianism and the Trinity," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 324.

⁴⁵ Millard Erickson, *God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005); id., *Making Sense of the Trinity: Three Crucial Questions* (Baker Academic, 2000); id., *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2009); Robert Letham, *The Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005); Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005); Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit: The Trinity in John's Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008).

⁴⁶ See Timothy George, ed., *God the Holy Trinity: Reflections on Christian Faith and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006); and id., "Is Jesus a Baptist?" In *Southern Baptist Identity: The Future of an Evangelical Denomination*, ed. David S. Dockery (Wheaton: Crossway, 2009), 92–97.

by commending the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian creeds to our churches the next time we revise the Baptist Faith and Message.⁴⁷

Southern Baptists and other Evangelicals share many beliefs that we need to bequeath to the next generation. But Southern Baptists must also pass on those distinctives that are uniquely emphasized by our tradition. This will be tougher than it sounds. Doug Weaver, my Baptist history professor in college, used to say that we live in a "post-denominational" era, and I think his claim is generally true.⁴⁸ I have studied Baptist history and identity at three Southern Baptist-related institutions, and now teach Baptist studies at a Southern Baptist seminary. While I have met some folks in the last decade who are excited about the SBC as a denomination, that attitude does not characterize the majority of my generational peers. Even the ones who *appreciate* the convention are not necessarily *excited* about it. Part of passing on the Southern Baptist faith will be convincing the next generation that the Southern Baptist faith is one worth having. I am afraid that the times are friendlier to our Evangelical friends on this point. But the task is not impossible and I remain hopeful for a vibrant future for the SBC, mostly because I am convinced that a basically baptistic identity is biblical and I continue to believe that the primary arena of God's redemptive activity is the local church.

⁴⁷ For a recent critical edition of this statement of faith, see Thomas Monck et al., "An Orthodox Creed or a Protestant Confession of Faith," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 48, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 133–82. Another possibility is suggested by Beeson Divinity School-theologian Steven Harmon, who argues that any future Baptist confession should be conceived as a Baptist exposition of the Nicene Creed. See Steven R. Harmon, "Baptist Confessions of Faith and the Patristic Tradition," in *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision*, ed. Steven R. Harmon, Studies in Baptist History and Thought, vol. 27 (Milton Keynes, UK, and Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006), 81–82.

⁴⁸ Weaver continues to emphasize the challenge that post-denominationalism poses for Baptist identity. See C. Douglas Weaver, "What Are the Top Challenges Facing Baptists Today," *Associated Baptist Press* (September 30, 2009), http://www.abpnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4442&Itemid=9 (accessed October 7, 2009); Harry L. Poe, "Beyond the Denomination: Dean Addressed SBC Life in 'Postdenominational' Era," *The Alabama Baptist* (February 26, 1998): 6.

I argue in my classes that Baptist principles are simply the consistent application of the gospel to ecclesiological matters. We must pass on our belief that local churches, as communities of the gospel, ought to include only those individuals who give evidence of regeneration. We must pass on our conviction that believer's baptism by immersion publicly identifies a believer with Christ and marks him out for the community created by the gospel. We must pass on our conviction that we live out the gospel personally by embracing the principle of individual liberty of conscience, under the lordship of Christ, and in submission to Christian Scripture. We must pass on a healthy understanding of congregational polity that enables us to practice the gospel in community with one another. We must preserve the freedom of each gospel community to pursue its own gospel agenda by passing on our belief in local church autonomy. We must defend the preservation of gospel freedom by passing on the firm conviction that a free church best flourishes in a free state where religious liberty for all is a basic civil right.

There are several other priorities that Southern Baptists must instill in the next generation. We must teach them that redemptive church discipline and the adoption of local church covenants are two key means the Lord uses to preserve a regenerate church membership. We must pass on a commitment to a graciously confessional cooperation that builds a Southern Baptist consensus around primary issues while allowing for diversity in many secondary issues and all tertiary issues. (I say "many" secondary issues because some ecclesiological convictions that seem secondary to the Christian faith are in fact foundational to Baptist identity.) Although some of my generational peers might disagree, I think we must pass on a commitment to cooperative funding of missions and theological education through the Cooperative Program, which may not be perfect, but seems far better than any alternatives of which I am aware. We must instill in the next generation a zeal for Great Commission priorities that will result in an unwavering commitment to evangelism and church planting in every corner of North America and to the ends of the

earth. I believe that with the right priorities, the Southern Baptist Convention can enjoy a bright future.⁴⁹

But I also think there are some tendencies that both Evangelicals and Southern Baptists must not pass on to the next generation. To be as concise as possible, I will simply say of movement Evangelicalism that it must not pass on its *sometimes* unhealthy attraction to theological diversity and its *often* unhealthy overemphasis on parachurch ministries.⁵⁰ Evangelicalism must remain rooted in the gospel and strive to serve as a complement to local churches and denominations rather than their competition.

My greater concern, however, is with my own denomination. Southern Baptists must not pass on a cultural captivity that too often has confused Southern culture with biblical Christianity—America is too cosmopolitan for so myopic an approach. We must not hand down an ethnocentrism that is still present, albeit often subconsciously, in many quarters of our convention—America is too diverse for so prejudiced an approach. We must not pass on a denominational arrogance that has often assumed we are the greatest group of Christians in history just because we are the largest Protestant denomination in America (at least when we count all the dead people and Methodists on our church rolls). The nineteenth-century Georgia Baptist pastor C. D. Mallery warned against the “denominational pride and self-glorifying” that he so aptly dubbed “denominational idolatry.”⁵¹ We would do well to heed Elder Mallery’s advice in our own day. We must not pass on our sometimes sectarian and/or overconfident tendency to withdraw from other believers and go it alone, though we should

⁴⁹ I have elaborated on this theme elsewhere. See Nathan A. Finn, “Priorities for a Post-Resurgence Convention,” in *Southern Baptist Identity*, 257–80.

⁵⁰ One recent book that overemphasizes the virtue of theological diversity is Kenneth J. Collin, *The Evangelical Moment: The Promise of an American Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

⁵¹ C. D. Mallery, *Denominational Idolatry Reproved: The Introductory Sermon Preached before the Georgia Baptist Convention at Columbus, GA, April 22, 1859* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1859), <http://elbourne.org/baptist/mallery/idolatry/> (accessed October 2, 2009).

be prepared to face some considerable resistance on this point. Over the years, many Southern Baptists have considered themselves as “the last hope, the fairest hope, the only hope for evangelizing this world on New Testament principles,” an attitude that does not lend itself to much in the way of interdenominational cooperation.⁵² We must not impart a theological pragmatism that continues to influence not a few of our churches and denominational ministries. And we must not pass on our penchant for confusing bricks, budgets, baptisms, and bottoms with the blessing of the Almighty. Have you ever heard the old camping adage that you should leave the campsite in better shape than you found it? Southern Baptists should pass on a faith to the next generation that is even stronger than the one we have now.

Narrative: Passing On Our Stories

In addition to catechesis, Southern Baptists and Evangelicals must impart our faith to the next generation by means of *narrative*: passing on our stories. Movement Evangelicals must labor to pass on their stories to their younger counterparts. A generation of collegians was called to foreign mission work through the Student Volunteer Movement at the turn of the twentieth century. Theological conservatives in the North bravely battled modernism in the 1920s and 1930s, which helped give birth to a number of parachurch ministries and interdenominational networks. Countless thousands of Americans have come to faith in Christ through ministries such as Youth for Christ, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ, Young Life, and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Missions-minded Evangelicals who wanted to take the gospel to the nations birthed dynamic ministries such as Wycliff Bible Translators, New Tribes Mission, and World Vision, while industrious Evangelicals who wanted to both win the lost and shape the culture launched periodicals such

⁵² *Alabama Christian Advocate* (June 29, 1948): 2, cited in Bill J. Leonard, *God’s Last and Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 2n1.

as *Christianity Today* and seminaries such as Fuller and Gordon-Conwell. Historically fundamentalist schools such as Wheaton College, Moody Bible Institute, and Dallas Theological Seminary embraced a more Evangelical outlook and prospered during the mid-twentieth century, expanding their influence worldwide. Conferences such as Urbana and Lausanne instilled in thousands of Evangelicals a Great Commission passion that continues. Evangelicals must also pass on the exploits of such figures as Billy Graham, Carl F. H. Henry, Harold John Ockenga, Jim Elliott, Bill Bright, Henrietta Mears, Bernard Ramm, Ralph Winter, James Montgomery Boice, Samuel Escobar, Joni Erickson Tada, and of course our British friends J. I. Packer and John Stott.⁵³

We Southern Baptists have our own stories we need to pass on to the next generation. We are part of a tradition that advocated for full freedom of religion long before Jefferson's and Madison's grandparents were born. A number of traditions identified with locations such as Charleston, Sandy Creek, Georgia, Tennessee, and Texas give our denomination a unique ethos.⁵⁴ Our missionaries have been leaders in taking the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth and nearly every corner of North America. Southern Baptist seminaries and denominational colleges and universities have played a unique role in shaping the tenor of our churches, sometimes for better and sometimes for worse. The Cooperative Program became an ingenious

⁵³ A number of books recount the growth and development of the postwar "new" evangelical movement. See Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford University Press, 1997); George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Jon R. Stone, *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism: The Postwar Evangelical Coalition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008); A. Donald McLeod, *C. Stacey Woods and the Evangelical Rediscovery of the University* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007); Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God*.

⁵⁴ See Walter B. Shurden, "The Southern Baptist Synthesis: Is It Cracking?" *Baptist History and Heritage* 16, no. 2 (April 1981): 2–11; H. Leon McBeth, "The Texas Tradition: A Study in Baptist Regionalism," *Baptist History and Heritage* 26, no. 1 (January 1991): 37–57.

way to fund our convention ministries and unite Southern Baptists all over the country in common cause.⁵⁵ We have transitioned from a regional denomination to a national denomination, from an ethnically homogeneous network of churches to an increasingly diverse network of churches, from a rural movement to an increasingly urban and suburban movement. We have undergone a Conservative Resurgence that has returned our convention to its theological roots and likely prevented a theological downgrade similar to those that have infected so many of the mainline denominations. We must tell these stories.

Like our Evangelical friends, we have our own heroes. We must tell the next generation about Jesse Mercer, W. B. Johnson, James P. Boyce, John Broadus, Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, Isaac Tichenor, E. Y. Mullins, Fannie Heck, J. B. Gambrell, George W. Truett, Herschel Hobbs, W. A. Criswell, Bill Wallace, Oscar Romo, Adrian Rogers, Emmanuel McCall, and Paul Pressler. We must also pass on the stories of Baptist heroes Thomas Helwys, John Bunyan, Thomas Grantham, William Carey, Andrew Fuller, Daniel Taylor, Isaac Backus, John Leland, Gerhard Oncken, Adoniram Judson and his *three* remarkable wives, Charles Spurgeon, Nannie Burroughs, W. B. Riley, and Martin Luther King Jr.⁵⁶

Southern Baptists and movement Evangelicals have some common stories and heroes. Both movements were forged in the revival

⁵⁵ For more information about the Cooperative Program, see Chad Owen Brand and David E. Hankins, *One Sacred Effort: The Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists* (Nashville: B&H, 2005).

⁵⁶ Although it is a bit dated, the standard history of the Baptists remains H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville: Broadman, 1987). Other notable histories include Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2003); Tom Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity*, 3 vols. (Fearn, Ross-Shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2005–7). The best reference work is William H. Brackney, *Historical Dictionary of the Baptists*, 2d ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2009). The best introduction to Baptist thought is James Leo Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009).

fires of the First and Second Great Awakenings and similar stirrings.⁵⁷ Both movements experienced significant expansion during the nineteenth century and were part of what Martin Marty has called a “righteous empire” of conservative Protestants.⁵⁸ Both movements endured the fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the early twentieth century, albeit in different ways and toward a different result.⁵⁹ Both movements have survived wars on American soil and dispatched soldiers and chaplains to wars on foreign soil. Both movements have discovered a penchant for political engagement in the last generation or two and both movements have sent presidents to the White House.⁶⁰ Of course both movements have shared some notable figures such as Carl F. H. Henry, Jimmy Carter, Harold Lindsell, and that quintessential Southern Baptist Evangelical, Billy Graham. We must pass on their stories too.

Conclusion

When I first delivered this material in lecture form in the fall of 2009, we were celebrating the 400th anniversary of the beginning of the Baptist movement. Coincidentally, 2009 also marked the 60th anniversary of the 1949 Los Angeles Crusade that catapulted a young Southern Baptist evangelist named Billy Graham into Evangelical superstardom and made him the most well-known Protestant on earth. Interestingly, 2009 was also the 30th anniversary of the year a young Southern Baptist church planter named Rick Warren arrived in Saddleback Valley, California. When Warren’s 2002 book

⁵⁷ See Jerry Tidwell’s chapter in this book.

⁵⁸ Martin E. Marty, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (New York: The Dial Press, 1970).

⁵⁹ See George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, new ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁶⁰ See William Martin, *With God on our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway, 1996); Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon*. For a recent history of Southern Baptist political engagement, albeit one written as an apologia for the denomination’s current positions, see Jerry Sutton, *A Matter of Conviction: A History of Southern Baptist Engagement with the Culture* (Nashville: B&H, 2008).

The Purpose-Driven Life became an international best seller, it was his “Los Angeles” moment, the event that made his a household name.⁶¹ Fast-forward to August 2008. You no doubt remember that Saddleback Church hosted a live televised debate between presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain, with Warren as moderator. In an article published the day of the debate, editors of *The Economist* magazine dubbed Warren “the next Billy Graham,” that is to say, the best candidate to replace Graham as “America’s pastor.”⁶²

The comparison makes sense. Both Graham and Warren are popular authors with dynamic ministries, entrepreneurial spirits, and a desire to cooperate with all Evangelicals and at times even some outside the Evangelical fold. Both count presidents, business leaders, and Hollywood moguls among their friends. Critics accuse both men of being too shallow, too conservative, too ecumenical, too political, etc. Especially relevant to this chapter, both Graham and Warren are simultaneously Southern Baptists and card-carrying Evangelicals. Apparently, Billy Graham has passed his torch to the next generation. I sincerely hope that Southern Baptists, Evangelicals, and Southern Baptist Evangelicals will be able to pass on our faith to the next generation. After all, as Graham has reminded us on many occasions, God has no grandchildren.

⁶¹ See Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002).

⁶² “The Next Billy Graham,” *The Economist* (August 16, 2008): 35.