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*Embracing the Early Church:  
Reflections on Evangelicals, Patristics,  
Ecclesiology, and Ecumenism<sup>1</sup>*



*Phillip Luke Sinitiere*

*H*oly Scripture declares in the books of Kings: when ten tribes were divided from the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, and forsaking their king, appointed for themselves another one without . . . so great was the indignation of the Lord against those who made the schism, that even when the man of God was sent to Jeroboam, to charge upon him his sins, and predict the future vengeance, he was forbidden to eat bread and to drink water with them.

CYPRIAN, *EPISTLES*

*C*hristians are in the world what the soul is in the body.

EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS

*B*eware of your own confidence, lest you fall from a height of discipline because of lack of training. It is better to move ahead a little at a time.

BASIL

*I*t is fashionable for cultural historians to write about historical memory—how individuals remember moments in life, how societies remember important events and dates, or how institutions create and maintain collective remembrances. Closely related to historical memory is identity—personal or collective—and what factors contribute to its construction. Or, as historian Stephen Bertman observes: “to be human is to remember.”<sup>2</sup> This article is about evangelical memory and the use of ancient Christianity to construct evangelical identity. After noting the work of several leading “ancient-evangelical” scholars, I summarize and categorize the massive body of evangelical literature that engages ancient Christianity. By way of summary I offer three observations about evangelicals who embrace the early church.

It is not a stretch to say that evangelicalism is in the midst of an identity crisis. Memories, boundaries, and identities—doctrinal, ecclesial, and ethnic, for example—are now important topics within evangelical conversations.<sup>3</sup> Evangelicalism itself, in fact, is difficult to define though historians have carefully noted some of its distinguishing marks. According to historian David Bebbington, evangelicalism focuses on conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism.<sup>4</sup> Despite relative consensus about evangelicalism’s distin-

guishing marks, there is less uniformity about how the meaning of these distinguishing marks should shape evangelicalism's doctrinal and ecclesial boundaries. For instance, the recent controversy over proponents of open theism within the Evangelical Theological Society exemplifies one doctrinal fissure. To cite another example, in *Deconstructing Evangelicalism*, D. G. Hart suggests that the term evangelicalism is now so porous that it has lost meaning and relevance. Whatever the case, evangelical scholars and observers continue to debate memories, boundaries, and identities and are exploring what it means to live in a post-Christian, postmodern world.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the most important interlocutors in discussions about memories, boundaries, and identities are the recent evangelical voices that seek to introduce and appropriate various elements of ancient Christianity. Though important conversations took place in the 1970s and 1980s<sup>6</sup>, since roughly the mid-to-late 1990s a growing number of evangelical scholars and pastors have sought consciously to make accessible the doctrines and teachings of the early church. The aims of this article, therefore, are first to further demonstrate *that* a trend is present, and second, to suggest a way to situate this trend within the wider stream of evangelical thought. To demonstrate that growing numbers of Evangelicals are turning to ancient Christianity for reflection and renewal, we must first turn to three of the most prominent voices calling Evangelicals to reconsider memories, boundaries, and identities: Thomas Oden, Robert Webber, and D. H. Williams.

Thomas Oden, a theologian at Drew University, underwent a conversion of consciousness in the 1970s wherein he began to understand how the ancient wisdom of the church fathers might better speak to the contemporary theological age than contemporary theological trends themselves. "Traveling this backroad," Oden writes, "[I moved] from obsessive spiritual faddism to stable classic Christian teaching." This "stable classic Christian teaching" enveloped Oden's life and these reflections have shaped a career. In Oden's most recent work, *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy: Signs of New Life in Christianity* (2003), he vividly describes his personal story and the historical machina-

tions that draw religious individuals to drink from ancient wells. Oden defines orthodoxy as "*integrated biblical teaching as interpreted in its most consensual classic period*," located in the Holy Scripture, articulated in the earliest confessions (Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed), and applied by "teaching contextually within ever-emergent cultural situations." This "rebirth of orthodoxy" reveals what Oden calls a "new ecumenism," simply a return to grounded belief in things like the sacred character of Scripture, a conscious trinitarianism, and affirmation of Christ's incarnation, atonement, and resurrection. Oden cites evidence for this movement in the appearance of conversion narratives, a focus on ancient scriptural exegesis, recognition of the multicultural character of ancient consensus, a willingness to define orthodoxy and heresy, and a contemporary restructuring of ecumenicity. This new ecumenism, Oden insists, transcends denominations without eschewing important differences and is moving toward a Spirit-led Christian unity. Thoughtful Christians thus possess a common deposit of faith.<sup>7</sup>

Robert Webber, a professor at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, has crafted an "ancient-future" lens through which Christians might see the postmodern world. The phrase "ancient-future," according to Webber, attempts "to find points of contact between classical Christianity and postmodern thought." Webber's *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (1999), chronicles and defines the differences between modern and postmodern conceptions of Christ, the church, spirituality, and missions. Webber contends that the cultural context of "classical" (ancient) Christianity has some parallels with the postmodern world and thus intends to "interface historic Christian truths into the dawning of a new era." This is done, Webber insists, by seeing Christ as the ultimate victor over sin and evil and the church as the incarnational extension of Christ into the world. Furthermore, Webber contends, the incarnational embodiment of Christians is best fostered in a church that is consciously holy, catholic, and apostolic. The worship in such a historically conscious church, Webber argues, revolutionizes "experience"

such that communication, ritual, and spiritual discipline become "the vehicle through which the story of the work of Christ is proclaimed and enacted" as well as "the rehearsal of the Christ event through which one's experience with God is established, maintained, and repaired." Thus, for Webber, the interplay of present and past defines the ancient-future thrust of evangelical faith in a postmodern context.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to *Ancient-Future Faith*, Webber extends his analysis with books like *Ancient-Future Evangelism* (2003), and most recently, *Ancient-Future Time* (2004), a book that urges Evangelicals to live according to the rhythms of the historic church calendar. More books are planned in Webber's *Ancient-Future* series whose catchphrase is: "the road to the future runs through the past."<sup>9</sup>

While Webber's *Ancient-Future* books create a conceptual framework for evangelicalism's engagement with postmodernism, his *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing Challenges of the New World* (2003), literally puts a face on those faithful who seek to dialogue with modern culture. Webber defines a "younger Evangelical" as a college or seminary-aged student (a "twenty-something"), a middle-aged Evangelical with a younger mindset, and generally one "who deals thoughtfully with the shift from twentieth- to twenty-first century culture . . . [and who] is committed to construct a biblically rooted, historically informed, and culturally aware new evangelical witness in the twenty-first century."<sup>10</sup>

While not specifically about Evangelicals, here I parenthetically note Colleen Carroll's, *The New Faithful: Why Young Adults Are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy* (2002). One of the "new faithful" herself, Carroll recounts the stories of students, professionals, artists, academics, and ministers, among others, to demonstrate that there exists a surge of orthodox Christianity among the younger generation. According to Carroll, ecumenism and balance—augmented by prayer, bible study, and the sacraments—are the tools the new faithful must possess to impact today's (and tomorrow's) world. The ecumenism of the new faithful, in Carroll's estimation, comes "because they can clearly articulate the distinctiveness of their faith tradi-

tions [Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox] and [because] they believe that universal truth is knowable" and form a thoughtful application of Christ's command to be in the world but not of the world.<sup>11</sup> Carroll's work, carefully researched and engagingly written, complements Webber's study of Evangelicals by telling the stories of young and faithful Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians.

In addition to Oden and Webber, another Evangelical to issue a call for deeper reflection on the Christian past is Baylor theologian, D. H. Williams. In his *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (1999), Williams sketches the historic formulation of Christian Tradition—what he defines as the patristic formulation of Christian doctrine and interpretation—and urges Evangelicals to embrace, adopt, and appropriate these elements instead of embracing the false Protestant dichotomy that pits Scripture against tradition. Furthermore, Williams argues, the Protestant penchant for pragmatic and utilitarian innovation has created a kind of historical amnesia in which thinking about the past is seen as detrimental and stifling. If evangelical churches continue to ignore the Christian past, Williams warns, these communions will delve further into sectarianism. In fact, Williams points out, many of these churches uncritically adopt innovative (and often ahistorical) postures of ecclesiastical gurus. By "retrieving the tradition" Williams has in mind a "serious study" of the early church fathers that will integrate ancient wisdom into contemporary currents of evangelical thought while responsibly retaining the historical context of patristic theology. "If the aim of contemporary evangelicalism is to be doctrinally orthodox and exegetically faithful to Scripture," Williams observes, "it cannot be accomplished without recourse to and integration of the foundational Tradition of the early church. . . . Tradition is not something Evangelicals can take or leave."<sup>12</sup>

Oden's careful articulation of the new ecumenism, Webber's clear explanation of both the peril and the possibility of embracing postmodernism, and Williams' erudite examination of history and tradition frame the current conversation of

evangelical interest in ancient Christianity. And while Oden, Webber, and Williams are three of the leading voices of this surge, there are countless others contributing to the larger conversation drawing Evangelicals into deeper and more reflective conversations about the ancient Christian past.<sup>13</sup> This body of literature falls roughly into five categories: (1) conversion narratives; (2) historical studies; (3) exegetical commentary; (4) ancient application; and (5) pastoral and popular perspectives.

Since much has been written about evangelical-Roman Catholic engagement (including a forthcoming book by Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over?: An Evangelical Protestant Assessment of Roman Catholicism in the Era of Vatican II and Pope John Paul II*<sup>14</sup>) to strike a balance I will focus mostly on Evangelical-Eastern Orthodox engagement. Bradley Nassif helpfully examines many of these conversations in a 2003 essay, "Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism: The Status of an Emerging Global Dialogue." Unlike Nassif, however, I set this part of the conversation more within the broader scope of evangelical ecumenical initiative and within the wider contours of evangelical thought.<sup>15</sup>

### CONVERSION NARRATIVES

Conversion is one theme that emerges from the literature on evangelical interest in ancient Christianity, and the conversion narratives that I discuss are the stories of those who have left the ranks of evangelicalism.

In his *Turning to Jesus: The Sociology of Conversion in the Gospels* (2002), North Park University theologian Scot McKnight analyzes the complexities that accompanied early conversion to the Christian faith. And in a recent article, "From Wheaton to Rome: Why Evangelicals Become Roman Catholic," McKnight analyzes some well-known Protestant-turned-Catholic stories (John Michael Talbot, Scot Hahn) and the conversion accounts of some of his former students. Church history surfaces as one of the many factors that influence conversion, and most evangelical converts to Roman Catholicism, observes McKnight, are drawn to church history by what is perceived as the "historical disenfranchisement"

and "temporality of modern evangelicalism." In the end, a sense of the past grounds and centers these evangelical converts to Roman Catholicism. Interestingly, McKnight notes that evangelical converts to Eastern Orthodoxy also cite church history as a reason for conversion.<sup>16</sup>

Four relatively well-known evangelical-turned-Eastern Orthodox conversion accounts confirm McKnight's comments and cite the discovery of church history as a crucial reason for leaving evangelicalism. Peter Gillquist's *Becoming Orthodox: A Journey to the Ancient Christian Faith* (1987), Frank Schaeffer's *Dancing Alone: The Quest for Orthodox Faith in the Age of False Religion* (1995), Frederica Mathewes-Green's *Facing East: A Pilgrim's Journey into the Mysteries of Orthodoxy* (1996), and Matthew Gallatin's *Thirsting for God in a Land of Shallow Wells* (2002), all address evangelicalism's "historical disenfranchisement" and explain how this realization sparked an interest in the Christian past that led to serious engagement with the early church and with Eastern Orthodoxy. While these conversion stories might seem to contradict my point about evangelical interest in ancient Christianity, it is important to remember that these individuals (and others) traveled to ancient Christianity by way of the evangelical road. Furthermore, their stories reinforce the fact that many consider what Stephen Holmes calls "historical locatedness" integral to sustaining the Christian faith.<sup>17</sup>

### HISTORICAL STUDIES

The next segment of evangelical literature that deals with ancient Christianity is what I term historical studies, works that come from evangelical authors who rigorously and responsibly explore elements of ancient Christianity in order to make more accessible the rich Christian past.

The two leading evangelical studies of Eastern Orthodoxy are Daniel Clendenin's *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective* (1994) and Donald Fairbairn's *Eastern Orthodoxy Through Western Eyes* (2002). Both Clendenin and Fairbairn ministered and studied in Russia and their work comes from personal and professional experience.

Clendenin's volume, which helpfully includes a companion reader, in addition to chapters about history and tradition, theosis, icons, and apophaticism, argues that Evangelicals must thoughtfully, critically, and humbly acknowledge the Christian East. Clendenin asserts that through careful study Evangelicals will find Orthodoxy consistent with the "basic truths" of the Christian faith. Furthermore, the liturgical and theological mystery of Orthodoxy, observes Clendenin, can redirect evangelical "reductionism, barrenness, [and] minimalism." Clendenin also argues that the unity of Christ's body is at stake with the study of Orthodoxy. Evangelicals, according to Clendenin, must "see beyond the narrow confines of their own particular experience of Christianity." Finally, employing what Clendenin terms a "hermeneutic of love," Evangelicals can learn several things from Eastern Orthodoxy. For example, catholic Evangelicals with eyes to see and ears to hear might grasp the importance of apostolic tradition and its connection to liturgy. From this, contends Clendenin, Evangelicals might develop a more balanced "historical consciousness" that will set essential Christian doctrine in its rightful context and lead to a healthy integration of doctrine and doxology. "Without disregarding our profound differences, unique perspectives, and the importance of repudiating heresy," Clendenin insists, "it is past time for Christians to move forward toward unity in a spirit of mutual appreciation."<sup>18</sup>

Donald Fairbairn's examination of Eastern Orthodoxy, published eight years after Clendenin's work, is a more extensive doctrinal analysis of Orthodoxy theology. Like Clendenin, Fairbairn addresses tradition and theosis; unlike Clendenin, Fairbairn more extensively examines Orthodoxy in the context of nationalism and the folk beliefs of Orthodoxy, what he calls "popular Orthodoxy." Pleading for patience and suggesting that Evangelicals and the Orthodox should "see through each other's eyes," Fairbairn contends that Evangelicals have things to learn from Eastern Orthodox Christians. First, Orthodox theology demands that Evangelicals reflect anew on what it means to be "scriptural." Moreover, Fairbairn suggests that Orthodox trinitarian theology is far more practical than

Western, esoteric trinitarianism and that the Orthodox understanding of the incarnation more accurately addresses the human condition and balances the legal connotation of the atonement with a very real sense of Christ's victory over death.<sup>19</sup> While Fairbairn's work offers more theological detail than Clendenin's, both books helpfully introduce Western Evangelicals to the mysteriously beautiful world of Eastern Christianity.

In his 1997 article, "Becoming Like God: An Evangelical Doctrine of Theosis," Robert Rakestraw argues that in order to be more "biblical," Evangelicals must explore and engage theosis. Rakestraw likens theosis to the doctrine of sanctification and defines theosis as "the restoration and reintegration of the 'image' or, as some prefer, 'likeness' of God." Rakestraw sets the doctrine in its patristic context and points to several early Evangelicals who embraced theosis—including Henry Scougal and John Wesley. And while Rakestraw quibbles with Athanasias' ancient phrase "becoming like god," he suggests that such language might spur Evangelicals to deeper theological reflection. Furthermore, to embrace a doctrine of theosis, according to Rakestraw, is to adopt a more incarnational and, therefore, more practical theology. Finally, suggests Rakestraw, Evangelicals will better integrate doctrine and life, or theory and practice, by embracing a doctrine of theosis.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the work of Clendenin, Fairbairn, and Rakestraw, several other studies engage the Evangelical-Orthodox conversation in historical and ecumenical perspective. Edited by James Cutsinger, *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox in Dialogue* (1997), engages in rigorous ecumenical conversation and James Saucy's 2000 article, "Evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox Together: Is the Church the Extension of the Incarnation?," argues that such dialogue centers, first, on ecclesiology. Saucy contends that the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox emphasis on the incarnational aspects of the church move beyond the New Testament definition of Christ's body. An evangelical balance, Saucy concludes, comes with a more focused Trinitarian vision of the church (i.e., the Pauline

illustration of marriage in Ephesians 5) that also addresses matters of Christology, eschatology, and pneumatology.<sup>21</sup> Finally, in a new book titled, *Three Views on Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism*, with a forward by J. I. Packer and essays by Michael Horton and Bradley Nassif, among others, also addresses historical and doctrinal issues between evangelicalism and Eastern Orthodoxy.<sup>22</sup>

Here, parenthetically, I also note that the mainline Presbyterian publication, *Theology Today*, devoted its January 2004 issue to Eastern Orthodoxy. The issue, save Ellen Charry's editorial, features all Orthodox writers (including the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, and the British Orthodox Bishop, Kallistos Ware) who address Orthodox artistic expression, monasticism, worship, and prayer. Here it is worth noting several of Charry's comments. First, she notes a contemporary "sensitivity of understanding" that allows such ecumenical conversation to take place and points out that "Eastern Orthodoxy sees Christianity as a way of worship in the life of prayer and liturgy, while the West sees it as a way of thought, a set of ideas whose truth is to be perfectly worked out in order to dispel all false notions." Equally illuminating in a guest editorial, Orthodox theologian John Chryssavgis describes the Orthodox posture of "ecumenical openness and personal humility before the mystery of words, and especially the very mystery of God's 'word that assumed flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1:14)" while exploring the dialectic of ancient tradition and contemporary application.<sup>23</sup> While the Protestant-Orthodox differences are not glossed over, it is a positive ecumenical gesture that *Theology Today* opened its pages to the mystery of Eastern Orthodoxy.

Similarly, the July/August 2003 issue of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity* explored the idea of "Christianity Unity & the Divisions We Must Sustain." Articles by Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and evangelical theologians like Richard John Neuhaus, Metropolitan Maximos, Timothy George, and Albert Mohler, among others, deal with denominational, liturgical, sacramental, doctrinal, and historical

issues in a balanced and ecumenical way without sacrificing key points of difference.

Another aspect of evangelicalism's historical engagement with ancient Christianity is a growing interest in Mary. While a number of mainline theologians approach Mariology in a recent collection of essays edited by Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Cynthia L. Rigby, *Blessed One: Protestant Perspectives on Mary* (2002)<sup>24</sup>, Baptist theologian, Timothy George, argues, "It is time for Evangelicals to recover a fully biblical appreciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her role in the history of salvation, and to do so precisely as Evangelicals." Situated under what George calls five "Marian [m]otifs," he urges Evangelicals to envision Mary as a daughter of Zion, as a handmaiden of the Word, and as the mother of the church while simultaneously affirming the virgin birth and embracing Mary as *Theotokos*.

George also carefully notes where Reformers like Luther and Zwingli extolled Mary and suggests that an evangelical Mary might ultimately infuse evangelicalism with a more focused incarnational theology and promote a healthier ecclesiology.<sup>25</sup>

As the previous works indicate, there are several evangelical scholars who rigorously and responsibly engage both Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy in order to better understand the shared traditions of ancient Christianity. In a similar vein, this historical view has spurred some important biblical commentary aimed particularly at Evangelicals.

#### EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY

There are an important and growing number of biblical commentaries aimed at a recovery of patristic exegesis that are broadly ecumenical and quite accessible to Evangelicals.

The first commentary series—and the most well known—is the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (ACCS), edited by Thomas Oden. With 14 volumes currently in print and 14 volumes forthcoming, plans are underway to translate the series into Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, and Italian. The series continues to sell well and it is important to point out



that the aim of ACCS is to put patristic exegesis not only on scholars' bookshelves, but also into the hands of laypeople and ministers. According to Thomas Oden, the ACCS

has as its goal the revitalization of Christian teaching based on classical Christian exegesis, the intensified study of Scripture by lay persons who wish to think with the early church about the canonical text, and the stimulation of Christian historical, biblical, theological and pastoral scholars toward further inquiry into scriptural interpretation by ancient Christian writers.<sup>26</sup>

Another series whose aim is to introduce Evangelicals to the ancient Christian past is *The Church's Bible*, a new commentary series under the general editorship of Robert Wilken. Different from the ACCS in that this series includes medieval exegesis, the only volume published to date is *Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, edited by Union Seminary's Richard A. Norris, Jr.<sup>27</sup>

A third and equally important commentary series intent on recovering patristic exegesis is Brill Academic's *The Bible in Ancient Christianity*, under the general editorship of Dallas Seminary's Jeffrey Bingham. This series, set to include non-canonical texts like the Gospel of Thomas has two volumes: Charles Kannengiesser's *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity*, and James Ernest's *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria*.

Since the late 1990s three major commentary series have emerged that aim to address the exegetical and historical deficiencies within evangelicalism and equip both pastors and laypeople with the tools to enhance historical studies of the Bible.<sup>28</sup>

#### ANCIENT APPLICATION

While the aforementioned commentaries allow for conversations about applying ancient Christianity to contemporary life, there are several important studies that more consciously seek to provide applicatory guidance.

Among other things, Christopher Hall is known for his

popular volumes about the church fathers. In 1998 Hall published *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* and in 2002 published *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*. *Praying with the Church Fathers*, to be published in 2005, will round out Hall's patristic trilogy. A student of Thomas Oden, Hall leads the way in making patristic life and thought popularly accessible to evangelical pastors and laypeople. *Reading Scripture* introduces the church fathers to the general reader and acclimates those unfamiliar with the history of biblical exegesis before discussing major exegetes like Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Augustine, and Gregory the Great, among others. In *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*, Hall delves into the fathers' observations on and comments about key doctrines of the Christian faith such as Christ's divinity, the Trinity, sin, grace, providence, the Bible, and the church. Here again Hall opens up the minds of the church fathers and provides a way for pastors and laypeople to benefit from the great minds of the past.

Another ancient application comes in Jeffrey Bingham's 2002 essay, "Evangelicals, Irenaeus, and the Bible." Bingham asserts that evangelical attention to patristic interpretation can redirect and reorient the individualist thrust of evangelical notions of conversion and sanctification. Criticizing what he calls an evangelical solipsism, Bingham also notes that this individualism subverts the Christian community "as a means of grace." Taken together, insists Bingham, both individual and communal solipsisms create a climate of presentist thinking and result in a "devaluation of tradition in evangelical Bible reading." Bingham suggests that second-century church father Irenaeus might help redress this deficiency within evangelicalism. From *Against Heresies*, Bingham demonstrates how Irenaeus argued that the teaching authority of presbyters resided in its pneumatic qualities and therefore, doctrinal fidelity. Thus led by the Spirit, Bingham points out that the authority of presbyters was necessarily linked with ecclesiological concerns. Evangelicals, according to Bingham, must therefore "journey to the exegesis of the past in search of the Spirit's [ecclesial] fruit."<sup>29</sup>

In a March 2004 article, "Early Church Catechesis and New Christians' Classes in Contemporary Evangelicalism," Clint Arnold argues that Evangelicals might learn from the way the early church fathers committed to training, teaching, and equipping those new to the Christian faith. Arnold suggests using the *Apostolic Tradition*, a guide to training catechumens associated with second-century Christian Hippolytus of Rome, and notes how patristic *scholars* engaged in the doctrinal and moral training of new church members. In the end, Arnold draws four broad applications from the early church catechumenate: he argues that this new approach necessitates an "immersion" in the Bible, can facilitate basic doctrinal instruction, train in spiritual discipline, and allow for what Arnold calls a "deliverance ministry," or "renunciation" of the Satan himself. While Arnold's article is both historical and doctrinal, he suggests that tapping the roots of the early church might better serve evangelical ecclesiology.<sup>30</sup>

To be published in early 2005, I also note a book by Elizabeth Zelensky and Lela Gilbert titled, *Windows to Heaven: Introducing Icons to Protestants and Catholics*. According to the Spring/Summer 2005 Brazos Press catalog, *Windows to Heaven* aims to orient "non-Orthodox" Christians to the "visible world" of icons and thus enhance spiritual life and devotion. Such an approach is "ancient" in its application.

### POPULAR AND PASTORAL

The final major theme around which the growing body of evangelical literature on ancient Christianity clusters comes in both pastoral and popular expressions. By "popular" literature I mean books and articles aimed specifically at thoughtful laypeople. By "pastoral" I refer to either books or sermons authored by ministers. I will first address ancient Christianity in popular works.

In circulation for nearly two decades now and published under the umbrella of *Christianity Today*, *Christian History & Biography* (formerly *Christian History*) has devoted two of its recent issues to topics relating to ancient Christianity. For instance, the December 2003 issue, titled, *The First Bible*

*Teachers: Reading Over the Shoulders of the Church's Founding Fathers*, features articles on patristic interpretation, a look the monastic spirituality, an examination of what Gerald Bray calls Augustine's "historical" interpretation of Scripture, and an interview with Christopher Hall titled, "Habits of Highly Effective Bible Readers."

Most recently, Mary was the subject of the Summer 2004 issue of *Christian History & Biography* titled, *All Generations Will Call Me Blessed: Mary in the Imagination of the Church*. This issue features articles that address Marian devotion, Marian art, and Martin Luther's praise of Mary. In addition, the issue contains an interview with Timothy George titled, "Recovering a Protestant Mary."

Another example of popular reflection that borders on pastoral application comes from the observations of several leading members of a home-church collective known as the New Testament Restoration Foundation. The aim of this group is to create the "New Testament church" by hosting home meetings, partaking of the Lord's Supper weekly and as a communal meal, conducting church rule by elders, meeting for fellowship daily, and cultivating a "[c]hurch leadership that is male, plural, non-hierarchical, homegrown, [and upholds] servant leadership." Above all, the New Testament Restoration Foundation aims to adopt "apostolic" norms for ecclesiastical life.<sup>31</sup>

Some of the pastoral reflection on ancient Christianity surfaces in a growing body of literature some call the "emergent church"—what I take to be a post-Christian, postmodern, and simultaneously multi-denominational and non-denominational community of Christians which aims to be historically conscious, biblically sound, culturally creative, artistically expressive, doctrinally responsible, and faithfully missional. The emergent churches appear to focus on cultivating a deeper sense of community within diversity.<sup>32</sup>

Brian McLaren, pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in Maryland, is one of the leading thinkers and practitioners of emergent Christianity. Since the late 1990s, McLaren has fleshed out important themes of emergent Christianity in creative ways in dialogical, conversational

books like *A New Kind of Christian* (2001) and *The Story We Find Ourselves In* (2003). His most recent book, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (August 2004), is somewhat of a personal theological statement in which McLaren briefly defines the phrase “generous orthodoxy” and addresses emergent themes in the context of his own doctrinal convictions.

Adopted from a phrase first used by post-liberal theologian, Hans Frei, and most recently by Stanley Grenz in *Renewing the Center*, McLaren notes that “generous orthodoxy . . . consistently, unequivocally, and unapologetically upholds and affirms the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.” Furthermore, writes McLaren, a generous orthodoxy “invites us as never before to study not only the history of the church, but also the history of writing the church’s history.” While in one sense the ancient creeds and history frame emergent discussions, McLaren details the practical aspects of a generous orthodoxy as well.<sup>33</sup>

In a chapter titled, “Why I am catholic,” McLaren comments on the Nicene Creed and its potential to shape conversations about Christian unity and describes what he has learned and applied from [Roman] Catholic Christianity. About the phrase, “We believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic church,” McLaren writes:

“We believe in one . . . church,” the creed says, and that’s no easy-to-swallow statement because we’re surrounded by denominations, divisions, arguments, grand polemics, and petty squabbles. That’s where the “we believe” part comes in: you can only know the unity of the church by believing it, not by seeing it. When you believe it you see through the surface dirt and cracks to the beauty and unity shining beneath. Generous orthodoxy presumes that the divisions, though tragic, are superficial compared to Christianity’s deep, though often unappreciated, unity. Perhaps the more we believe in and practice that unity, the easier it will be to grow beyond the disunity.<sup>34</sup>

Here, in a practical and pastoral phrase, McLaren urges contemporary Christians to embrace the ancient message of unity in diversity found in the Nicene Creed.

In a similar vein, McLaren also describes what he finds most attractive about Roman Catholic Christianity and suggests that evangelical renewal might come from embracing some of the ancient elements of the Christian faith. McLaren embraces the sacramental aspects of Roman Catholicism that purports to see God’s handiwork in its multiform manifestations of the sacred; argues that liturgy can enhance the sometimes simplistic and thoughtless aspects of evangelical worship; highlights the practicality of respecting tradition; urges Evangelicals to adopt a healthy posture of veneration for Mary; celebrates the incarnational focus of Catholic theology and life; and praises the spirit of forgiveness and healing in some Roman Catholic circles.

Interestingly, McLaren situates his comments about tradition as a critique of the Protestant Reformation. “The Protestant Reformation separated two brothers,” McLaren observes, “Scripture and tradition. The older brother tells the story that leads up to and through Christ, and the younger brother remembers what has happened since. These brothers aren’t the same, but neither should they be enemies.”<sup>35</sup> There is much for Evangelicals to digest in McLaren’s chapter on catholicity and ecumenism, and his work demonstrates both a popular and pastoral emphasis on ancient Christianity.

Donald Miller, another leading light of the emerging church movement—one whom Robert Webber might call a “younger Evangelical”—addresses ancient Christianity in a very conversational, dialogical way in two recent books, *Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* (2003) and *Searching for God Knows What* (2004). While Miller does not name any church fathers or quote any ancient creeds, he critiques evangelicalism’s animus against historical and intellectual engagement and encourages Evangelicals to adopt and embrace a more ecumenical and catholic faith. In *Searching for God Knows What*, Miller describes his approach to Christian spirituality and its manifestation in popular Christianity as “an ancient sort of faith, the same faith shared by all the dead apostles.”<sup>36</sup>

Moving from the popular to the pastoral, I know of at

least three ministers from Houston who seek to introduce, and apply aspects of ancient Christianity to their local setting. In fact, two ministers at one of Houston's megachurches, Second Baptist, recently preached on ancient topics. Ben Young, son of former Southern Baptist Convention President Ed Young, worked his way through a series titled, "Ancient Spirituality: What You Can Learn from Monks and Mystics." Jim DeLoach, a senior minister at Second Baptist, recently finished a series on the Apostles' Creed. Lance Waldie, a minister at Harvest Bible Church in northwest Houston, preached a series of sermons on the Nicene Creed in May 2004.<sup>37</sup> While this part of the argument is provincial and somewhat anecdotal, it is striking that important themes and elements of ancient Christianity are being addressed in pastoral forums in a massive Southern Baptist church and a smaller free church.

This discussion about ancient Christianity reflects a larger academic and theological interest among Evangelicals, brings more laypeople into conversations about ancient Christian history, and supplements some of the pastoral reflections on ancient Christianity. Moreover, the popular and pastoral literature does not necessarily possess the defined aspects of scholarly exploration of ancient Christianity, but it does indicate that the scholarly and academic reflection on the ancient Christian past has, at least to some degree, migrated to lay and popular conversations. Only time will tell how extensive the larger evangelical conversation about ancient Christianity actually is.

So how does one evaluate this growing evangelical interest in ancient Christianity? Is it just another fad in the storied history of evangelical innovation? Or, perhaps, is it something genuine, historic, and substantive, something holy, catholic, and apostolic? While it is unwise to draw firm conclusions about a surge still underway, I will offer three observations.

First, the current evangelical interest in ancient Christianity is one strain of a larger conversation about how history and tradition shape memory and identity. Put another way, many scholars are reflecting on the ontological dimensions and implications of Christian tradition.

It is important to note in passing that a number of recent scholars (though not all Evangelicals) have examined when, where, and how ancient Christianity shaped and informed the thinking of Reformers like Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, among others. This work demonstrates that the current surge of evangelical interest in ancient Christianity is not necessarily something new, but a trend with significant historical precedent.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to this work, several evangelical scholars register important observations about how history and tradition can shape memory and identity. Christopher Hall, for example, in a 2003 panel on tradition and evangelicalism at the national meeting of the American Academy of Religion, explored these issues in a paper titled, "The Role of Tradition in Evangelical Theology." Hall patiently addressed the evangelical animus against tradition and intelligently suggested that Evangelicals might benefit from engaging the best elements of the church's tradition—what Hall defined as patristic exegesis. In short, patristic tradition, according to Hall, can function authoritatively in evangelical theology without sacrificing the authority of Scripture. It was the second-century church father Irenaeus, Hall reminded his hearers, who described the "three legged stool of authority: Scripture, Tradition, and the church."<sup>39</sup>

In a 2001 issue of *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* devoted to church history, David Lotz and Robert Wilken critically address the confluence of history and tradition with memory and identity. Lotz, in an essay titled, "A Study of Church History: A Vital Enterprise for Christian Theology and the Christian Churches," urged Christians to be a "community of memory"—a body of believers whose historically grounded faith should be fortified by the church's traditions. This, according to Lotz, has the power to create what he calls "ecumenicity in space" and "ecumenicity in time," or, "the rediscovery and recovery of the Christian tradition as our common history and heritage."<sup>40</sup>

In "Why Does the Church Need Church History?," Robert Wilken describes the interplay of the Bible's history and the historicity of the Christian faith. Such interplay, in Wilken's

estimation, makes church history nothing short of “an exercise in humility.” Put another way, Wilken describes church history as “the mother who suckles the other theological disciplines—for without memory there is not Christ.” Wilken further observes:

Church history is the raw material of Christian lexicography. Before we can learn to speak our own words we must learn the words of others, the words of the great thinkers and of the simple men and women of the desert. Christian faith begins in imitation as we trail our thoughts and feelings behind others.<sup>41</sup>

These observations echo Wilken’s comments in a 1993 essay, “Memory and the Christian Intellectual Life.” In the context of noting a trend in conversations about historical memory and identity, Wilken is worth quoting at length:

The Christian intellectual tradition . . . is inescapably historical. Without memory, our intellectual life is impoverished, barren, ephemeral, subject to the whims of the moment. Memory locates us in the corporate and the particular. There is no memory that is not rooted in communal experience. . . . Just as there can be no human life without the bricks and wood, the trees, hills, and rivers, the neighbors and family and friends that make up the world of each of us, so there can be no Christian intellectual life without reference to the writings of the prophets and evangelists, the doctrines of the church fathers, the conceptual niceties of the scholastics, the language of the liturgy, the songs of the poets and hymn writers, the exploits of the martyrs, and the holy tales of the saints. The Christian intellectual is inescapably bound to those persons and ideas that have created Christian memory.<sup>42</sup>

Here both Lotz and Wilken envision the study of church history as an eminently practical exercise—an exercise that engages the whole person. Mind and heart, in communion with the past and present, converge to create memory and identity.

My second observation is that the current evangelical conversation about history, memory, and identity implies that there is a kind of institutional crisis—what I call ecclesiological discontent. That is, Evangelicals are asking questions like: “What is the church, and what should the church be?” “Where does tradition, if at all, fit into the evangelical ecclesiological landscape?” “What does it mean to be evangelical and ecumenical?” This quandry has been explored in a number of venues and in a number of important publications.

Timothy George addresses evangelical ecclesiological issues in two recent essays. In a 2000 article, “An Evangelical Reflection on Scripture and Tradition,” George sketches the evangelical distaste for tradition—what he calls “the heresy of contemporaneity”—and observes that “for Evangelicals . . . the Christian past is not so much something to be studied and appropriated as it is something to be overcome.” George then demonstrates *how* many of the early Reformers drew from the long stream of patristic theology and consciously read the Scriptures, in part, through a patristic lens. George ends the article with a summary of post-WWII ecumenical conversations about tradition and, while cautious, sees significant potential in such discussions where there might be “a bridge upon which the estranged parties [Evangelicals and Catholics] might at least meet even if they do not journey on to the other side.”<sup>43</sup>

In a 2003 article, “The Sacramentality of the Church: An Evangelical Baptist Perspective,” George situates the evangelical suspicion of using sacramental discourse about the church and suggests several ways in which Evangelicals might describe the church in sacramental terms without sacrificing doctrinal clarity or conviction. For example, George suggests that Evangelicals might appropriate the incarnational aspects of the church (as understood by Roman Catholics) by living out the principles of Christ. Moreover, thoughtful Evangelicals might begin a sacramental “journey” by appropriating the incarnational elements of their own traditions—what George terms a “churchly spirituality”—and the traditions of the church more generally and by recognizing when and

where Roman Catholics uphold the authority of Scripture. Finally, Evangelicals might create more sacramentally-oriented churches by realizing that the church on earth—the visible church—“always exists in a constant state of becoming, buffeted by struggles, under the sign of the cross.” In a word, George suggests that by faithful living a sacramental evangelical church will ideally be “a sign that conveys that which it signifies.”<sup>44</sup>

John Stackhouse recently edited a collection of essays titled, *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?* (2003). Many of these essays come from a 2002 conference that explored shades of evangelical ecclesiology. Kerry Dearborn, in an essay titled, “Recovering a Trinitarian and Sacramental Ecclesiology,” argues that Celtic Christianity “offers a window” into understanding and embracing a more theologically robust, and evangelical, ecclesiology. Celtic Christianity, Dearborn asserts, possesses “Trinitarian sensibilities” modeled in its “liturgical rhythms,” its “sacramental visions,” and its missional imperative.<sup>45</sup>

In another important essay, “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic,” Edith Humphrey explores the precision of meaning in this Nicene phrase, its sacramental significance, and its ontological application. It should remind Evangelicals, Humphrey insists, that the church is an ecclesial and sacramental communion, united in confession, experience, and hope for complete (and future) redemption. “What would it mean to live as citizens of heaven,” concludes Humphrey, “within the polity of the kingdom” on earth?<sup>46</sup>

Dearborn and Humphrey both assert that an evangelical ecclesiology exists, but that it should be shaped and framed by critical conversations with the past. While Dearborn focuses on the ecclesiological possibilities of the Celtic past, Humphrey emphasizes the liturgical and sacramental aspects of community, both within the church and toward the rest of society.

To cite another example, the 2004 Wheaton Theology Conference also addressed the question of evangelical ecclesiology. Titled, “The Community of the Word: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology,” the conference featured scholars like

William Dyrness, D. G. Hart, John Webster, Dennis Ockham, and Ellen Charry, to name just a few, and explored issues of sacramentality, morality, and the church as community. I will cite one essay for illustration.

Fuller Seminary’s William Dyrness, one of the keynote speakers, encouraged Evangelicals to ponder the physical space the church occupies in the context of ecclesiological discussions. His essay, “The Church in ‘Evangelical’ Theologies Past and Future: Spaces for Evangelical Ecclesiology,” suggests that evangelical consciousness might better engage history by reflecting on the current social, symbolic, and historical spaces the church occupies. In other words, Dyrness insists that Evangelicals consider the ways that history, the postmodern context, and the social expressions of evangelicalism interact and interplay. Dyrness argues that the symbolic expression of evangelicalism is the most pressing matter because

corporate ritual acts and symbolic objects cement our social lives . . . [and] give important expression to the historical place that we stand in recalling with discrimination ancient practices and images that Christians have lived with for centuries. Indeed the symbolic spaces and objects give form to the social and historical spaces, they bec[o]me places where these spaces coalesce and which, by the Holy Spirit can be used to shape us together in the body of Christ.<sup>47</sup>

Dyrness’s important observations suggest to Evangelicals that reflection on the church’s current ecclesiological expressions might provide an avenue both for renewal and for historical engagement, some of which involves ancient Christianity. “Having a place to stand historically is not a limitation,” Dyrness observes, “it is a grace, [and] it makes possible a situated reading of Scripture that can mediate the special gifts of our cultural particularity.”<sup>48</sup>

Thus, with the noted conversations about history, tradition, memory, and identity and, by extension, evangelical ecclesiological discontent, evangelicalism is situated in an

important historical moment. The conversations about memory, history, and identity, however, can be profitably situated in the longer stream of evangelical thought.

My third and final observation about the current evangelical interest in ancient Christianity can be seen as the next chapter—and certainly not the final chapter—in what Mark Noll terms *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. “The scandal of the evangelical mind,” Noll writes, “is that there is not much of an evangelical mind.”<sup>49</sup>

Published in 1994, Noll’s important book sketched the historical contours of evangelical thought and argued that nineteenth-century fundamentalism severed Evangelicals from the rigorous and responsible intellectual engagement of historic evangelicalism. The scandal matters, Noll argues, because it is necessary to inform and educate future generations and because ideas have consequences. In short, Noll suggests, the evangelical mind is important because the worship of God is important.

While Noll’s book painted a bleak picture of evangelical intellectual life, he noticed promising trends within evangelical political reflection, philosophy, and (much less so) science. In a 2001 article published in *First Things*, “Minding the Evangelical Mind,” Noll praised a number of Evangelical thinkers and suggested that some trends in scientific reflection (i.e., Intelligent Design) demonstrated a cultivated evangelical intellectual engagement.<sup>51</sup>

In a more recent update, “The Evangelical Mind Today,” Noll praises Evangelicals for consistent dialogue with Roman Catholics, for developments in philosophy, for increasing the academic rigor of Christian colleges and universities by a more conscious integration of faith and learning, for the increased presence of Evangelicals in scientific circles, for a stronger scholarly contingent within “pluralistic” universities, and for engaging forums like *Books & Culture*, *First Things*, and *Touchstone*.<sup>50</sup> Yet what is perhaps most remarkable about Noll’s *Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* comes in the fourth section of the book titled, “Hope?” Noll concludes with this observation:

Evangelicals who believe that God desires to be worshiped with thought as well as activity may well remain Evangelicals, but they will find intellectual depth—a way of praising God through the mind—in ideas developed by confessional or mainline Protestants, Roman Catholics, or perhaps even the Eastern Orthodox.<sup>52</sup>

Here Noll patently confesses that Evangelicals keen on rigorous thought leading to “theological insight” might benefit from a more critical engagement with tradition and history. Evangelicals passionate for renewal, Noll insists, must open themselves up to ecumenical and historical conversations that might be uncomfortable, difficult, disconcerting, but ultimately profitable and transformative. In fact, in a 2002 autobiographical essay titled, “Teaching History as a Christian,” Noll describes how his own faith is not only shaped by Calvinistic and Reformed traditions, but also rooted in the ancient creedal statements of the Christian church.<sup>53</sup>

While Noll is a respected historian of considerable faith and one who is gifted at telling stories about the past<sup>54</sup>, it would appear, given his comments above, that he is something of a prophet. Noll argued in 1994 that an evangelical intellectual life desiring more depth might pursue conversations with Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. I find it quite striking that some of the more thoughtful and historical evangelical reflection is doing exactly what Noll suggested. Serious evangelical thinking about history, tradition, memory and identity—and by extension ecclesiology—acknowledges the importance *and* necessity of conversations with Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. This reflection, as hopefully demonstrated, is historically conscious, intellectually rigorous, and concerned with what Noll calls the ultimate scandal of the evangelical faith—the scandal of the Cross.<sup>55</sup>

To return to where we started: How will evangelicalism’s historical memory contribute to the future of evangelical identity and how will evangelicalism’s future remember the church’s past? It appears, to use Robert Webber’s words, that

"the road to the future is paved with the past." Thus many Evangelicals—those who engage the patristic era, embrace the new ecumenism, and more deeply reflect on ecclesiology—are embracing the early church.

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#### Notes

1. An earlier version of this article was delivered at the Student Research Conference of the Conference on Faith and History meeting held October 12-14, 2004, at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. Thanks to Preston Jones, Lauran Kerr, Allen Gehring, Jr., Ken Stewart, Paul Michelson, and Donna Sims, for helpful questions and comments on earlier drafts of this essay. Thanks also to William Dyrness, Chris Hall, and D. H. Williams for use of unpublished material. Finally, thanks again to D. H. Williams for helpful comment and discussion when this project was still at a conceptual stage.
2. Stephen Bertman, *Cultural Amnesia: America's Future and the Crisis of Memory* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2000), 6.
3. See, for example, Stanley J. Grenz, *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000); Orlando Crespo, *Being Latino in Christ: Finding Wholeness in Your Ethnic Identity* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2003); John G. Stackhouse, Jr., editor, *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003); Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, S. Steven Kang, and Gary A. Parrett, *A Multi-Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004); Mark Griffin and Theron Walker, *Living on the Borders: What the Church Can Learn From Ethnic Immigrant Communities* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2004).
4. David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 1-17. Other helpful discussions include Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2003), 15-21; and Bruce Hindmarsh, "Is Evangelical Ecclesiology an Oxymoron?: A Historical Perspective," in Stackhouse, editor, *Evangelical Ecclesiology*, 15-38.
5. The theme of the ETS meeting in 2001 was "Defining Evangelicalism's Boundaries," and the June 2002 issue of *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* centered on the open theism-evangelicalism debate with articles and responses from Bruce Ware, Clark Pinnock, and Gregory Boyd, among others. D. G. Hart, in *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), argues that because under the evangelical umbrella rests such a vast array of beliefs and convictions the term "evangelical" ceases to have definitive meaning or relevance. By "deconstructing evangelicalism" Hart suggests the term be expunged from public discourse and refashioned as a scholarly category.
6. Timothy Weber helpfully explains these roots in "Looking for Home: Evangelical Orthodoxy and the Search for the Original Church," in Daniel B. Clendenin, editor, *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, 2nd edition, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 249-72.
7. Thomas C. Oden, *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy: Signs of Life in Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), quoting from 86, 29-30, 58-59. See also "Introduction," in *Ancient and Postmodern Christianity, Paleo-Orthodoxy in the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of Thomas C. Oden*, editors, Kenneth Tanner and Christopher A. Hall (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2002), 7-12, and "Can Anything Good Come Out of Liberalism?: One Pilgrim's Regress," in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail: Evangelical Ecumenism and the Quest for Christian Identity*, edited by Timothy George (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 157-74. Readers may also wish to consult J. I. Packer and Thomas C. Oden, *One Faith: The Evangelical Consensus* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2004). This important book features a compendium of doctrinal statements taken from various confessional affirmations.
8. Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), quoting 7, 14, 104-06 (italics his).
9. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith*, 14. See also Weber's *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003) and *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality Through the Christian Year* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).
10. Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), quoting 16, 49 (italics his).
11. Colleen Carroll, *The New Faithful: Why Young Adults are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy* (Chicago: Loyola, 2002), 266. See also Carroll's interview, "The Good News About Generations X & Y," in *Christianity Today* 46/9 (August 5, 2002): 40-45.
12. D. H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), quoting 4-5, 13. I should also mention that Williams's sequel to *Retrieving*



*the Tradition, Evangelicals and Tradition*, will be published in 2005 as part of a new Baker series (edited by Williams) called *Evangelical Resource-ment*. The series, according to the Winter 2005 Baker Academic Catalog, aims to "return to the sources of the Christian faith to promote ecclesial revitalization and the relevance of theology in our hyperindividualized and theologically illiterate era" (21).

13. In *Younger Evangelicals*, Webber praises the work of Oden and Williams along with other Evangelicals like James Cutsinger, Rodney Clapp, Stanley Grenz, James McLendon, Jr., Gordon Lewis, and Gregory Boyd (75-79).
14. Mark A. Noll, "Is the Reformation Over?: An Evangelical Protestant Assessment of Roman Catholicism in the Era of Vatican II and Pope John Paul II," a talk delivered at Lewis University (March 2004) and available at <http://regions.ivcf.org/academic/4116> (accessed Summer 2004). See also, among a large and growing body of literature, Richard John Neuhaus, "Why Evangelicals and Catholics Belong Together," Jeffrey Gros, "The Gospel Call to Common Witness," and Timothy George, "Between the Pope and Billy Graham: Evangelicals and Catholics in Dialogue," in George, editor, *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail*, 103-37.
15. See Bradley Nassif, "Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism: The Status of an Emerging Global Dialogue," in Clendenin, editor, *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, 211-48.
16. See Scot McKnight, *Turning to Jesus: The Sociology of Conversion in the Gospels* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2002) and "From Wheaton to Rome: Why Evangelicals Become Roman Catholic," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45/3 (September 2002): 451-72, quoting 464-65 (italics his).
17. Stephen R. Holmes, *Listening to the Past: The Place of Tradition in Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 6.
18. Daniel L. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodoxy Through Western Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), quoting 18, 19, 22, 148, 27. See also Clendenin's *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995). In 2003 Baker issued second editions of Clendenin's books; the only changes came with the addition of two articles in *A Contemporary Reader* (see notes 6, 15 above).
19. Donald Fairbairn, *Eastern Orthodoxy Through Western Eyes* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2002), quoting 131, 159, 133.
20. Robert V. Rakestraw, "Becoming Like God: An Evangelical Doctrine of Theosis," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40/2 (June 1997): 257-69, quoting 257, 260.
21. James S. Cutsinger, *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox in Dialogue* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1997), and Mark Saucy, "Evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox Together: Is the Church the Extension of the Incarnation?," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43/2 (June 2000): 193-212.
22. Bradley Nassif, Michael Horton, Vladimir Berzonsky, George Hancock-

- Stefan, Edward Rommen, *Three Views on Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).
23. Ellen T. Charry, "Editorial: West Meets East," and John Chryssavgis, "Guest Editorial: Open to Mystery and Open to Criticism," in *Theology Today* 61 (2004): 1-6, quoting 1, 3-4, 6.
  24. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Cynthia L. Rigby, editors, *Blessed One: Protestant Perspectives on Mary* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2002). See also Dwight Longenecker and David Gustafson, *Mary: A Catholic-Evangelical Debate* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2001).
  25. Timothy George, "The Blessed Virgin Mary in Evangelical Perspective," in *Mary, Mother of God*, editors, Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 100-122, quoting 102, 104, 107, 110, 112, 118. See also Timothy George, "The Blessed Evangelical Mary: Why We Shouldn't Ignore Her Any Longer," *Christianity Today* (December 2003): 34-39, and his interview "Recovering a Protestant View of Mary," *Christian History & Biography* 83 (Summer 2004): 13-15.
  26. Thomas C. Oden, "General Introduction," in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Mark*, editors, Oden and Christopher A. Hall (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1998), xi.
  27. Richard A. Norris, Jr., editor, *Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
  28. It is also important to point out that Phillip Schaff's edited editions of the early church fathers, first edited by Phillip Schaff in the late nineteenth century, are another resource for pastors and laypersons. Schaff's work is now available online at <<http://www.ccel.org>>.
  29. D. Jeffrey Bingham, "Evangelicals, Irenaeus, and the Bible," in D. H. Williams, editor, *The Free Church and the Early Church: Bridging the Historical and Theological Divide* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 27-46, quoting 29, 35, 46.
  30. Clinton E. Arnold, "Early Church Catechesis and New Christians' Classes in Contemporary Evangelicalism," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47/1 (March 2004): 39-54, quoting 46, 51.
  31. For more information about the New Testament Restoration Foundation, visit <<http://www.ntrf.org>>. The quote is taken from the first chapter of Steve Atkerson, *Ekklesia: To the Roots of Biblical Church Life*, available online with NTRF. While the NTRF helpfully saturates its literature with Scripture quotations, there appears to be very little engagement with any of the relevant scholarship related to evangelical interest in ancient Christianity.
  32. For a helpful summary of the emergent church see Andy Crouch, "The Emergent Mystique," *Christianity Today* 48/11 (November 2004): 36-41, and, in the same issue, an interview with Brian McLaren and Duane Litfin, "Emergent Evangelism," 42-43.
  33. Brian D. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 11, 28-29.

34. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 222.
35. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 225-30, quoting 227.
36. Donald Miller, *Searching for God Knows What* (Nashville: Nelson, 2004), 17.
37. For sermon notes visit the Web sites of Second Baptist Church (<<http://www.second.org>>) and Harvest Bible Church (<<http://www.harvestbiblechurch.net>>).
38. Among others, see S. J. Barnett, "Where Was Your Church Before Luther?: Claims for the Antiquity of Protestantism Examined," *Church History* 68/1 (March 1999): 14-41; Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); Phyllis Rodger-son Pleasants, "Sola Scriptura in Zurich," and D. H. Williams, "Scripture, Tradition, and the Church: Reformation and Post-Reformation," in Williams, editor, *Free Church and Early Church*, 77-126; Irena Backus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation, 1378-1615* (The Netherlands: Brill Academic, 2003); and D. H. Williams, "Justification by Faith: A Patristic Doctrine," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (2006). for another example, see Robert Webber's essay in this issue.
39. Christopher A. Hall, "The Role of Tradition in Evangelical Theology," paper delivered at the American Academy of Religion Meeting, November 2003. See also Hall's exchange with Baylor's Roger Olson about the role of tradition in evangelicalism in *Christianity Today* 47/11 (November 2003): 52-58.
40. David W. Lotz, "A Study of Church History: A Vital Enterprise for Christian Theology and the Christian Churches," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 55 (2001): 107-14, quoting 108, 114.
41. Robert Louis Wilken, "Why Does the Church Need Church History?," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 55 (2001): 121-26, quoting 123-25.
42. Robert L. Wilken, "Memory and the Christian Intellectual," in *Remembering the Christian Past* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 165-80, quoting 179-80.
43. Timothy George, "An Evangelical Reflection on Scripture and Tradition," *Pro Ecclesia* 9/2 (Spring 2000): 184-207, quoting 187-88, 219-20.
44. Timothy George, "The Sacramentality of the Church: An Evangelical Baptist Perspective," *Pro Ecclesia* 12/3 (Summer 2003): 309-23, quoting 322.
45. Kerry L. Dearborn, "Recovering a Trinitarian and Sacramental Ecclesiology," in Stackhouse, editor, *Evangelical Ecclesiology*, 39-73, quoting 41.
46. Edith M. Humphrey, "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic," in Stackhouse, editor, *Evangelical Ecclesiology*, 135-59, quoting 158.
47. William Dyrness, "The Church in 'Evangelical' Theologies Past and Future: Spaces for an Evangelical Ecclesiology," paper presented at the Wheaton College Theology Conference, April 15-17, 2004. Papers from the 2004 Wheaton Theology Conference will be published as Daniel J.

- Treier and Mark Husbands, editors, *The Community of the Word: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2005).
48. Dyrness, "The Church in 'Evangelical' Theologies Past and Future: Spaces for an Evangelical Ecclesiology."
49. Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 3.
50. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, ix, and Mark A. Noll, "Minding the Evangelical Mind," *First Things* 109 (January 2001): 14-17. Within this conversation, Noll cites Alan Wolfe's "The Opening of the Evangelical Mind," *Atlantic Monthly* 286/4 (October 2000), 55-76, an important article that recognizes several aspects of what Wolfe considers rigorous evangelical intellectual engagement. For Noll's most recent assessment of the evangelical mind, see "The Evangelical Mind Today," *First Things* 147 (October 2004): 34-39.
51. Noll, "Minding the Evangelical Mind," 239.
52. Noll, "Minding the Evangelical Mind," 246. Mark A. Noll, "Teaching History as a Christian," in Andrea Staerk, editor, *Religion, Scholarship, and Higher Education: Perspectives, Models, and Future Prospects* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 161-71.
53. See Shawn Mosher, "Mark Noll's Historiography" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2002).
54. Noll, *Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 241-53. Though I did not address it in this article, the "Radical Orthodoxy" movement shares similar concerns and addresses similar issues. See James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, December 2004).