





Jamaican children on the Ship H.O.P.E.







Bebbington Quadrilateral

A Definition of Evangelicalism

Biblicism
Conversionism
Crucicentrism
Activism

*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History
from the 1730s to the 1980s*
(London: Unwin Hyman, 1989)

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Characteristics of Evangelicalism

Biblicism: All essential spiritual truth can be found on its pages.

Conversionism: The belief that human beings need to be converted.

Crucicentrism: A focus on the atoning work of Jesus on the cross.

Activism: The belief that the Gospel needs to be expressed in effort.

What is an Evangelical?

(Different answers to different questions)

- By theology
- By self-identification
- By political climate (American public life)

81% of Evangelicals voted for Trump

But who are these?

Only group more consistent at voting Democratic are
Black church-going Protestants who define themselves as Evangelicals

Is this Definition Sufficient?

- The World situation complicates things

David Bebbington noted that Evangelicals in Britain are now more apt to vote for the Liberal Democratic party or the Labour party as they are to vote for the Conservative party.

In emerging countries, Evangelicals are not white, American, nor Republican.

What we think about the term “Evangelical”

- White
- Republican
- Conservative
- Trump Supporter



History of Evangelicalism (past 300 years)

- Franciscans (first recorded usage of term in Western history)
Applied to monks who gave up everything to live in poverty to serve God.
- Until 16th century until Luther and Reformers
 - 1520s/30s “Evangelical” was seen as an adjective
 - Modern-day Evangelicals more closely represents what came from the English Reformation
- Pietists (feelings of the heart)
- Puritans (Conversion and Half-Way Covenant, Solomon Stoddard)
- Jonathan Edwards (stood at the “Headwaters” of Evangelicalism)
- New Divinity Theologians (modifications to Calvinism)
- (See *Evangelicals*, Mark Noll, David Bebbington, George Marsden, 2019)

19th Century Evangelicals

- Evangelical protestants disagreed and fought with each other.
- Almost all were anti-Catholic, believed in new birth, Bible...
- Yet Robert Baird (1798-1863) – *Religion in America* (1844)

Stated that the vast majority of Protestants are Evangelicals and he included all Christian groups (Catholics, Mormons, Unitarians).

- We also see this in the National Association of Evangelicals (1940s) who did outreach with serious Christians Groups not identifying as Evangelicals (e.g. Missouri Synod Lutherans, Christian Reformed Church).

19th Century Social Action

- *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work (1865-1920)*, Norris Magnuson (1977).
- *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War*, Timothy L. Smith (1976)

19th century Evangelicals did not disconnect personal evangelism and social action (it was an integral part of the Gospel message):

Dwight L. Moody (YMCA, education of the poor and minorities)

J. Wilbur Chapman (Clinics, kitchens, and rights of postal workers)

Jerry McAuley, Samuel H. Hadley (Water Street, first rescue mission)

William Booth (Salvation Army)

Issues for 19th Century Evangelicals as a matter of faith and practice

- “Slum work”
- Food and Shelter
- Healing and healthcare
- Rescue Homes for Women
- Unemployment
- Worker’s rights (see *Sin in the City: Chicago and Revivalism, 1880-1920*, Thekla Ellen Joiner, 2007)
- Prisons and Prisoners
- Liberation of Women
- Concern for Ethnic Groups

Question: Would 19th century Evangelicals be considered progressives today?

-Maybe...Maybe not. The one thing that identified their faith was Evangelicalism (note the “Bebbington Quadrilateral”) – They believed that social action/work is a product of the Gospel, not a replacement of the Gospel.

So What Happened?

- Response to German Liberalism
- Response to Evolution (a reaction to the loss of the teleological argument)
 - *see *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders* (1984) by David N. Livingstone
- George Marsden (1980) *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism (1870-1925)*
 - Non-Fundamentalist Conservative Protestants, Mennonites, Christian Reformed, Holiness Movement, Pentecostals,
- Modernist/Fundamentalist Debate
- “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” (Harry Emerson Fosdick’s sermon in 1922)
- The emergence of Neo-Orthodoxy
- Pro-choice, Pro-Life
- Moral Majority (specifically political involvement)

The Ugly Side of Evangelicalism

- When speaking on the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, Historian Matthew J. Hall (Boyce College) stated that activism was most often status quo and not the rule.

“The unfortunate reality isn’t that evangelical theology in the South was muted when it came to racial justice, it’s that it was actively used to undermine justice and to perpetuate a demonic system.”

- Justin Taylor noted that there were three categories in the southern Presbyterian tradition (See *Coalition*, July 1, 2016):
 1. Segregationists (like W.A. Gamble, Clerk of the Central Mississippi Presbytery),
 2. Moderates (like L. Nelson Bell, Associate Editor of the *Presbyterian Journal* and founder of *Christianity Today*),
 3. Integrationists (like Pastor and Evangelist Bill Hill, West End Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church, Hopewell, Virginia).

“Evangelicals must involve themselves in Christian social action because the Scriptures place that responsibility upon us. The Word of God calls us to Christian social action because it calls us to the pursuit of social righteousness.”

(Jaymes P. Morgan, an address to the Presbytery of Los Angeles, 1967)

1973 Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern

- Context of the Declaration: Vietnam War, disillusionment with Richard Nixon's leadership and policies, a growing gap between the rich and poor, ongoing racial strife...
- Evangelicals recognized the need not just for personal holiness but for social justice.
- The Declaration "challenged evangelicals to emphasize social sins and institutionalized evils as vigorously as they do personal sins."
- Signers included President William Bentley of the National Black Evangelical Association, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship Canadian director Samuel Escobar, theologian Carl F. H. Henry, and Carl Thomas McIntire of Toronto's Institute of Christian Studies.

Tensions between “Evangelism” and “Social Action”

- The tensions have always existed in Evangelicalism.
- 1. Lausanne Conference (1974) conflict between John Stott and Billy Graham over the issue of social justice

At Lausanne III (Cape Town, South Africa, Oct. 16-25, 2010):

“Reconciliation to God and to one another is also the foundation and motivation for seeking justice that God requires, without which, God says, there can be no peace. True and lasting reconciliation requires acknowledgment of past and present sin, repentance before God, confession to the injured one, and the seeking and receiving of forgiveness. It also includes commitment by the Church to seeking justice or reparation, where appropriate, for those who have been harmed by violence and oppression.”

Some have sought to drop the term “Evangelical”

- Princeton University’s longstanding evangelical student ministry dropped the name in 2017, saying it is “increasingly either confusing, or unknown, or misunderstood to students.”
- Though some continue to keep the term, the trend is moving toward a departure from it. Ron Sider, founder of “Christians for Social Action”, argued that the history of the term (Evangelical) overcame any modern qualms and was worth clinging to. (a recent article in *Christianity Today*).
- “Evangelicals for Social Action” (founded in 1973) last year changed its name to “Christians for Social Action”
 - Mark Labberton has said, “With the current roiling semantics over the word ‘evangelical,’ [Evangelicals for Social Action’s former name] can lead to confusion over what this organization is or isn’t affirming,” (*Christianity Today*, September 15, 2020)

Difficulties in losing the term “Evangelical”

- What about the denominations that have that term in their title and have used it in within an historical definition?
- Are we viewing “Evangelicalism” through a western and white lens? (white, empowered, Republican, etc.)
 - What about the large number of Evangelicals in the Black church who have voted Democratic and sometimes progressive, yet identify themselves as Evangelicals?
- What do we do with the many emerging countries whose Christians use the term to identify themselves as being Christian?