

**Clio or St. Luke ?**  
**When the Evangelist becomes the Historian: A Former Evangelical's**  
**concerns about contemporary Evangelical Historiography.**

**Part Three: Problems in Evangelical Historiography**

**Part Three of A Three-Part Paper by Neville Buch**

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Evangelical Historiography centres in three organisations, Study Group on Christianity and History (SGCH) in England and Scotland, the Conference on Faith and History (CFH) in the United States, and the Evangelical History Association (EHA) in Australia. There is an ambiguity built up around these organisations. On one hand they portray themselves as places of academic learning, on the other hand, there are theological assumptions which are expected of its members. One is never too sure whether these organisations are meant to be associations for Evangelical-believing historians, or associations for historians of Evangelicalism ? It is possible that non-Evangelical-believing historians have been caught up in these organisations out of an interest in the history of Evangelicalism. However, to become a member of such organisation one must sign a declaration that states certain theological beliefs. In the case of the EHA, it is that:

I declare my faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who through His atonement is the mediator between God and humanity.

I will seek to follow the teachings of the Holy Scriptures which are the Word of God, the Christian's authoritative guide for faith and conduct.<sup>1</sup>

The EHA states that members need to be in agreement with the above statement. Supposedly, most non-Evangelical-believing historians would simply not sign such a statement, but we have a problem. What happens to a member who had signed the statement previously, and then, on later reflection, decides this is something he or she can no longer sign ? Such would be the case of a EHA member who began as an Evangelical-believer, and at some stage became alienated with the ideological ethos of Evangelicalism. Would the refusal to sign the declaration mean that a historian would

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<sup>1</sup>1993 Membership Form. Evangelical History Association. Attached to *Lucas* No. 14. December 1992.

be excluded from the professional historical association, or reduced to the position of associate member ("second class citizens" who do not quite make the grade) ?

We will return to this question later on, but it is important to first raise the question whether Evangelical historiography is academic history or simply a form of Evangelical apologetics. American Evangelical historian Mark Noll, in an interview with the Australian Evangelical Mark Hutchinson, was asked the question of what changes had he seen in history writing during his years of training in the American Evangelical heartland. Noll stated that "Its a good question but its a complicated question", and goes on to reply:

...I don't recall ever coming across any history writing in the evangelical communities of which I was a part that could act as a really good model. History was a kind of apologetics; there were some decent historians at Wheaton College, but not historians who ventured out beyond the confines of their own communities. There were some good historians at Trinity, who yet tended to be apologists, some in marvellous ways. At Vanderbilt there were other kinds of historians who were more advanced in strictly professional terms, but who had little concern for Christian faith. That is one of the reasons why George Marsden was such an important influence, because he seemed intuitively to be a very good historian as well as an openly Christian person.<sup>2</sup>

Noll never went on to actually answer the question ("what changes had he seen"). Perhaps he was not to sure if anything really had changed. His comments indicates that American Evangelical historiography has only recently began to take academic history seriously. The implications of Noll's comments are also true for Australian and British Evangelical historiography. Noll says "[Evangelical] History was a kind of apologetics". One fears that Evangelical history, for the most part, is still mere apologetics. If anything has changed, it is that the apologetical agenda in Evangelical historical writing is much more subtle. There is still a tendency in Evangelical historiography to define history only with the internal categories of Evangelical theology, such as the dualistic battle between the Truth and error, revival as

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<sup>2</sup>Mark Noll interviewed by Mark Hutchinson in *Lucas*. No. 13 June 1992. p. 91.

supernatural phenomena, the question of personal holiness, and the concern for social moralism. To express this in another way (the otherside of the same coin), there is a tendency to ignore categories outside Evangelical theology, such as the role of myth in historical documents, institutionalisation of faith, the power-politics in the institution, the culturalisation of faith, and the secularisation of faith. This view is confirmed when the American Evangelical historian Donald Dayton states that he believes that "Historiographical perspective are not just history but they express and articulate theological visions" and that "Theological agenda and ideological commitments shape the reading of history, and most readings of history are developed to support theological agendas".<sup>3</sup>

An Evangelical historiography that is confided by its theology has ten problems. The first is that it avoids critically examining the intellectual soundness of its own theological paradigm as it has been composed in history. The tendency in Evangelical historiography is not to consider Evangelical theology as a product of the historical process. Bible colleges in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, have given many of its graduates the idea that their theology was part of a some "historic Christianity", an unchanging orthodoxy that has come to us through a self-preserving revelation of God. The influence of Francis Schaeffer in the evangelical decade of the 1970s did much to promote this idea. In the 1990s, there are still many Evangelicals who consider Schaeffer as a scholarly historian. A few critiques have been offered by Evangelical academics, but by an large, Evangelical historians have done little to dispel the myths that rises up from Schaeffer's appalling historiography.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Donald Dayton. "Yet Another Layer of the Onion: Or Opening the Ecumenical Door to Let the Riffraff in". *The Ecumenical Review*. Vol. 40. No. 1. 1988. p. 102.

<sup>4</sup>Two Australian Evangelical critiques of Schaeffer are Stuart Cunningham. "Towards a Critique of Francis Schaeffer's Thought". *Interchange*. No. 24. 1978; D.L. Roper. "A Sympathetic Criticism of Francis Schaeffer's Writings". *Interchange*. No. 41. 1987.

The second problem, which follows from the first, is that most Evangelical historians fails to acknowledge the temporal and changing nature of Evangelical theology. One Evangelical historian who has avoided this problem is George Marsden. Noll is right, Marsden is a very good historian. The reason why he is good, is that, unlike most Evangelical historians in the past, he has dared to explore the cultural-historical elements that have reconstructed Evangelical theology in the United States. Marsden's second book, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, demonstrates that major shifts have occurred in American Evangelical theology in the last four decades. As mentioned earlier, Marsden's examination raises serious questions. The most damning of these questions has to do with the fact that *the* leading Neo-Evangelical theologian, Edward Carnell, failed to be able to argue for the inerrancy of scripture when confronted by the twentieth-century's leading theologian, Karl Barth, in a panel question session, at the University of Chicago in 1962.<sup>5</sup> It was not that Carnell failed to have his argument understood, but rather, after Barth explained that one could accept view of Scripture as the "Word of God" without having a belief in an inerrant bible (an argument that directly cuts against the Evangelical distinctiveness), Carnell "declined to press the subject further".<sup>6</sup> Here, Marsden has opened up a major crack in the foundation of Evangelical scholarship. For if the Neo-Evangelical theologian who had written the foundational textbook of contemporary Evangelical theology (*The Case for Orthodox Theology*) could not, or would not, take up the cause of biblical inerrancy at the very moment that it mattered, all was lost; because once Barth's argument, which assumes historical relativity, is accepted (and Carnell's refusal to debate the issue was interpreted by the moderator of the panel question session as

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<sup>5</sup>George Marsden. *Reforming Fundamentalism*. Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism. Grand Rapids. Eerdmans. 1987. p. 194.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

consent to Barth's views) then the Evangelical distinctiveness is lost, and (to be theologically consistent) would have no choice but to declare for Neo-Orthodox theology. Quebedeaux makes the distinction between Evangelicalism (including the Young Evangelical position) and Neo-Orthodoxy on three grounds.<sup>7</sup> By taking each of Quebedeaux' grounds, it can be shown that, in the case of Young Evangelicalism, the distinctions are no longer valid (to be intellectually consistent), as summarised here:

1. The first ground for distinction is that Neo-Orthodoxy does "not accept the inspiration and authority of the Bible or recognise its words as revelation itself". The issue of inspiration is a red herring, it is serious doubtful that Neo-Orthodoxy denies inspiration. It may deny that divine inspiration is not limited to the construction of the Bible, but it does not deny that in some way the biblical drama was inspired by the Holy. The issue of authority is complex. Terms like the "authority of the Bible" are used in ways that only means the self-legitimation of orthodoxy. The term may also mean the belief that God "authored" the Bible. If by "authored" it is meant "inspiration" then we are back to Quebedeaux's red herring, and there is no difference between Young Evangelicalism and Neo-Orthodoxy. If by "authored" it means anything more, it immediately implies a notion of biblical inerrancy, and Young Evangelicalism would have to say that it also would not accept the "authority of the Bible" in this sense.
2. The second ground for distinction is based on the claim that Neo-Orthodoxy holds to "the doctrine of universal salvation" and does not require that people "repent and believe the Gospel". These issues are also complex, and mixed with red herrings. Barth, certainly, believed in the need for repentance and believing the Gospel, but the problem lies in what is meant by "Gospel". Evangelicalism distinguishes itself from the rest of Protestantism through its pietist and revivalist interpretation of the Gospel message. This interpretation in, the twentieth century" can only be intellectually maintained through the notion of biblical inerrancy. The Young Evangelical support for revivalism is inconsistent with its rejection of biblical inerrancy. Given the de-emphasis on pietism in Young Evangelicalism, if the Young Evangelicals were forced to explain what they actually mean by "repentance" and the "Gospel", it would differ only marginally from Neo-Orthodoxy, not enough to support Evangelical distinctiveness. As for "the doctrine of universal salvation, no Neo-Evangelical missionary would remain credible in his Neo-Evangelical organisation, if he publicly declared that all who had not heard the Gospel was doomed to eternal damnation. Neo-Evangelicalism (let alone Young Evangelicalism) has the same doctrine of universal salvation as Neo-Orthodoxy.
3. Quebedeaux's third ground for distinction is that Neo-Orthodoxy has reinterpreted "the whole concept of evangelism" seeing it "as the call for social action", but Young Evangelicalism has also reinterpreted the whole concept of evangelism, incorporating the concept of evangelism "as the call for social action". The recent acceptance of certain liberation theologies by the Young Evangelicals is evidence of this reinterpretation. If Young Evangelicals still use revivalistic and pietistic language they are merely contradicting the whole meaning of their revolution. Thus Young Evangelicalism has left itself with no distinction of any real meaning from Neo-Orthodoxy. Although on the wrong side of historical sensibility, the Neo-Fundamentalist Francis A. Schaeffer, at least, was intellectually consistent in his Evangelicalism. Schaeffer understood that once the Young Evangelicals rejected the notion of biblical inerrancy, then they are forced to a position of historical

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<sup>7</sup>R. Quebedeaux. *The Young Evangelicals*. Revolution in Orthodoxy. New York. Harper & Row. 1974. pp. 13-15.

relativity which undermines all the notions of Evangelical orthodoxy.<sup>8</sup>

In the final analysis, the illusion of the Evangelical distinctiveness, post-the Young Evangelicals revolution, is reduced merely to a desire to continue a sense of spiritual superiority ("My Christianity is better than your's"). American revivalism has become nothing more than the desire to sell itself as a "superior product" in a very competitive market, and like all advertisement, it is all hype and nothing of substance.

Marsden portrayal of Carnell is of a tragic figure who became "too liberal for the fundamentalists and too fundamentalist for the liberals", suffers psychological breakdown, comes out of depression only by a series of shock treatment, and spends his last days somewhat traumatised, enough to raise some speculation that his death from a drug overdose was an act of suicide.<sup>9</sup> This is not an encouraging portrayal of someone who is seen to be one of the chief founding theologians of your movement. What is worse, is that Marsden indicates that there was a history of serious psychological crises or breakdowns among the faculty of what was suppose to be *the* educational centre of Neo-Evangelicalism, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Carnell's case was only the most severe.<sup>10</sup>

With questions being raised about the competence in the original Neo-Evangelical scholarship, Marsden also subtly, or perhaps unintentionally, raises questions about the consistency in the Young Evangelical scholarship. Although Marsden does not state it directly in his text, he seems to suggest that it is now possible

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<sup>8</sup>This is a summary of the writer's conclusions about the attempt to distinguish Young Evangelicalism and Neo-Orthodoxy. Schaeffer provides another critique in Francis A. Schaeffer. *The Great Evangelical Disaster*. Westchester. Good News Publishers. 1984.

<sup>9</sup>Marsden. *Reforming Fundamentalism*. pp. 193-194, 258.

<sup>10</sup>Marsden. *Reforming Fundamentalism*. p. 193.

to see the Young Evangelicals at Fuller as having embraced Neo-Orthodox theology. This, certainly, seems to be the accusation of Fuller's conservative Neo-Evangelical critics; foremost, being Harold Lindsell with his attack on Fuller in *The Battle for the Bible*.<sup>11</sup> The Young Evangelicals generally deny this, and Marsden points out that only two percent of staff and students at Fuller state that they are Neo-Orthodox.<sup>12</sup> Without comment nor footnote of reference, Marsden included in his chapter on what was called "The Battle of the Bible" - between the progressive (or Young) Evangelicals (who had rejected biblical inerrancy as necessary for Evangelical orthodoxy) and the conservative Neo-Evangelicals (who still stood by biblical inerrancy as the touchstone of orthodoxy) - a series of cartoon sketches entitled "The Strange Case of Fuller Seminary".<sup>13</sup> Portraying statements made by Fuller's faculty members, it clearly suggests that the conclusions of the Young Evangelicals is consistent with Neo-Orthodox theology, and not with their self-proclaimed Evangelical orthodoxy.

The limitations of Marsden is that he has not attempted to fathom out what are intellectual implications of these shifts for Evangelicalism and its relationship to the Non-Evangelical world. Is it not possible that the intellectual cutting-edge of Evangelicalism has arrived the exact same conclusions that Neo-Orthodox theologians articulated in the mid-twentieth century ? And if this is so, can Evangelical theology continue as a distinctive theological paradigm separate from the Protestant mainstream ? These are the questions Evangelical historians should be addressing, but do not for fear of undercutting their organisational *raison d'etre*. For if there is no Evangelical

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<sup>11</sup>Marsden. *Reforming Fundamentalism* pp. 279-280.

<sup>12</sup>Marsden. *Reforming Fundamentalism* p. 301; Quebedeaux. *The Young Evangelicals*. pp. 13-15.

<sup>13</sup>Marsden. *Reforming Fundamentalism*. p. 284. The series of cartoon sketches may relate to the chapter entitled "The Strange Case of Fuller Theological Seminary" in Harold Lindsell's book, *The Battle for the Bible*, but this not clear in Marsden's book.

distinctiveness, how can one justify a Evangelical historiography ?

The third problem, which follows from the second, is one of historical revisionism. As Douglas Sweeney explains, there is, among Evangelical historians, ...a tendency to apply contemporary attitudes and terms to the 1940s and 1950s. Inclusivity, ecumenicity, and pluralism have today become bandwagon concepts among evangelicals...Many scholars are tempted to carry these attitudes into their evaluation of the early days of the evangelical movement, yet this tendency makes for inaccurate history.<sup>14</sup>

Sweeney uses the perceptions of Joel Carpenter, George Marsden and Timothy Smith as an example of historical revisionism.<sup>15</sup> The three Evangelical historians attempt to project a view of Neo-Evangelicalism which minimise the place of fundamentalism in the early Neo-Evangelical movement. Carpenter maintains that both fundamentalists and non-fundamentalists went to form the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).<sup>16</sup> Marsden gives the impression that the Neo-Evangelical leadership promoted a doctrinally ecumenical spirit.<sup>17</sup> Smith describes the fundamentalist of the Moody Bible Institute as "more distant from the centre of evangelicalism than is commonly perceived".<sup>18</sup> Sweeney points out that each historian has failed to give an accurate

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<sup>14</sup> D.A. Sweeney. "The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic: The Historiography of the Early Neo-Evangelical Movement and the Observer-Participant Dilemma". *Church History*. Vol. 60. 1991. p. 77.

<sup>15</sup> Sweeney. *The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic*. pp. 78-79.

<sup>16</sup> Sweeney. *The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic*. p. 78. Sweeney cites Joel Carpenter. "The Fundamentalist Leaven and the Rise of an Evangelical United Front" in Leonard Sweet (ed). *The Evangelical Tradition in America*. Macon. 1984. pp 266-267, 261, 283, and Joel Carpenter. "Evangelicals: Why Should We Put Up With This Label ?". Paper presented to the Presidents of the Christian College Consortium in Chicago, Illinois, 26 October 1987. pp. 2-3.

<sup>17</sup> Sweeney. *The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic*. pp 78-79. Sweeney cites Marsden. *Reforming Fundamentalism*. pp. 229-230.

<sup>18</sup> Sweeney. *The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic*. p. 79. Sweeney cites Timothy Smith. "The Evangelical Kaleidoscopes and the Call to Christian Unity". *Christian Scholar's Review*. Vol. 15. 1986. pp. 130-131.

history. The groups that joined the NAE did so assenting "heartily to its rather exclusive and ideologically fundamentalist agenda". Marsden's construction depends on presenting outspoken doctrinalists as atypical; one could also add that Marsden's perceptions run counter to the purpose of his own book, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, which is to demonstrate that the early Neo-Evangelical leadership was, theologically, fundamentalist. "Moody Bible Institute", footnotes Sweeney, "was at the organisational center of the Neo-evangelical movement from its inception".<sup>19</sup> "Indeed", continues Sweeney, "it served as the location where the neo-evangelical founders first strategized".

One of the shifts in contemporary Evangelicalism has been the reconsideration of two important influences on modern theology, Søren Kierkegaard, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. There is no doubt that the integration of insights from Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer into Evangelical thought is liberating for Evangelicalism, but there is a tendency to use the Evangelical reinterpretation of Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer to booster the image of contemporary Evangelicalism.<sup>20</sup> Dayton does this when he associates the critical edge of the Holiness movement with the critiques of Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer; as symbols of support for the Holiness tradition against the Reformed tradition.<sup>21</sup> It is not only scholars from the revivalist-holiness wing guilty of turning Non-Evangelical figures into symbols of support, scholars of the Reformed tradition are equally culpable.<sup>22</sup> It is as if to announce that Evangelical theology has

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<sup>19</sup>Footnote 44. Sweeney. *The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic*. p. 79.

<sup>20</sup>An example of take up Kierkegaard as a symbol of support for Evangelical cause, at the level of populist Evangelicalism, is C. Stephen Evans. "A Misunderstood Reformer". *Christianity Today*. September 21 1984. pp. 26-29.

<sup>21</sup>Dayton. *Yet Another Layer of the Onion*. pp. 109-110.

<sup>22</sup>An Australian example is seen in K. Runia's sympathetic critique of Bonhoeffer. Runia, Vice-Principal of the Reformed Theological College, Geelong, severely criticises that part of Bonhoefferian thought that does not fit his Evangelical agenda, while at the same time, hail those parts that

"come of age". The problem is that the average Evangelical believer is left with the impression that good old Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer were on the side of the Evangelicals.

This is a historical revisionism at its worse, and must be stopped before it completely takes over, but no Evangelical historian has address this issue. Can you imagine the horror on Kierkegaard's face, if it was foretold to him that the great-grandchildren of his pietistic enemies would use his writings to booster their own revivalistic enterprise ? Or could you imagine poor Bonhoeffer being told that the grandchildren of his fundamentalist enemies would use his concept of a "religionless Christianity" to booster their own fundamentalistic faith ? In writing on Kierkegaard's and Bonhoeffer's insights, Evangelical scholars have failed to see that Kierkegaardian and Bonhoefferian paradigms demand a radical critique of American Evangelical theology.

This is not the only historical revisionism that occurs in popular Evangelicalism. Another shift in contemporary Evangelicalism has been the consideration of two important influences on conservative theology, C.S. Lewis and Jacques Ellul. Clyde Kilby's evangelicalisation of Lewis has done a disservice to the memory of the Cambridge don.<sup>23</sup> Most Evangelicals have come to view Lewis through

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reinforce his Evangelical prejudice. Evangelical theologians like Runia "want their cake and eat it", and so distort Bonhoeffer's real position as regards to Evangelicalism.

<sup>23</sup>It was through Clyde Kilby, Professor of English literature at Wheaton College, that the American Evangelical sub-culture discovered C.S. Lewis as a useful apologetical symbol. Kilby then became the main Evangelical interpreter for the global Evangelical sub-culture. Kilby made Wheaton College the world centre for the study of Lewis's literature. The College houses the Marion E. Wade Memorial Collection, which has the papers of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Dorothy Sayers, and George MacDonald. Evangelicals have an affinity with these writers because of their anti-modernist critique, but they too easily downplay the non-Evangelical beliefs of these literary figures. Paul M. Bechtel. *Wheaton College. A Heritage Remembered 1860-1984*. Wheaton. Harold Shaw Publishers. 1984. p. 126.

the Wheaton screen, and know little of this Irish-born Anglo high Churchman. There is no denying that Lewis was an apologist for a broadly orthodox Anglican view of faith, but he too, like Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer, would be horrified to see that he has become a symbol for crude Evangelical apologetics. Lewis, in real life, had no time for the Josh McDowell's of this world. Certainly, Ellul, a member of the French Reformed Church, comes closer to the American Evangelical tradition.<sup>24</sup> Yet his ideas have also been rendered for crude apologetical usage in the name of American Evangelicalism. The irony is that Ellul's ideas provides the most damning critique of American Evangelicalism ever given.<sup>25</sup> One can see a level of stupidity when Evangelical believers use an Ellulian critique to condemn the unbelief of the Secular age, while failing to recognise the technologicalisation in their own belief system.

If historical revisionism is concerning, so is a fourth problem, the tendency to see revivalism as a result of divine intervention rather than part of the historical process. The result is a distorted perception of the nature of revivalism. This is evident in Bernard Semmel's recent resurrection of the Halevy thesis.<sup>26</sup> The

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<sup>24</sup>Jacques Ellul is difficult to classify as regards to an Americanised Evangelicalism. He has become the latest apologetical symbol for Evangelicals, but his views do not sit very comfortably with the current ethos of Evangelicalism. For one thing, Ellul is a Barthian. Like Lewis and Tolkien, Ellul is popular with Evangelicals because of his anti-modernist critiques, but these are critiques in which contemporary Evangelicalism itself stands condemned. In the same manner that Kilby to Lewis, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Professor of Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, introduced Ellul to the American Evangelical sub-culture, and therefore, because Ellul's main interpreter for the global Evangelical sub-culture. Jacques Ellul. *The Ethics of Freedom*. Translated and Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids. Eerdmans. 1976; Jacques Ellul. *What I Believe*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids. Eerdmans. 1989.

<sup>25</sup>To be consistent in using Ellul's analysis, his critique of modernity in *The Technological Society* and *Propaganda* to Evangelicalism itself. Jacques Ellul. *The Technological Society*. 1964; Jacques Ellul. *Propaganda*. The Formation of Men's Attitudes. 1966.

<sup>26</sup>Elie Halevy. *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*. 6 Vols. New York. Barnes & Nobles Inc. 1961. Elie Halevy. *The Birth of Methodism in England*. Translated and Edited by Bernard Semmel. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press. 1971. Bernard Semmel. *The Methodist Revolution*. New York. Basic Books . 1973.

Evangelical interpretation of the Halevy-Semmel thesis has it that Methodist revivalism "pre-empted a revolution of French proportions because it was itself a democratic revolution, a progressive, modernising, liberalising movement" and "contributed to the 'modernization' of the English working class", although "radical political implications were averted".<sup>27</sup> Although this thesis is very doubtful, it is, nevertheless, appealing for those Evangelical apologetists who wish to demonstrate the providence of God in history.<sup>28</sup> Evangelical historians, who articulate various versions of the Halevy-Semmel thesis as evidence of revivalism (as a positive divine intervention), merely provide contemporary revivalists with ideological ammunition.<sup>29</sup> The coming of Wesleyan revivalism is, then, seen as a deliberate act of God to save eighteenth century Britain from the terrors that had been played out in the French Revolution. Out the window goes any other historical factors that can demonstrated the reason for a eighteenth century revolution in France, and not in Britain. One of those factors is that it appeared that God did not save the English from a bloody Civil War in the previous century; thus allowing the British a similar experience to the French - a similar revolution of terror (remember Cromwell's invasion of Ireland) and a similar

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<sup>27</sup> Stuart Piggin. "Halevy Revisited: The Origins of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society: An Examination of Semmel's Thesis". *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*. Vol 9. No. 1. October 1980. Piggin critiques what he calls the "the Semmel thesis" which is a particular argument that Semmel has about the place of Wesleyan foreign missions, but Piggin offers no critique of the Halevy thesis nor of Semmel central thesis. Piggin does, however, elsewhere, offers a critique of Thompson's interpretation of Methodism. F.S. Piggin. "Religion and the Industrial Revolution: An Analysis of E.P. Thompson's interpretation of Methodism". *Historical Journal* (University of Wollongong). Vol. 1. No. 2. March 1976.

<sup>28</sup> E.P. Thompson expresses doubts about the Halevy thesis in E.P. Thompson. *The Making of the English Working Class*. pp. 45-49; Eric Hobsbawm critiques Halevy thesis in Eric Hobsbawm. "Methodism and the Threat of Revolution". *History Today*. February 1957. Piggin as an Evangelical historian notes that the Halevy thesis is "dismissed by social historians as an 'unwieldy synthesis', as 'promiscuous opportunism', 'otiose' and 'anti-intellectual'". Piggin. *Halevy Revisited*. p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> "Wesley saved England from bloody revolution" is a common statement of Evangelical preachers. The statement carries with it two ideological implications, the first being that Evangelicalism is always anti-revolutionary (because Wesley as a Tory was anti-revolutionary), therefore, a pillar of conservatism, and secondly, that revivalism is always a positive social influence in the society.

violent shift into "parliamentary democratisation". The problem with the Evangelical sole reliance on the Halevy thesis lies, in fact, with a mistaken comparison of French and English history. Elie Halevy, as a French historian, has made the error of relating the French eighteenth century causes of the French revolution to eighteenth century England causes of non-revolution.<sup>30</sup> It completely misses the point of seeing the uniqueness of the French revolution in terms of its own particular historical situation (ie. the historical inertia of French absolutism), and seeing the unique political factors that determined a non-revolutionary democratic gradualism in England (ie. the political settlement of the 1688 Glorious Revolution).<sup>31</sup> The historiographical debate over the Halevy thesis, unfortunately, tends to degenerate to the polemic level of the religious idealism of Christian historians who support the thesis (W.R. Ward, David Hempton, and Bernard Semmel) against the economic determinism of the Marxist historians who oppose, or revise, the thesis (E.P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, and

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<sup>30</sup>This analysis is supported by Hugh Stretton. *The Political Science, General Principles of Selection in Social Science*. New York. Basic Books. 1969. pp. 275-276, 282. Itzkin summarises Stretton's argument that "Halevy based his choice of variables on recent French history and French factors of disintegration, and these were not always the most likely or valuable alternatives 'to imagine for England'. In seeking certain qualities within the English social system which contributed to English stability, Halevy chose those values which warded off particular alternatives - alternatives derived from the French model and 'chosen as likely-and-dangerous for the English system'. He then looked for the English 'functional substitutes'. This circumspect view caused Halevy to envision the only possible results for prevailing English political and economic conditions as chaos and anarchy. His determination to see better-than-French solutions for the universal problems of industrializing societies blinded him to other societies' similar social responses to those same stresses. Thus the thesis' main weakness lies in its failure to relate the facts to its own values. 'Alternatives bound less to French facts, deliberately imagined rather than borrowed or remembered, might have served Halevy's purpose better'". Itzkin. *The Halevy Thesis - A Working Hypothesis* ? pp. 49-50.

<sup>31</sup>Thompson argues that, until the coming of Thomas Paine, English reformers argued for social transformation upon the notion of English constitutionalism which included the Bill of Rights and the Glorious Constitution of 1689. E.P. Thomson. *The Making of the English Working Class*. pp. 84-110; George Rude "also sees a direct connection between the events of the seventeenth century and England's lack of upheaval in the nineteenth". Itzkin. *The Halevy thesis - A Working Hypothesis* ?. p. 51, George Rude. *Debate on Europe 1815-1850*. New York. Harper Torchbooks. 1972. p. 230. Both Thompson and Rude are basically arguing that the main political factor that prevented a French-type revolution in England was the development of the notion of "The Free-born Englishman".

George Rude).<sup>32</sup> Here we have two ideological forces clashing, one emphasising the theological-doctrinal factors, the other emphasising political factors.<sup>33</sup> Few historians like Alan D. Gilbert can escape the constraints of ideology to find "the middle path".<sup>34</sup> Evangelical historiography with its pietistic bias can only extenuate the polemic nature of the debate.

An American example of this tendency to see revivalism as divine intervention can be seen in *The Democratization of American Christianity* written by the American Evangelical historian Nathan O. Hatch.<sup>35</sup> Hatch argues that Second

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<sup>32</sup>In the historiographical debate over the Halevy thesis, the main religious support for Halevy mentioned includes Bernard Semmel. *The Methodist Revolution*. New York. Basic Books. 1973, W.R. Ward. *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850*. London. 1972., and David Hempton. *Methodism and Politics in British Society*. London. 1984; more general support comes from J.L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond. *The Town Labourer 1760-1832*. New York. Longmans. Green and Co. 1917., G. Kitson Clark. *The Making of Victorian England*. Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1962., V. Kiernan. "Evangelicalism and the French Revolution". *Past and Present*. No. 1. February 1952., J.D. Walsh. "Elie Halevy and the Birth of Methodism". *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. Vol. 25. 1975; the main political critiques of Halevy are E.P. Thompson. *The Making of the English Working Class*. Middlesex. Penguin Books. Rev. Ed. 1980 (1963)., E.J. Hobsbawm and George Rude. *Captain Swing*. London 1969. George Rude. *Debate on Europe 1815-1850*. New York. Harper Torchbooks. 1972 George Rude. *Ideology and Protest*. London 1980; three general critiques of Halevy are Elissa S. Itzkin. "The Halevy Thesis - A Working Hypothesis ? English Revivalism: Antidote for Revolution and Radicalism 1789-1815". *Church History*. Vol. 44. 1975., Elisabeth Harris. "The Halevy Thesis Revisited; Evangelical Religion and Political Stability in Britain in the Nineteenth Century". *Flinders Journal of History and Politics*. Vol. 11. 1985., J.A. Jaffe. "The 'Chiliasm of Despair' Reconsidered: Revivalism and Working-Class Agitation in County Durham". *Journal of British Studies*. Vol 28. January 1989.

<sup>33</sup>David Luker, as a religious historian, accuses historians like Thompson of "a tendency to neglect or depreciate the internal circumstances of the Churches themselves". One is tempted to retort that religious historians have a tendency to neglect or depreciate the external circumstances in which Churches find themselves. David Luker. "Revivalism in Theory and Practice: The Case of Cornish Methodism". *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*. Vol. 37. No. 4. October 1986. p. 604.

<sup>34</sup>Jaffe shows Alan D. Gilbert as "a type of middle way between the political emphasis of Thompson and Halevy and the theological and doctrine emphasis of Ward, Hempton, and Semmel". Gilbert, offers a view that Methodism was a force for "moderate radicalism". Jaffe. "The 'Chiliasm of Despair' Reconsidered". pp. 24-25. Alan D. Gilbert. *Religion and Society in Industrial England 1740-1914*. London. 1976. pp. 86-92 and Alan D. Gilbert. "Methodism, Dissent and Political Stability in Early Industrial England". *Journal of Religious History*. Vol. 10. No. 4. December 1979. pp 281-399.

<sup>35</sup>Nathan O. Hatch. *The Democratization of American Christianity*. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1989.

Great Awakening should be understood as a democratising movement within American Evangelicalism. The apologetic agenda here is hardly subtle, an attempt to identify the Evangelical heritage with spirit of Democracy. Given that the most recent global Evangelical revivalism has occurred in some of the most anti-democratic societies (eg. Chile, Korea, Indonesia, South Africa, and one is tempted to include the United States whose president is elected on less than fifty percent of the adult population), Hatch's thesis must be seriously questioned. Joseph Conforti, in a 1991 article entitled "The Invention of the Great Awakening", states that Hatch's "interpretation ignores the way mainline evangelical leaders invoked the past, created a revivalistic tradition, and canonized "classic" religious texts as a response to the religious populism that was stimulated by the Second Great Awakening".<sup>36</sup> American Evangelical historians because they want to some way see revivalism as a result of divine intervention fail to see that the American revivalist tradition is a cultural constructed reality that needs to be demythologised. As Conforti explains about the New Divinity men at the outset of the Second Great Awakening, there was within the Evangelical sub-culture, "a process of historical interpretation and cultural containment that would be continued by other Evangelicals: invoking the social memory, cultural authority and sacred texts of the past to respond to the democratising changes and revivalistic conflicts of the present".<sup>37</sup> In turn, Moody's generation of American Evangelicals continued this American revivalist tradition by looking back romantically at what they called "the old-time religion".<sup>38</sup> In the post-1945 period, the Billy Graham generation of American

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<sup>36</sup>Joseph Conforti. "The Invention of the Great Awakening" 1795-1842". *Early American Literature*. Vol. 26. No. 2. 1991. p. 106.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.* pp. 99-100.

<sup>38</sup>William G. McLoughlin. *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*. An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America 1607-1977. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press. 1978. p. 144; John Kent. *Holding the Fort*. Studies in Victorian Revivalism. London. Epworth Press. 1978. p. 31.

Evangelicals continued the same process by looking back romantically to Moody.<sup>39</sup> Thus the myths in Americanised revivalism propound.

A recent article by the Australian Evangelical historian, Stuart Piggin, demonstrates the propensity for revivalistic mythology in Evangelical historical recollection.<sup>40</sup> Piggin argues on very dubious grounds that the Billy Graham 1959 Australian crusade was a revival. What Piggin mean is that there was a social transformation for the better in places where Graham had preached. What Piggin is doing is that he, much like J. Edwin Orr (mentioned earlier), is imposing the American and British nineteenth century experience of revival on to contemporary secular Australia. It simply does not work. Graham's crusade did make an impact upon the country because of the novelty of his approach, the level of organisation, his association to the President of the United States in the Cold War era, and the level of media coverage, but this very different to the experience of the trans-atlantic revivalism of nineteenth century. Social historians would see no difference in Australian society between the time Graham arrived and the time he left the country. Piggin is probably convinced that there was revival for two reasons, both have to do with the apologetical agenda that constrains Evangelical historiography - the first is that Piggin wants to see revival as a divine visitation to this country, and therefore secondly, such a revival would boost the place of Evangelicalism which has been large marginalised in Australian history. Australian Evangelicalism may deserve a greater focus in the historical profession, but can not be gained by inaccurate, and largely unprovable, interpretations.

A fifth problem is that Evangelical scholarship is founded upon

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<sup>39</sup>Graham's biographer continually cited the image of Moody in his reference to Graham's revivalistic ministry. John Pollock. *Billy Graham*. pp. 34, 36, 43, 44, 47, 68, 74, 75, 124, 199, 209, 227, 333.

<sup>40</sup>Stuart Piggin. "Billy Graham in Australia, 1959 - Was it Revival ?" *Lucas*. No. 6. October 1989.

scholasticism (a closed system of theology) which is opposed to the "humanistic" approach of modern scholarship. Evangelicalism has always tended to denounce "humanism" as the main cause of atheistic modernity and secularity. The Evangelical rejection of "humanism" is based on an old conflict between religious scholastic thought and the humanist's new learning during the Renaissance and Reformation. Evangelicalism is part of a scholastic tradition whose approach to theological understanding is based in constructing logical closed systems. The Renaissance humanism, on the other hand, seeks to obtain theological understanding from historical criticism (going back to the original sources). Contemporary American Evangelical historians celebrate the fact that their theological outlook is based on the Protestant scholasticism constructed by the seventeenth century Reformed theologian, Francis Turretin.<sup>41</sup> Such historians have encouraged their populist counterparts in the Evangelical myth that humanism is anti-Christian, and Christianity must be anti-humanist. What Evangelical historians have ignored to communicate to their Evangelical constituency is the existence of a Christian humanist tradition going back to Erasmus, the Dutch scholar and father of Christian humanism. The Erasmusian approach to historical understanding and learning provided an alternative to the scholasticism of both the Protestant Reformers and the Catholic Thomists. It challenges deeply those who believe that scholastic theology can produce a unchangeable static orthodoxy, a system of "right-doctrine" since it often shows that scholasticism distorts the original meaning of primitive faith.<sup>42</sup>

The sixth problem in Evangelical Historiography is its relationship to the

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<sup>41</sup> The best example is Richard A. Muller, Associate Professor of Historical Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. Richard A. Muller. "Scholasticism Protestant and Catholic: Francis Turretin on the Object and Principles of Theology". *Church History*. Vol. 55. 1986.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 205 It was the personal discovery of Erasmus that led to the breakdown of this writer's previous scholasticised Evangelical theology.

Evangelical sub-culture. When a sub-culture is tightly controlled by centres of hierarchical power who predetermine how far its orthodoxy will be questioned by its own scholars, we have an insidious situation. This situation is maintained by closely controlled networks of scholars who work from inside the sub-culture, who act almost as a wall which separates the members of sub-culture from the insights of outside scholars whose thinking can not be controlled. Even though Evangelical historians have been part of the liberalisation within the Evangelical sub-culture they have merely reaffirmed the insidious sectarianism of the Evangelical sub-culture.<sup>43</sup> For all the liberalisation, the Evangelical sub-culture is still built upon the Calvinistic distinction between the community of the elect and the world. In the Evangelical mind, there is still this ridiculous sectarian notion that their sub-culture represents an ideological purity against the impurity of an outside world. Evangelical historians have done very little to dispel this notion, and has, in fact, reinforced this notion by their modus operandi. By enlarge, Evangelical historians work through distinctly Evangelical organisations and educational centres, and work closely together, collaborate on Evangelical projects, co-authoring and co-editing Evangelical books published by Evangelical publishing houses.<sup>44</sup> They often are found writing book reviews for each other's books. If an Evangelical historian is seen to work on a secular university campus, with publications in non-Evangelical periodicals, and through non-Evangelical publishing houses, the Evangelical sub-culture see this as an Evangelical capture of ground that can be used for Evangelical purposes, and not a legitimisation of the wider intellectual community. Sub-cultures are fact of life, and one must respect the need for minorities to identify themselves distinctly from the surrounding culture (often a frightening and misunderstood culture). Nevertheless,

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<sup>43</sup>This argument is developed further in Appendix 1 - Notes: "Sub-Cultures and Scholarship"

<sup>44</sup>Leonard Sweet. "Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves: The New Evangelical Historiography". *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. Vol. 56. 1988. p. 398.

sub-cultures are the basis for tribalism. This is a serious problem in this last decade of the twentieth century, where national cultures are being torn apart by ethnic tribal warfare. The militants in such ethnic groups have been able to generate an incredible hostility towards their neighbour because their ethnic sub-culture is insulated from outside perspectives. In the United States, the Evangelical sub-culture, residing in the heartland of American mythology, forms a significant American ethnic tribe. There are already demagogues, within the Evangelical sub-culture, calling for tribal conflict, as they denounce secular America. These demagogues state that Evangelicals should not tolerate secularism, but should attempt a return to Christian America. A few Evangelical historians have declared their opposition to such notions. However, Evangelical historians continue to write histories that affirm the Evangelical distinctiveness which is said to help make the United States a great nation. Evangelical historians are indirectly aiding the demagogues by presenting a largely positive focus on Evangelicalism, and failing to consider the contribution of other American ideologies and their relationship to Evangelicalism.

A seventh problem emerges when one considers the cultural influences that play upon Evangelical scholarship. Since the 1950s, the American Evangelicalism has set the agenda for the rest of the Evangelical world. The Australian and British Evangelical communities have become orbits to the theological activities of Pasadena (Cal.), Wheaton, Deerfield, Chicago, Minneapolis, Nashville, Grand Rapids, the Boston area, Washington (D.C.), and Columbia (N.C.). Australian Evangelical scholarship, much like the Australian culture generally, has little originality to offer. It has largely depended on models from either the United Kingdom or the United States.

When one closely examines the alternative in British Evangelical scholarship, it is seen that British Evangelicalism has largely been reshaped from the

trans-Atlantic flow of British and American revivalists.<sup>45</sup> While English, Scottish, and Irish Protestantism have provided a foundation to American Evangelicalism, the American Evangelicals, from the time of Finney, have redirected British Evangelicalism to their American frame of reference.<sup>46</sup> British Evangelical scholarship, through its I.V.F. network, may have begun to offer a slightly different perspective than that to the Americans, but in time, such scholarship gets absorbed into American Evangelicalism.<sup>47</sup> Thus we first see John Scott in Leister, then we see him in Urbana.

This is also true for Australian Evangelical scholarship. We have generally followed the cultural pattern of our nation in the post-1945 period. As the country underwent cultural Americanisation, Australian religious institutions have adopted American models of Church life and Church Growth. Prior to the Second World War, United Kingdom was the destination of Australians theological students going overseas to study. Now the destination is the United States. For Australian Evangelical institutions, American seminaries such as Fuller and Trinity, and American colleges such as Wheaton and Moody, have become important training centres. Thus when Australian Evangelicals do provide a uniquely different insight in

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<sup>45</sup> This conclusion is drawn from the analysis of Richard Carwardine. *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism. Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America 1790-1865*. London. Greenwood Press. 1978. Carwardine states " If American evangelicals were socially and ecclesiastically more powerful than the British, if that power gave them a greater confidence, if that confidence was translated at times into a seemingly boundless optimism for the future of America as God's chosen country, and if the foundation of these attitudes was a revivalism more deeply rooted and far-flung than anything Britain could offer, British and American evangelicals nevertheless saw themselves as branches of the same closely knit family...In such a context the American new-measure developments were bound to make an impression in Britain". p. 198.

<sup>46</sup> Evidence of this is provided in John Kent. *Holding The Fort*. Studies in Victorian Revivalism. London. Epworth Press. 1978.

<sup>47</sup> This is demonstrated in Keith & Gladys Hunt. *For Christ and the University*. The Story of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship of the U.S.A. 1940-1990. Downers Grove. InterVarsity Press. 1991.

Australian scholarship, it is generally grounded in an American framework.

Australian Evangelical scholarship did have, in a brief period in the 1970s and early 1980s, an opportunity to develop a different direction to the American orbit. This was the scholarship that centred around IVF graduate journal, *Interchange*, and the Zadok Centre in Canberra.<sup>48</sup> Three Australian Evangelical sociologist-type historians merged from these heady days. Robert Banks formulated the idea and practise of an Australian House Church movement from his historical examination of the New Testament.<sup>49</sup> Bruce Wilson established the Eremos Institute as a way to allow "God to survive in Australia".<sup>50</sup> David Millikan provided a re-examination of Australian cultural mythology.<sup>51</sup> It was a basic Russell Ward interpretation with religion given a particular focus.

Banks, Wilson, and Millikan appeared to offer something different, but in the end, what differences there existed were quickly overshadowed by the overseas influences they contained. Millikan was a graduate of Fuller and his concerns for Australian Christianity had come from Fuller's emphasis on cross-cultural evangelism. It is also suspect that his use of Ward is somewhat inspired by the American Turner thesis. The parallel between historical development of American Evangelicalism in the Mid-West frontier, and Millikan's projected "Australian Christianity" from a sensitivity

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<sup>48</sup> Out of *Interchange* in this period, came articles such as Allan W. Loy. "Australian Culture - an Attempt at Theological Penetration". *Interchange*. No. 25. 1979; Out of the Zadok Centre in this period, came papers such as David Millikan. "Christianity in Australian Society". *Zadok Centre Series* No. 1., and Jim Stebbins. "The Distinctive of Australian Christianity - Historical Perspective". *Zadok Centre Reading Guide* No. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Banks. *Paul's Idea of Community*

<sup>50</sup> Bruce Wilson. *Can God Survive in Australia*. Sutherland. Albatross Books. 1983.

<sup>51</sup> David Millikan. *The Soul of the Sun-Burnt Land*.

to Australian frontier mythology can not be escaped. Perhaps this is why Evangelical communities are being set up in rural Australia.<sup>52</sup>

Banks offers something a bit more tangible, but is it really any different to House Church movements that have developed in United Kingdom and the United States ? What role does the primitivism that is strongly expressed by American frontier religions play in artificially recreating a New Testament Church structure in a Non-New Testament environment ? Up until recently, Banks was, at least, leading a path for the sociological study of Australian Christianity. This has all change upon his appointment as a theology lecturer at Fuller. Banks', Wilson's, and Millikan's ideas, along with the rest of the "Gum-leaf" theological experiment, has been lost or caught up in the American orbit.

Once one realises how Australian Evangelical scholarship has been caught up in the American orbit, it raises the ultimate question; to what extent has a personal Evangelical theology (here in Australia) been the adoption of theological formulation created from an American worldview over the last two centuries ? One quickly realises that United States plays the same role for conservative Protestantism in last four decades, what Rome has for Catholicism in last four centuries. The shocking truth is world evangelisation in the twentieth century has been largely the religious version of cultural Americanisation. Given the enormous global effect that this Americanisation has had, it is almost unbelievable that nearly nothing has been written on this subject in Australian Evangelical historiography.

An eighth problem is one that is raised from discussions of Leonard Sweet and Douglas Sweeney, on what Sweet calls "observer-participant history" and

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<sup>52</sup> A noted example is the Cornerstone community located on the Australian frontier town of Bourke.

Sweeney calls "the observer-participant dilemma". Sweet is clearly impressed by the observer-participant approach of the Evangelical historians. Sweeney is more reserved: Evangelical historians can provide an enormous service to their movement, to the academic community, and to broader culture if they practice their craft honestly and thoroughly; as Sweet quips "the best attacks are inside jobs". But when personal or institutional agendas are allowed to color a historian's depictions of the movement, no one is served.<sup>53</sup>

Sweet puts forward the argument that observer-participant history is a new liberating direction in scholarship away from the scientific approach of positivism. For Sweet, observer-participant history is this lovely coming-together of critical thought and ideological faith -

Observer-participant historians are showing that the nature of genuine scholarship is critical engagement, interested love, or what Noll both descriptively and prescriptively calls "believing criticism"...the state of being as "wise as Serpents with respect to the world of thought, as innocent as doves with respect to the gospel"...<sup>54</sup>

Sweet's argument, however, demonstrates the extent to which his ideological pretension distorts critical thought. For Sweet, fails in the same trap of all ideologues - the polemic tendency to present the opposing side as the source of all problems, and paying little attention to the problems on your own ground. Sweet contrasts the observer-participant history of the Evangelical historians with the scientific history of the positivist historians, and in doing so, has revealed the subtle anti-intellectualism of the Evangelical ideology.<sup>55</sup> He states that "scientific history has led the way down terrible paths towards Auschwitz, Bangladesh, Chernobyl, Dresden etc".<sup>56</sup> This statement, of course, is nothing more than the anti-intellectual tendency in many religious ideologies to blame secular intellectuals for the modern ills of society. It is true that Positivism in science, history, and education has led to the dehumanising elements in the ideology of

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<sup>53</sup>Sweeney. *The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic*. pp. 70-71.

<sup>54</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. p. 413.

<sup>55</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. pp. 411-413.

<sup>56</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. p. 413.

behaviourism, but one could hardly blame these materialistic enterprises for human tragedies that have various ideological sources. Auschwitz was directly the result of Nazism which romanised history according to twentieth-century racist mythology. Hardly, the approach of scientific history. Bangladesh was directly the result of religious intolerance in the ideologies of fundamentalist Islam and Hinduism. Why should scientific history be blamed ? Chernobyl might be blamed on the sense of invincibility in the old Stalinist ideology. One should, however, not confuse the intellectual notion of "scientific history" (ie. Ranke) with its ideological use in the old Soviet Union. Dresden was certainly not the result of the scientific approach, but the mad militarism of arrogant generals. Most "scientific historians" are bitterly opposed to the glorification of Air Marshal Arthur "Bomber" Harris that has been carried out in recent years by the extreme ideologists of Anglophilism. Sweet is very wrong to make such a derogatory statement about the notions of objective detachment. For all the problems in positivism, it is simplistic nonsense to claim that the positivist approach of detached objective analysis has created all the societal nightmares of our modern society. Sweet has merely found a scapegoat so that he can make the observer-participant approach in the cause of his own ideology look good. As scientific history is blacken, Evangelical historiography will shine.

What Sweet has overlooked in his argument about the problems in the approach of objective detachment, and the positive contributions of the approach of critical attachment, is that most academic historian have long forsaken the positivist myth of objectivity, and will clearly acknowledge their own attachment to their subject matter. Marxist and Evangelical historians do not have the corner on an approach of attachment. A good historian will always have a certain affinity with his subject matter, and the characters he/she portrays. The difference between a good historian and an ideological-controlled historian is that the former will not allow his/her attachment to

stop him/her from criticising the very heart of his/her own ideological thought. The latter is so bound up within the ideological sub-culture that his/her observations are far too narrow. A historian can only be valuable to the limit that he/she is prepared to understand and appreciate the perspective that lie beyond the boundaries of their ideological sub-culture. A Marxist historian and an Evangelical historian can both be good historians, as long as they are aware of the ideological pressures around them. Most Evangelical historians, however, seem deeply unaware of how much their thinking has been controlled by their participation in the Evangelical sub-culture. None have yet to demonstrate that Evangelical historians can really understand and appreciate what it is really like to be non-Evangelical scholar examining Evangelicalism. Worse still, they have yet to demonstrate that Evangelical historians can understand and appreciate the pain of alienated former Evangelicals, those who fell foul of an ideological system. Yes, Evangelical historians can contribute an insider's view of their history, but, in spite of their willingness to acknowledge problems and failures in Evangelicalism, they have still ended up presenting histories that never deeply questions the heart of the Evangelical ideology, and which are used to booster the image of popular Evangelicalism. The true believer, maybe a little bit humbled by the darker side of their history, remains triumphant, while the story of the alienated and despised believer remains untold.

One of the problems that emerges from the observer-participant dilemma is the contradictory nature of Evangelical historians attempting to appear reasonably critical in their approach, while at the same time, appear very sympathetic towards symbols of their own tradition. This problem is well expressed inadvertently by Sweet.

At the end of one paragraph, Sweet writes:

The willingness of evangelical historians to lift the lid off fundamentalism's whole bucket of squirmy, squabbly worms is an integral component of evangelical scholars' effort to break down the rigid barriers separating evangelicalism from modern modes of scholarly

inquiry.<sup>57</sup>

Two paragraphs later, Sweet then writes:

Marsden finds it necessary to deodorize his presentation on Fundamentalist leaders, especially those still living or recently dead. His portraits of people are so even-handed that the ugly, sordid features are flattened out or explained away.<sup>58</sup>

It may be that Sweet is saying that historians like Marsden have to be polite in order to avoid being sued for slander (easily done in a society where the most extreme will shoot you to defend their sick sense of honour), but this can not justify a history that has "deodorize", "flattened out", "explained away", and certainly does not measure up to an "effort to break down the rigid barriers separating evangelicalism from modern modes of scholarly inquiry". It is along way from Smith's 1957 quip - "letting the chips fall where they may".<sup>59</sup>

Sweeney confirms the fact that the observer-participant approach of Evangelical historians has been distorted by their particular apologetical agendas. Specifically, Sweeney demonstrates that the two categories of Evangelical historians, Reformed and Holiness, are attempting to redefine Evangelicalism in opposition to one another. The Evangelical historians from the Reformed tradition are accused by their Holiness opponents for producing the "presbyterianization of evangelicalism and evangelical historiography".<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, the Reformed opponents can accuse Evangelical historians from the Holiness tradition of producing a "kaleidoscope" view

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<sup>57</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. pp. 407-408.

<sup>58</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. p. 408.

<sup>59</sup>At least some comfort may be drawn from Sweet open and honest reference to unnamed fundamentalist demagogues as "creeps". It is not merely a derogative remark, but a value judgement that be validated by a fair interpretation of history.

<sup>60</sup>Sweeney. *The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic*. p. 73; Sweeney cites Dayton. *Yet Another Layer of the Onion*. p. 97 and *passim*.

of Evangelicalism that is incoherent.<sup>61</sup> Above the particular agendas of the two groups of Evangelical historians, Sweeney perceives a more general apologetical agenda in contemporary Evangelicalism that distorts the observer-participant approach in both groups of Evangelical historians:

...the contemporary evangelical agenda seems to have distorted both [Reformed and Holiness] group's perception of neo-evangelical history in the 1940s and the 1950s.

One problem resulting from this agenda is that scholars from both groups evince a tendency to equate evangelicalism with pristine Christianity. Most of the key players in this historiography have evangelical sympathies. It seems as though these "observer-participants" are tying too hard to make their story attractive. Donald Bloesch, for example, allows that evangelicalism "is not the only form of Christianity" but maintains that "it is the truest and purest form".<sup>62</sup>

It is difficult to see how an observer-participant approach which assumed its own superiority could be taken as serious scholarship.

At the heart of the observer-participant dilemma is what Sweet points out as Evangelical historian's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, an attempt to come to terms with the fact that contemporary Evangelicalism is very much built on a reprehensible past. Sweet states:

Evangelical historian's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is with a fundamentalist movement that, thinly scarfed in tradition, went forth to battle the elements of modernity; that explicitly denied that it was shaped by a cultural context...that in varying degrees has embraced them [the Evangelical historians], both by its anti-intellectualism and by its unfair share of leaders who, on the tracks of their souls, were creeps.<sup>63</sup>

The Evangelical historian is faced with the horrible truth that their contemporary Evangelicalism has not only been dominated by militant demagogues (who Sweet

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<sup>61</sup>Sweeney. *The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic*. pp. 73, 75; Sweeney uses, as an example, Timothy L. Smith. "The Evangelical Kaleidoscope and the Call to Christian Unity". *Christian Scholar's Review*. Vol. 15. 1986. pp. 125-140.

<sup>62</sup>Sweeney. *The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic*. pp. 76-77. Sweeney is referring to Donald Bloesch. *The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity Amid Diversity*. New York. Garden City. 1983. pp. 5, 17.

<sup>63</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. p. 402.

rightly refers to as "creeps"), but has been built on the ideological illusions of anti-modernism. The problem is that these Evangelical historians can observe these truths, but still remain participants in the same ideological system that their own histories condemn. They are able to critically observe and uncritically participate in contemporary Evangelicalism by not forcing the obvious conclusions of their own histories. Their histories state the facts as they critically see them, but at the end of the day, they themselves still believe in some quality in Evangelicalism that gives it special insight that other religious ideologies have lost. Thus Marsden can declare the historical problems in Evangelicalism, and yet affirm the Evangelical beliefs about angelic intervention into human affairs. Noll has labelled this ambiguous state as "inhabiting two worlds", or "clashing communities" or "Between Faith and Criticism" - a title of a book by Noll.<sup>64</sup> Such a mindset is to be faulted. Although it has legitimacy in the Evangelical historian experience, being caught in the world of modern scholarship and the world of apologetic Evangelicalism, such a mindset is, nevertheless, polemical. For is not there more than two worlds? There are, surely, those who inhabit various world of religious belief along with the world of modern scholarship without any sense of ambiguity. The problem is only one for ideologies, like Evangelicalism, which has placed a gap between modern scholarship and orthodox belief. Liberal Protestantism never had this problem, in the first place, because it was always prepared to perceive spirituality through the standards of contemporary scholarship. Is there only one Faith? Surely, Liberal Protestants, Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, etc, can hold deep faith and spirituality alongside rigorous and open scholarship. The problem is only one for ideologies, like Evangelicalism, that has a subtle, at most times - a sub-conscious, tendency to see itself as the bearer of the only true faith.

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<sup>64</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. pp. 410, 412; Marsden. *Reforming Fundamentalism*. p. 7. Mark Noll. *Between Faith and Criticism*. Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America. San Francisco. Harper & Row. 1986.

What Evangelical historians have failed to see is that the historical problems in Evangelicalism, that they themselves observe, undermine the whole framework of Evangelical thought. If Evangelicalism is built on tenets, such as biblical inerrancy, and a belief in divine revelation that is historical demonstrable from a literal belief in Bible, then the whole of such Evangelical thought is nothing but the ideological illusions of anti-modernism. It may still be possible to have a different sort of "Evangelicalism" which is intellectually tenable in this post-modern age, much in the sense that we can talk of a broad liberal Evangelical Protestant tradition. However, such a tradition is today represented in Neo-Orthodox theology, still outside what is regarded to be Evangelicalism. The irony is that the Neo-Evangelicalism that condemned Neo-Orthodox as too liberal (and therefore unacceptable) in the 1950s, had, with the Young Evangelicals in the 1960s, arrived at the very same conclusions as their Neo-Orthodox foes. The Young Evangelical theologians, and the New Evangelical historians, still can not see that Evangelicalism without biblical inerrancy ends up being a Neo-Orthodox faith. For once you remove the anti-modernist approach to history, you have to accept that belief in divine revelation is a matter of existential faith, totally beyond the examination of the historian.

Evangelical historians, however, are under the illusion that, by giving contemporary Evangelicalism historical self-understanding, it may be able to make its problems go away.<sup>65</sup> What the Evangelical historians have overlooked is the factor of ideological power. If the leadership of Evangelicalism was to face up to conclusions that one draws from an examination of their own historical problems, they would be forced to admit that there could no longer be a distinctive wall that separates themselves and the rest of Protestantism, and therefore, would lose their ideological power.

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<sup>65</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. p. 403.

However, they want to still believe in revivalism (as divine intervention) in a way that the rest of Protestantism no longer expects, and so must ignore the historical conclusions on revivalism (explainable in terms of human and culture forces). Thus they must continue to adapt an anti-modernist approach to history. They can not see that by making the phenomena of revivalism into divine intervention, it automatically reduces God to the mindset of the human and cultural forces that can be shown to make up revivalism. The Evangelical historian, therefore, is in the position of explaining revivalism in terms of human and cultural forces as an observer, and legitimising the revivalism of Evangelical demagogues (Sweet's "creeps") as participants.

A ninth problem is the avoidance of hard questions. There is no doubt that the new Evangelical historians have brought a high level of scholarship within the Evangelical community. There is, however, a false impression that Evangelical historians have achieved asking the hard questions. Sweet contradicts himself when he states that Marsden and Noll do not shrink from the responsibility of asking awkward questions, in his article on the New Evangelical historiography, only then to state that "Noll ducks all discussion of Christological issues as they relate to biblical criticism, and thereby neglects to scrutinise the evangelical elevation to absolute of Scripture rather than Christ", and that Marsden does not explain the "collapse of neo-evangelicalism's united front" as best that it could be.<sup>66</sup> Sweet quibbles that "such 'bad' in the 'best' is but specks on the sun", but is this the case?<sup>67</sup> One would have thought that the mythologies of the "Sacred Book" tradition was a major historical problem within Evangelicalism (as it is for Islamic fundamentalism), and Noll's failure to address this issue avoids awkward questions that many in the Evangelical

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<sup>66</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. p. 399.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*

sub-culture would rather not face. Unlike Bultmann and Pannenberg, Evangelical scholars believe that the Resurrection of Christ was a historically demonstrable event. The resurrection is said, by Evangelicals, to be knowable in the same way that historians could demonstrate knowledge of any event in the life of Julius Caesar. Evangelical apologist, such as Josh McDowell, can not understand how modern secularists could possibly deny the historicity of the resurrection while believing in the historical existence of Napoleon.<sup>68</sup> Evangelical historians of contemporary Evangelicalism escape having to justify their personal beliefs about the Bible, and therefore, can avoid revealing their unacademic view of history when it comes to the New Testament period, while being very academic in their approach to nineteenth and twentieth century history. It is simply a double standard.

Marsden is, certainly, much more daring about asking hard or awkward questions. He has opened up a major area of concern in Evangelicalism by demonstrating that Evangelicalism has, since the conflict broke out in Fuller in 1962 (the Black Saturday incident), been divided between "conservative neo-evangelicals" and "progressive neo-evangelicals" (or "the Young Evangelicals").<sup>69</sup> What Marsden fails to do is to explain how this collapse of the Evangelical united front has affected the present intellectual integrity of Evangelicalism. In our present age, Evangelicalism is in such a flux, with so many varying expressions (eg. charismatic, non-charismatic, inerrantist, non-inerrantist, pre-millenarian, post-millenarian, non-millenarian, radical, liberal, conservative, neo-conservative, etc.), that it has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to define what Evangelicalism really means at this present time. In the past, Evangelicalism could be defined by the acceptance of certain fundamental

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<sup>68</sup>Josh McDowell. *More Than A Carpenter*. Wheaton. Tyndale Publishers. 1977. pp. 46-49.

<sup>69</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. p. 399; Marsden. *Reforming Fundamentalism*. pp. 208-215.

doctrines (a belief in biblical inerrancy being the key doctrine in the American experience). Then came the major break between separatist Fundamentalists (Neo-Fundamentalists) and ecumenical Fundamentalists (Neo-Evangelicals) in the 1940s and 1950s. Then came the second major break between those who held to biblical inerrancy (conservative neo-evangelicals) and those who was opposed to it (progressive neo-evangelicals or the "Young Evangelicals"). Then came the influence of Neo-Pentecostalism upon mainstream Evangelicalism in the late 1960s and 1970s, in the form of the Charismatic movement (sometimes referred to as "Charismatic Renewal"). This was followed by conflict in many Evangelical churches between anti-charismatic and charismatic enthusiasts. In the 1970s and 1980s, the confusion was further expounded by the political shifts in Evangelicalism both towards the Left (Evangelical radicals) and the Right (Evangelical neo-conservatives). The conflict between the political left and right within Evangelicalism parallels the conflict between the political philosophy of Left-wing Protestantism (ie. Mennonite, Quaker, Non-Calvinist Baptist, Welsh Methodist traditions) and that of Neo-Calvinism. In an age of ecumenical Christianity, Evangelicalism has broken down into more and more factions bound by an increasingly meaningless identity called "Evangelicalism". Even though contemporary Evangelicals still talk of an "Evangelical orthodoxy", such orthodoxy no longer exist except in how it is defined for each faction of Evangelicalism. Whereas an Evangelical orthodox may have once defined Evangelicalism, it can no longer define Evangelicalism as a whole, but only adds further to its factionalisation.

What has characterised contemporary Evangelicalism has not been religious orthodoxy, but rather, it has been the interplay of outside influences and the Evangelical tradition. Therefore, as Sweet acknowledges, Martin E. Marty's observation is true - "the culture changed evangelicalism more than evangelicalism

changed the culture".<sup>70</sup> The culture of the sophisticated twentieth-century mind had scoffed at the narrowness of American populist fundamentalism in the first half of the twentieth century. Those American fundamentalists who wished to be seen as intellectually sophisticated heed the criticism of their surrounding culture, and thus, formed the Neo-Evangelical movement to create a more intellectually sophisticated fundamentalism. As Marsden explains in *Reforming Fundamentalism*, in order to attain something that was intellectually sophisticated, the ecumenical (or open) fundamentalists had to engage with the academic centres of theology. Dan Fuller, son of the radio revivalist and founder of Fuller Seminary, Charles Fuller, went off to Switzerland to study under Karl Barth. However, the surrounding culture of Barth's academic theology impinges upon the young evangelical mind, and therefore, Dan Fuller returns to Fuller Seminary to led the Young Evangelical movement. The up-and-coming new evangelicals pass through the surrounding cultures of the New Left and New Right, and so, the political divisions within the Evangelical tradition intensifies.

In all these issues - factionalisation, and the influence of outside forces, Marsden, Noll, Quebedeaux, Moberg, and Pierard - all as Evangelical historians - have provided apt descriptions. What they have failed to do, is to state the obvious conclusion, that Evangelicalism is a religious, culturally-defined, ideological force that adapts with each changing zeitgeist. In this regard, it is not the distinctive phenomenon of its own self-image. It is like every other religious tradition which has to shift with the times, or face irrelevancy. It would seem that the new Evangelical historians want to hint at the transient nature of Evangelical thought, while at the same time, give self-assured comfort to Evangelicals who want to maintain the illusion that Evangelical doctrine has defined spirituality in a way that is beyond the surrounding culture; that

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<sup>70</sup>Sweet. *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves*. p. 398.

Evangelicalism only has truly understood *the* revelation of God captured in the pages of the Bible.

Evangelical historians, like nearly everything in Evangelicalism, are catching up with yesterday's fashions. It is only now in the post-1960s period that the Evangelical tradition has affirmed (and there are still those in the tradition who will never affirm) what had been accepted in the rest of Christianity a hundred years ago. Now, in this age of post-modernity, most Christians intellectuals are beginning to perceive that no religious tradition can really capture spiritually and systemised it neatly into dogma. The mysteries of God and the universe-beyond-the-universe are that, mysteries - that which can not be explained nor defined with any real meaning, this side of death. It is only a matter of existential choice ("leap of faith") that one choose to affirm mystery or not. Beyond this existential choice, is only religious traditions that are generated by the surrounding culture, and celebrated by various sub-cultures. The hard question that Evangelical historian must face is he/she going to affirm the illusions of the sub-culture, or is he/she going to be able to communicate, or at least translate, the insights of post-modernity. For how long must the Evangelical historians be caught up in yesterday's battles ?

There is a pattern in popular Evangelicalism that is played out in Evangelical historiography - you take what can be used to booster your apologetic agenda, and ignore what can critique your own paradigm. This leads to the ultimate and final problem (tenth), one that was mentioned at the beginning of this article - who does Evangelical historiography ? Is Evangelical historiography only for Evangelical-believing historians, or is open to historians of any ideological persuasion who has interest in the study of Evangelicalism ? Professional historical associations like the Evangelical History Association seem to be taking over the historical study of

Evangelicalism in a way that would exclude or minimise the presence of those who do not conform to the Evangelical ideology. It is unacceptable for open professional historical associations, engaged in the secular academic field, to have "declarations of faith". The origins of such declarations demonstrate the desire for ideological control which is extremely insidious. Such declarations were used shamefully by anti-intellectual demagogues to remove leading academics from their positions of teaching at several seminaries-colleges in the United States, Britain, and Australia. In the final analysis, declarations of faith are only a tool in an ideological power game which seeks to keep new learning, new thinking, outside the guarded walls of orthodoxy. Those beyond the citadel of orthodoxy may not care about such problems, but what happens to the "Evangelical historian" who decides that he/she refuses to "sign on the dotted line" ? Is he/she to face the fate of Sir Thomas More ? And what happens to the historian of Evangelicalism who wish to establish him/herself in the field, only to find it controlled by ideologists who carefully construct its academic agenda ? Are they to be frozen out ?

Patrick O' Farrell raises a parallel issue here in his 1977 article on "Historians and Religious Convictions".<sup>71</sup> O' Farrell, faced with K.S. Inglis' claim that it does not matter whether Catholic historiography is done by Catholics or non-Catholics, outlines the view that a historian's religious conviction "could and should matter" in the writing of religious history.<sup>72</sup> While rejecting both the proposition that Catholic history can only be written by Catholic historians (so as to have an orthodox view), and the proposition that Catholic history can only be written by non-Catholic historians (so as to have an objective view), O' Farrell argues "that

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<sup>71</sup>Patrick O'Farrell. "Historians and Religious Convictions". *Historical Studies*. Vol. 17. No. 68. April 1977.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid. pp. 279-282, 286.

the familiarity of any insider is likely to be advantageous (ie. "that socialists are likely to better understand the history of socialism" and in O'Farrell's case, that Catholics are likely to better understand the history of Catholicism), and thus, "that the historian who has religious beliefs has - *potentially* - significant, indeed crucial, advantages in writing religious history".<sup>73</sup> O'Farrell has a point, but unfortunately, his argument is limited by the notion of the insider and the outsider. What most historians (including O'Farrell) fail to see are those who fall between the two positions - those who were once "insiders", but those who have never become true "outsiders". In terms of Catholic scholarship, Han Kung fits this bill.

This article has been written from the perspective of one who is like Han Kung. He is an historian of Evangelicalism who is also a former Evangelical believer that has not been able to walk away from his own personal history (an once-insider-but-not-outsider). He joins the ranks of other "in-betweeners" - former Marxists and former Catholics disillusioned with their ideology, but who still maintain a faith far greater than the dead wood of ideology. When people talk of ex-priests who never really cease being priests ("once a priest, always a priest"), one gets a sense of this "in-between world". In his historical writings, the writer has attempted to be both objective and empathic, but in his life outside the "official historical records", he knows that Evangelicalism can be an extremely alienating ideological force. The historian can not turn a blind eye to the fact that, beyond the romantic view of the official records, people's personal lives have been cruelly burnt by Evangelical demagogues. One only has turn to the quintessential Australian historian, the late Manning Clark. The account of his personal and family life demonstrates how vicious and nasty an Evangelical ideology can be.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid. pp. 282-285, 287, 291, 292. O'Farrell's own emphasis.

<sup>74</sup>Manning Clark. *The Puzzles of Childhood*. Ringwood. Viking Penguin Books. 1989. Clark states "It was also the time [1913] my father [who was then Anglican chaplain to the State Penitentiaries at

Who does Evangelical historiography ? It is a question that is close to the heart of a former Evangelical historian who is attempting understand his alienation from his own past. However, it is one question that, at this point of time, he has no answer for. In the end, it all depends on the continuing nature of Evangelical historiography.

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Darlinghurst and Long Bay, and the State Reformatory for Women] became aware that between him and the men in power in the Church of England in Sydney there was a great gulf set...He was not a vindictive man, or a punishing man. The idea of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth was revolting to him. He believed those words of Christ: 'love your enemies...bless them that persecute you' - or thought he did. He wanted everyone to like him... It was a shock to him to find that what he believed to be his strongest point - his capacity to win the approval of all the ones whom God seemed to have forgotten - was adjudged by his superiors in the Church to be a weakness...Archbishop John Charles Wright, a worthy representative of Jehovah in Philistine Sydney, weighed his young chaplain [Clark's father] in the balance and found him wanting in moral fibre...the ones [Sydney diocese Evangelicals] whose approval he so desperately coveted began to frown and wear black looks whenever he came into their presence" pp. 42-43. ; Manning Clark. *The Quest For Grace*. Ringwood. Viking. Penguin Books. 1990. Clark states "There were the members of the Evangelical Union [at the University of Melbourne in the 1930s], the women who always wore stockings, and fastened the top button of their blouses, the women who wore smiles even on a hot north wind day in Melbourne, because smilers bore witness to their joy in being part of God's creation. They used to tell me they were praying for me, and I wanted to say they would need to pray a very long time, as their smugness grated on the mind of a young man who believed life was much more of a mystery than anything acknowledged in their philosophy". pp. 8-9; "Those who profess themselves followers of the universal embrace or medicine men for social evils, I was to find were often most lacking in charity, pity and understanding for all the ones whom God seemed to have forgotten" p. 12; in the context of Marxist ideology but equally applicable to Clark's experience of the Evangelical ideology (as Clark says 'all ideologies were on my hit list' p. 26), he writes "I had always been uncomfortable with those who claimed they knew all the answers. Accepting another man's view of the world meant the loss of the right to decide for oneself. That I could not abide. I already believed passionately I must make my own decision even if I were wrong. The spiritual bullies wanted to take that right from me. I believed there was a mystery at the heart of things. Wordsworth had put it into word for me: there was 'the burden of the mystery'. The self-appointed engineers of the human soul acknowledged no such mystery, or dismissed it as reactionary mysticism and nonsense. They talked and wrote as though it were possible to measure the passions of the human heart by the methods of the bookkeeper". pp. 15-16; "Our two fathers {Clark's and his wife's} were victims of the walnut-hearted men preposterously claiming to represent Christ on Earth - my father of the life-deniers in the Church of England, and her father of the harsh elders of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa". p. 37;

## Appendix 1

### Notes: "Sub-Cultures and Scholarship"

From the outside, the Mennonite Amish community in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, or the Jewish orthodox community in New York City, may look quaint and a noble protest against the harsh dominant hegemony of American commercialism, but consider what it means for an insider. For questioning spirits caught up in such sub-cultures, one sees life experiences of alienation that either end in the departure from the sub-culture or the death of that spirit. It is a similar dilemma that many more conventional immigrant communities face, the clash between the traditional mindset of the strongly ethnic parents and the questioning spirits of their children. The sympathy of this writer is for the children, the questioning spirit of youth. For the mistake that the older generation makes all the time, is the failure to see that tradition, in the historical process, is always dynamic, never static.

Understandably, the first generation of immigrant communities rigidly hold to traditional ethnicity as a way to maintain an identity against frightening dominant hegemony. It, however, produces the ridiculous situation where, for example, the older generation of American and Australian Italians are more "Italian" than the Italians of Italy, or where Australian-British in the Menzies era were more British than the residents of Britain. When the first generation of the immigrant communities return to the mother country, they find that their own national culture has shifted, leaving them behind in an out-dated traditionalism. At a level of ideology rather than ethnicity, the same processes have occurred in the Evangelical sub-culture. An older generation of Evangelicals determines the "traditional" mores of the community. The questioning spirit of younger Evangelicals comes along and pushes the limits of the traditional view of orthodoxy. This process has occurred continually in Evangelicalism, but it has meant that there is a crisis for each new generation. Like the second generation of the immigrant community, the younger Evangelicals, must work out a compromise between their loyalty to their inherited sub-cultural "traditions", and the wider cultural-intellectual trends of their age, the *Zeitgeist*. Some will, consciously, refuse to compromise, and end up in the irrelevancy of some type of fundamentalism. Sub-consciously, however, those fundamentalists who cry "No Compromise" have already compromised by the mere fact that they live in the present age. Even those who have rejected the present age, such as the Amish communities, find themselves compromising with the wider culture that surrounds them. Thus, while rejecting the use of modern transportation in their own community, Amish families can be seen touring the United States on Greyhound buses.

It can then be seen that, as the younger Evangelicals push against the traditional view of orthodoxy, the sub-culture undergoes a liberalisation with a rump reacting to this liberalising, and choosing fundamentalism. In the first half of the twentieth century, however, the reaction against liberalisation was much stronger in American Evangelical Protestantism, and the militant conservatives were able to

marginalise the liberals, maintaining ultimate control over American Evangelicalism during this period. The post-1945 period has been a swing against the militant conservatives and toward greater liberalisation within the Evangelical sub-culture. Evangelical historians have been part of this liberalisation.

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