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BILL BRIGHT'S (1921–2003) *FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS* REIMAGINED: A NARRATIVE APPROACH TO MEANINGFUL GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS FOR AN AMERICAN TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY SECULARIZED CONTEXT

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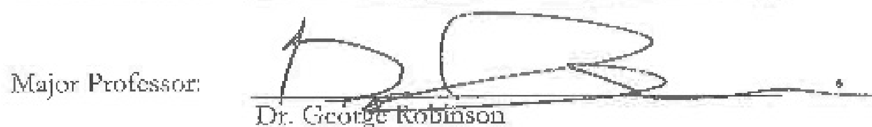
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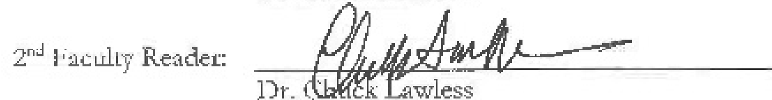
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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation has been born out of the Spirit's leading in my life and a call to help bolster Cru's organizational commitment to sharing the gospel in culturally relevant and meaningful ways. I could have never finished this task without the support of my husband, Bob, who has always loved me and encouraged me to reach beyond my perceived potential, to walk by faith, and to lead in ways often contrary to our culture. He has selflessly cared for me during the process of completing my dissertation, has eagerly learned with me, and has patiently listened to and interacted with me—for hours—around my research discoveries. Earning a PhD has deeply enriched our nearly forty years of marriage, our love for God, and our ongoing understanding of the gospel. I love you, Bob.

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Thank you to my director and lifelong friend, Greg Lillestrand, who has put wind in my sails and has provided me with a platform to share my findings. Thank you to

Steve Douglass, whose office provided funding for the Evangelism Think Tank and some of our research, and to Steve Sellers, who is willing to pave the way for change. Thank you to the following evangelists who have collaborated with me as part of the Evangelism Think Tank: Jess and Steven Arita, Daniel Du, Josh Chen, Gary Fuller, Andy Garber, Carrie Lauer, Julie Naanes, Ranae Nanney, CJ Neal, Lisa Pettit, Allison and Joe Priola, and Emma Tautolo. Writing and defending this dissertation is meant to spur meaningful gospel conversations and has been fueled by your friendship and collaboration. It is my heartfelt prayer that the research and proposal housed within these pages will serve Cru and the body of Christ in the twenty-first century.

Completing a dissertation is a lonely task, but it is never done in isolation and requires the involvement and expertise of many people. First of all, I want to thank my editor and friend, Helen Overmyer, for her excellent work. I had no idea what I was getting myself into when I started this adventure, and without Helen's expertise, attention to detail, and patience, I would not have been able to complete this task.

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I am humbled and proud to be a graduate of SEBTS—a Great Commission seminary.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIA	Athletes in Action
ATS	Association of Theological Schools
BTM	Biblical Theology Movement
CCC	Campus Crusade for Christ
CELAM	Roman Catholic Latin American Episcopal Council conferences
CGM	Church Growth Movement
CTC	Cape Town Commitment
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
DTIB	*Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*
EDT	*Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*
EDWM	*Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*
EFMA	Evangelical Foreign Missions Association
ETT	Evangelism Think Tank
HPC	Hollywood Presbyterian Church
HS	Cru High School
HUP	Homogeneous Unit Principle
IBMR	*International Bulletin of Mission Research*
IFMA	International Foreign Missions Association
IJST	*International Journal of Systematic Theology*
IMC	International Missionary Council
JAH	*Journal of American History*
LCWE	Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

LG	*Lumen Gentium*
LIFE	Lay Institute for Evangelism
NAE	National Association of Evangelicals
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement
TEF	Theological Education Fund
TSWW	True Story of the Whole World
WCC	World Council of Churches
WMC	World Missionary Conference

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on one of the key paradigmatic shifts evident in this era of twenty-first-century missiology. These shifts provide the impetus for this dissertation and help to drive the argument that Bill Bright's evangelism tool, *Four Spiritual Laws*, shaped within his twentieth-century context, is insufficient for our current era and context. This study argues for the necessity of a reimagined, narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations for an American twenty-first-century secularized context. The main research question is this: How can Cru honor Bill Bright's vision and maintain his commitment to evangelism by training others to present the gospel in an American, twenty-first-century secularized context?

This study begins by examining the twenty-first-century religious and sociological context through the lens of cultural critics Charles Taylor and Philip Rieff. They characterize the twenty-first-century context as *secularized*—exclusively humanist and void of sacred authority. This secularized context is set in juxtaposition with Bill Bright's twentieth-century context. The genealogy of his theological, missiological, and methodological development is examined in order to better understand his development of *Four Spiritual Laws*. This research surfaced the significance of Bright's evangelical context in surprising ways, particularly as it relates to the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland from which the ecumenical, evangelical streams of mission emerged along with a parallel Roman Catholic stream.

These discoveries led to the call for a faithful recontextualization of the gospel for a secularized context. A narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations is proposed by way of four prominent features of twenty-first-century recontextualization.

Feature One provides an overarching theological framework that affirms the Bible as the True Story of the Whole World (TSWW) and the gospel as Good News for All. The TSWW tells the comprehensive story of God's mission in the world and provides meaning for all of history and for each person's life. Feature Two requires the church to yield to the full weight of God's authority. In addition, Feature Two contends that a Trinitarian, Christocentric, eschatological hermeneutic is a vital interpretive element of the TSWW. Feature Three posits that faithful recontextualization for the twenty-first century must reflect the multicultural reality in America today. This includes an increased awareness of the cultural variation in America and a willingness to engage cross-culturally and inter-culturally. Feature Four necessitates a dynamic and dialogical encounter with culture that is marked by the following components: (1) an affirmation that the Spirit-created church lives as the very body of Christ in the world; (2) a dynamic and prophetic faith; (3) a reciprocal and cruciform way of discipleship; and, (4) a heightened awareness of secularization.

To the next generation of gifted and well-trained evangelists. May this dissertation spur you to push the boundaries of gospel witness into the twenty-first century and beyond.

CHAPTER 1

THESIS, TERMS, ORIGINALITY OF STUDY

Overview

Two of the missiological constants in the North American twenty-first-century milieu are the recognition of paradigmatic shifts and the call by many for a more robust missional theology to serve as ballast in these tumultuous times. Missiologists from various points of view have anticipated these shifts for close to a century. Lesslie Newbigin (1909–1998), on his return home from the mission field of India, saw the West through a fresh missionary lens. He posed the question, "Can the West be Converted?"[1] and heralded the need for a cross-cultural missionary approach in the so-called Christianized West.

David Bosch (1929–1992), South African missiologist and theologian, describes this contemporary crisis as affecting not only mission but also the entire church and world. He asserts, "The events we have been experiencing at least since World War II and the consequent crisis in Christian mission are not to be understood as merely incidental and reversible."[2] Contemporary missiologists Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile characterize these paradigmatic shifts as "disruptions,"[3] evidence of "the great unraveling of many of the assumptions and cultural expressions of late modernity."[4] Timothy Tennent, with reference to the cultural changes in the US, provides "seven megatrends" that are shaping twenty-first century missions, and states, "Those who live

[1] Lesslie Newbigin, "Can the West be Converted?," *IBMR* 11, no. 1 (January 1987): 2–7.

[2] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 4. Bosch discusses how the Western church has lost its position and privilege, thereby requiring a fundamental revision of traditional approach to mission.

[3] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 1.

[4] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 1.

in the West are facing a crisis concerning missions and Christianity identity within the larger global Christian movement."[5] The aforementioned assertions highlight a growing consensus that Christians in the West are not prepared to live counter to a secularized culture. This is discussed further in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, cultural analysts such as philosopher Charles Taylor and sociologist Philip Rieff (whose work is discussed further in Chapter 2) describe these disruptions from different cultural vantage points concurrently as "titanic"[6] and "unprecedented … without moralities or religions."[7] These collective observations validate the seismic challenges faced by the church in America and by mission agencies such as Cru[8] in particular, and they provide language for the ever-changing contextual dynamics at play in American missiology.

Cru, widely known for the profound impact of *Four Spiritual Laws*[9] and for its organizational commitment to help fulfill the Great Commission, is undergoing some of

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[5] Timothy Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 18. Tennent's seven megatrends include the following: (1) The Collapse of Christendom (p. 18); (2) The Rise of Postmodernism: Theological, Cultural, and Ecclesiastical Crisis (24); (3) The Collapse of the "West-Reaches-the-Rest" Paradigm (p.31); (4) The Changing Face of Global Christianity (p. 33); (5) The Emergence of a Fourth Branch of Christianity, which refers to independent, Pentecostal-oriented, prophetic movements, some originating in insider movements (p. 37); (6) Globalization: Immigration, Urbanization, and new Technologies (42); and (7) Deeper Ecumenism (p. 47).

[6] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 12.

[7] Philip Rieff, *My Life Among the Deathworks: Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority*, vol. 1 of *Sacred Order/Social Order*, ed. Kenneth S. Piver (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 6–7.

[8] Cru, formerly Campus Crusade for Christ, is a global, interdenominational missions organization founded by Bill Bright (1921–2003) and his wife Vonette (1926–2015). The organization was founded in 1951 for the primary purpose of helping to fulfill the Great Commission. Headquartered today in Orlando, Florida, Cru employs over 25,000 staff worldwide—approximately one-third of which serve in the US.

[9] Bill Bright, *Four Spiritual Laws* (Los Angeles: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1964). This four-point outline was developed by Bill Bright in the late 1950s and made available for print in booklet form in 1964. Bright describes *Four Spiritual Laws* as "… the distilled essence of the gospel message to assist in our outreach among non-Christian students and adults, something that would also serve the layperson who may not have much training or confidence in personal evangelism. Bill Bright, *Come Help Change the*

its own paradigm shifts. Primarily, Cru is seeking to determine what constitutes effective and even culturally appropriate approaches to evangelism in the twenty-first century. Therefore, this dissertation's central research seeks to answer the following question: How can Cru honor Bill Bright's vision and maintain his commitment to evangelism by training others to present the gospel in an American twenty-first-century secularized context?

Notably, Bright's mid-twentieth-century context was rife with disruption. While details concerning his upbringing, conversion, and consequent development of *Four Spiritual Laws* are discussed in Chapter 3, a brief overview of the twentieth-century context is presented here. Not unlike today, the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century marked a significant disruption in the global context for missions, demonstrated by an increasing ecumenical cooperation within the global mission enterprise and evidenced in particular at the World Missionary Conference of 1910.[10] Other notable disruptions include the onset of World War I, the growing Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy,[11] and an eventual unraveling of ecumenical and evangelical cooperation.

World (Peachtree, GA: Bright Media Foundation and Campus Crusade for Christ, 1999), Kindle edition, locations 632–644.

[10] The World Missionary Conference, a gathering of Protestant foreign mission societies, was held in Edinburgh, Scotland in June 1910. Under the leadership of John Mott, more than 1,200 delegates gathered from Western churches and mission societies in an effort to complete the challenge of the Student Volunteer Movement—"the evangelization of the world in our generation." The earliest Protestant gatherings like this were held in London in 1888 and in New York in 1900. See W. H. T. Gairdner, *Echoes from Edinburgh, 1910: An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference* (New York: Layman's Missionary Movement, 1910), n.p.

[11] C. T. McIntire, in "Fundamentalism," *EDT*:472, describes fundamentalism as "A movement that arose in the United States during and immediately after World War I to reaffirm orthodox Protestant Christianity and defend against liberal theology, German higher criticism, Darwinism, and other ideologies regarded as harmful." McIntire notes that fundamentalism has gone through at least four phases stretching across the twentieth century.

Moreover, Fundamentalists, under the leadership of William B. Riley, in response to the liberalizing influence of higher criticism in biblical studies, formed the World's Christian Fundamentals Association in 1919. C. Allyn Russell notes that their purpose was to "unite the fundamentalists of the world on a theological rather than denominational basis to propagate the orthodox faith and fight against the inroads of liberalism."[12] Edward J. Larson provides an excellent account of the Scopes Trial of July 1925 in which Fundamentalists became fortified against the threat of Darwin's evolutionary theory only to win the battle but lose the war. He describes the trial as an event that ultimately disparaged Fundamentalists and resulted in their militant and separatist retreat from culture.[13] At the same time, the Social Gospel movement[14] became more vocal, highlighting the squalid conditions in which an ever-increasing population of European immigrants were forced to work.

By the mid-twentieth century, a newly formed group of evangelicals in the US emerged from behind the scenes to form a conservatively ecumenical National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), including Harold Ockenga and Charles Fuller. Simultaneously, many of these evangelical leaders founded Fuller Theological Seminary. Bright was among the first to enroll in the seminary in 1947.[15] In addition, influenced in

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[12] C. Allyn Russell, "William Bell Riley: Architect of Fundamentalism," *Minnesota History* (Spring 1972): 24.

[13] Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 233.

[14] N. A. Magnuson, "Social Gospel," *EDT*:1118–19. Magnuson states, "The term 'social gospel' and its present association with theologically liberal, moderately reformist Protestant social thought came into use about 1900 to describe the Protestant effort to apply biblical principles to the growing problems of the urban-industrial America emerging between the Civil War and World War I" (p. 1118). He also credits Walter Rauschenbusch as "the social gospel's most influential prophet" (p. 1119). In the late nineteenth century, Rauschenbusch and his colleagues formed Christian organizations dedicated to the cause of Social Christianity.

[15] Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 178.

part by NAE leaders, the Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening[16] swept across the country, fueled in part by the powerful preaching of Bright's contemporary, the evangelist Billy Graham. The leaders of the NAE, including Henrietta Mears (to be discussed in Chapter 3) and the Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening, seem to have contributed to the theological and eschatological underpinnings for Bright's vision to found Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC).

The context of the mid-twentieth century prompted Bright's development of *Four Spiritual Laws*. This four-point outline was developed by Bright in the late 1950s and made available for print in booklet form in 1964. Bright describes *Four Spiritual Laws* as "… the distilled essence of the gospel message to assist in our outreach among non-Christian students and adults, something that would also serve the layperson who may not have much training or confidence in personal evangelism. The title of the booklet *Have You Heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?* came from our emphasis on four fundamental principles in the gospel. Just as there are physical 'laws' governing the physical universe (such as the law of gravity), so there are spiritual laws that govern the spiritual universe. These four laws are: God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life. Man is sinful and separated from God, thus he cannot know and experience God's love and plan

[16] There are various points of view regarding the Great Awakenings. In Joe Butler, "Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretive Fiction," *JAH* 69, no. 2 (1982): 308, he describes the Great Awakenings as a label that does "injustice to the minutiae it orders. The label … distorts the extent, nature, and cohesion of the revivals that did exist in the eighteenth-century colonies, encourages unwarranted claims for their effects … and exaggerates their influence on the coming and character of the American Revolution." Thomas Kidd, in *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), argues for one continuous awakening between the 1730s and 1780s, with Protestant evangelicalism as its lasting fruit. In J. Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue: The Impact of Twentieth Century Revivals* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973); "Hidden Springs," Lecture, 1963, location and exact date unknown, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL, he earnestly contends for a Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening with painstaking attention to detail. Due to Orr's significant influence in Bill Bright's life, this dissertation will follow Orr's timeline, which includes the First Great Awakening of the eighteenth century, the Second and Third Awakenings of

for his life. Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life. We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.

Each principle is validated by key Scripture passages and further explanation. The presentation then provides a suggested prayer by which the reader can thoughtfully invite Jesus Christ into his life according to our Lord's promise in Revelation 3:20. A few final pages provide information on the assurance of salvation, Scriptures to read, how to grow in one's new relationship with Christ, and the importance of getting involved in a good church."[17] A fresh analysis of Bright's twentieth-century context raises a subsidiary question: What can we learn from the foundation on which Bill Bright developed his commitment to evangelism that inspired his development of *Four Spiritual Laws*?

Thesis

This dissertation argues that Bright's evangelism tool, *Four Spiritual Laws*, shaped within his twentieth-century context, is insufficient for our current era and context. This necessitates, it is argued, a reimagined, narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations for an American twenty-first-century secularized context and builds on philosopher Charles Taylor's and sociologist Philip Rieff's analyses of the secularity of our Western context. Indeed, while *Four Spiritual Laws* literature is biblically faithful and contextually relevant to its era of origin, it does not communicate as meaningfully in

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the nineteenth century, and a fourth taking place in America in the mid-twentieth century.

[17] Bill Bright, *Come Help Change the World* (Peachtree, GA: Bright Media Foundation and Campus Crusade for Christ, 1999), Kindle edition, locations 632–644.

our era as it did when it was originally conceived and published. Christianity has been displaced from the default position in the West. As this dissertation will demonstrate, people in America are less familiar with biblical teaching and often find belief in God implausible. Therefore, Cru would be wise to consider a reimagined approach to meaningful gospel conversations framed within the context of the Bible's overarching narrative.

Definition of Terms

The following section provides working definitions of terms that serve to provide the biblical and theological framework for this dissertation and to identify terms not used interchangeably between Bright's twentieth-century context and that of today. Additionally, key terms used by Taylor and Rieff are included.

Evangelism

The noun εὐαγγέλιον means: "gospel, or God's good news;"[18] the verb εὐαγγελίζω means: "to announce good news."[19] The term τό εὐαγγέλιον means: to deliver "the joyful announcement of man's salvation" (Matt 11:5; Luke 1:19; 2:10–11; 3:18; 4:18; 7:22; Acts 5:42; 8:25–40).[20] The term *evangelize* is used more than 130 times in various forms in the New Testament. The Hebrew verb *basar* means to "bear tidings" (Isa 40:9; 41:27; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1).[21]

John Dickson describes the noun εὐαγγέλιον and the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι as terms that always referred to the announcement of important events. Dickson also distinguishes

[18] Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, https://biblehub.com/greek/2098.htm.
[19] Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, https://biblehub.com/greek/2097.htm.
[20] Strong's, https://biblehub.com/greek/2097.htm.
[21] Strong's, https://biblehub.com/hebrew/1319.htm.

between the specific activity of proclaiming the gospel and the broader category of promoting the gospel.[22] Robert Coleman notes that both a verbal articulation or proclamation of the gospel and active engagement in social issues are necessary. He states, "One without the other leaves a distorted impression of the good news. If Jesus had not borne the sorrows of people and performed deeds of mercy among them, we might question his concern. On the other hand, if he had not articulated the gospel, we would have not known why he came nor how we could be saved."[23] Evangelism in this dissertation is meant to include both the proclamation of the good news and an active presence in society that is evident within the framework of the True Story of the Whole World (TSWW). The metanarrative is intentionally described in this dissertation as the True Story of the Whole World (TSWW)[24] in order to reinforce the fact that the Bible tells the *true* story of the *whole world*. It is not one of many stories or merely a better religious story; it is *the* true story of the whole world and not just one more among many religious stories in the world.

Four Spiritual Laws

Four Spiritual Laws is an evangelistic tract developed by Bill Bright as a simple, transferable tool for use in personal evangelism. Bright describes *Four Spiritual Laws* as

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[22] John Dickson, *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

[23] Robert E. Coleman, "Evangelism," *EDWM*: 344. T. P. Weber, in "Evangelism," *EDT*: 410, adds, "Evangelism is based on the initiative of God himself. Because God has acted, believers have a message to share with others." God calls his children as ambassadors, agents of reconciliation, to proclaim God's excellencies (Rom 10:14–15; 2 Cor 5:17; 1 Pet 2:9–10). Weber adds, "Proclaiming salvation without demonstrating its transforming power in the fruit of the Spirit and good works is as inadequate as showing the effects of new life in Christ without explaining their source," (p. 411).

[24] Michael W. Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew, *The True Story of the Whole World: Finding Your Place in the Biblical Drama* (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Resources, 2004), 7. Lesslie Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 126, provides the foundation for this phrase, "We believe that the truth about the human story has been disclosed in the events which form the substance of the gospel. We believe, therefore, that these events are the real clue to the story of every person, for

a representation of "the distilled essence of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ…. These Four Laws contain the Word of God, which he has promised will never return void."[25] The first booklet was published in 1965.

Gospel

This dissertation argues that the gospel is the good news of God's reign or kingdom and is multidimensional and holistic. The good news of God's kingdom relates to every sphere or dimension of life and is historically embedded in various and particular cultures and contexts. The gospel is the good news of God's reign (Isa 40:9–11; Mark 1:14–15; Luke 4:18–19; Col 1:15–20; Heb 12:19–24; Revelation 4–7; 21–22); the call to repentance and a whole new life (Mark 1:14; John 3:3–8; Acts 1:38; Rom 5:5–11; 1 Pet 1:1–5); and the demonstration of mercy and forgiveness for sinners (Luke 23:26–43; Rom 3:21-26; 6:22–23; Eph 2:1–10; 1 John 2:1–2). The good news involves healing and restoration, the inclusion of all people—rich and poor, outcasts and foreigners, and empowerment, liberation, and deliverance for the disenfranchised (Luke 8:40–56; Matt 11:4–6; John 4:1–26). Furthermore, the good news includes God's presence in suffering now and the promise of eternal life (2 Corinthians 3–4; Phil 2:5–11; 1 Pet 1:1–9; 2:18–25). Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew provide this summary:

> The gospel is public truth, universally valid, true for all people and all of human life. It is not merely for the private sphere of religious experience. It is not about some otherworldly salvation postponed to an indefinite future. It is God's message about how he is at work to restore his world and all of human life. It tells

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every human life is part of the whole human story and cannot be understood apart from that story."

[25] Bill Bright, "Person-to-Person Evangelism: How to Present Christ Through Evangelistic Techniques of Campus Crusade for Christ," pre-1970, 1, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL.

> us about the goal of all history and thus claims to be the true story of the whole world.[26]

Metanarrative: The True Story of the Whole World

Chapter 5 of this dissertation argues that a narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations must be situated within the metanarrative of Scripture.[27] The TSWW is comprehensive in scope and anchored in the sixty-six-book canon of Scripture. It rests on four key themes that are woven throughout the sixty-six books of the canon—creation, fall, redemption, and restoration or re-creation. The following section provides a brief overview of each of these themes as they arise in Scripture and notes how each theme interrelates with the others as the metanarrative unfolds.

Creation

The Bible begins with the story of creation as the triune God, *ex nihilo*, speaks into existence the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon, and vegetation and living creatures (Gen 1:1–25 ESV). Notably, throughout the canon God's creative work is

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[26] Michael W. Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew, *The True Story of the Whole World: Finding Your Place in the Biblical Drama* (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Resources, 2004), 20. Included in the research is Bartholomew and Goheen's *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014) that provides an in-depth look at the metanarrative and missional theology.

Other authors providing insight on missional theology include Bruce Riley Ashford, ed., *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011); David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012); Michael W. Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); and Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

[27] James K. A. Smith, in *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?: Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), untangles the knot of postmodernism's "incredulity toward metanarratives" by taking a closer look at the author of this definition, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and concludes that Lyotard's incredulity is actually rooted in the Enlightenment. Smith avers, "The central tension for Lyotard is not between big stories and little stories or global narratives versus local narratives. Instead, he formulates the tension as a conflict between science and narratives: when judged by the criteria of modern science, stories and narratives are little more than fables" (p. 65). Importantly, the metanarrative as described in this dissertation is undergirded by revelation rather than the metanarrative of

repeatedly highlighted and praised. He is worshiped and adored for his involvement in, awareness of, and care for his creation, and his creation responds: the heavens and the earth rejoice, the floods roar and the waters thunder as they proclaim his glory, the trees of the forest sing for joy, and the whole creation waits for the revelation of the sons of God (Job 38–41; Ps 92; 96; 103; Rom 8:18–20). Moreover, God's creative work culminates in the creation of man and woman. Adam and Eve, created in *imago Dei*, are blessed by God and commissioned to fill and subdue the earth and to exercise dominion over every living thing (Gen 1:26–31; 2:21–24). In sum, God's concern for his creation is comprehensive, and after the fall, God's offer of redemption does not stop with humankind—it renews the whole creation (Gen 7:11–12; Rom 8:21).

Fall

The creation story takes a dramatic turn when first Eve and then Adam, tempted by the serpent, directly disobey God's command and eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, resulting in the fall (Gen 3:1–7). God clearly warns Adam and Eve that eating from this particular tree would surely result in death (Gen 2:15–17). After they disobey, Adam and Eve, suddenly conscious of their nakedness, try to hide from God out of fear and shame (Gen 3:8–19). The effects of sin reverberate across the pages of Scripture's metanarrative. The innate drive to choose autonomy from God bears out in dramatic and painstaking ways for all of humankind.

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autonomous reason.

Redemption

Although God banishes Adam and Eve from the garden and lays a curse on the serpent and humankind, he also promises redemption and demonstrates his grace and goodness. Genesis 3:15 provides the first proclamation of the gospel, the *protoevangelium*. God provides them with a covering and promises the good news of redemption. While Genesis chapters 4–11 provide a vivid picture of the devastating effects of sin, they also give way to God's redemptive response that is particularly evident in his covenant with Abram (Gen 12:1–4; 15; 17) and in Israel's deliverance from Egypt under Moses's leadership and their eventual entry into the Promised Land through the leadership of Joshua (Exodus–Joshua).

God's redemption reaches its climax in the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Broadly, God the Father sends his Son Jesus Christ as the embodiment of God's kingdom—he is God incarnate (John 1:14, 18). In fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, he proclaims good news to the poor, liberates the captive and the oppressed, recovers sight for the blind, and brings joy to those who mourn (Isa 61:1; Luke 4:18–19; John 20:21). The Father also sends the Son as a display of his generous and gracious love (John 3:16). Under the authority of the Father, Jesus fulfills the Scripture and declares with his last breath, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Christ's death on a cross, burial, and triumphant resurrection usher God's kingdom to the fore as Jesus, the first born of all creation, makes peace with God by the blood of the cross (Col 1:15–20).

The Holy Spirit's empowering presence and mighty initiative speed the gospel through the church, across history, and around the globe. The resurrected Jesus sends his disciples just as the Father had sent him, echoing back to Isa 61:1, "The Spirit of God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent

me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound." John records, "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:21–23).

Restoration or Re-creation

The triune God—all-loving, just and merciful, gracious and true—is at the center of Scripture's metanarrative. God provides "bookends" to the biblical narrative. He serves as Creator at the beginning and as Redeemer and Restorer at the end of the narrative. When Christ returns, he will not annihilate creation but will renew it. He will purge it from sin and the consequences of sin, thus restoring it to its proper function in glorifying God. Indeed, hearkening back to the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12, the blood of Christ will ransom people for God from every tribe and language, and people and nation will worship together in this restored environment, having been ransomed by the blood of Christ (Rev 5:9). Together, they will worship in the holy city—the new Jerusalem. God's dwelling place will be with humankind—they will be his people and he will be with them as their God (Rev 21:1–5).

Mission as the *missio Dei*

At the center of the metanarrative is the *missio Dei*—the mission of the triune God. Christopher Wright describes the *missio Dei* as comprehensive, "a missional phenomenon as it witnesses the self-giving movement of God toward his creation and us."[28] The *missio Dei* is about God restoring community throughout creation; God's call

[28] Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Grand

of Israel; the incarnation, life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus; and the church's call to witness to the recreation—consummation—of all things. Furthermore, the *missio Dei* implies that the very nature of God is missionary. Stephen Holmes explains this important distinction: "The fundamental difference between asserting that God has a mission and asserting that God is missionary is that in the former case the mission may be incidental, disconnected from who God is; in the latter case, mission is one of the perfections of God, as adequate a description of who he is as love, omnipotence or eternity."[29] David Bosch avers, "In the final analysis it is he himself who works among the nations, through Jesus Christ, in whom the believers exist and live."[30] God is the author and subject of mission—the compassionate God of history. God turns everything upside down: he uses the poor, the weak, and the marginalized to be his witnesses and to herald the good news of Jesus Christ.

Modern Social Imaginary

This chapter also introduces Taylor's term *modern social imaginary* that describes "the way we collectively imagine, even pretheoretically, our social life in the contemporary

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Rapids: InterVarsity, 2006), 48. Notably, the term *missio Dei* rose to prominence after the IMC at Willingen in 1952 where the concept of a Trinitarian understanding of mission was discussed and later became known as *missio Dei*. In 1958, George Vicedom used this language to summarize the work done at Willingen. See George Vicedom, *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission*, trans. Gilbert A. Thiele and Dennis Hilgendorf (St. Louis: Concordia, 1965). Another discussion of the emergence of *missio Dei* can be found in John G. Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, in *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 177, describe the concept of *missio Dei* as "a Copernican revolution within the discipline of missiology, though not without controversy." They cite the failure to keep an ecclesiology connected to the missiology of *missio Dei*, and a diminished emphasis on the redemptive actions of God's kingdom that resulted in the work of God being conceived largely in social, and political terms.

[29] Stephen Holmes, "Trinitarian Missiology: Towards a Theology of God as Missionary," *IJST* 8, no.1 (2006): 89.

[30] David Bosch, *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1980), 83.

Western world,"[31] thereby situating us in a secularized context. Furthermore, this chapter discusses Taylor's "spiritual super nova, a kind of galloping pluralism on the spiritual plane,"[32] and also his narratives of secularization that provide contextual markers and guideposts for meaningful gospel conversations discussed further in Chapter 4.

Secular

The term *secular*[33] is derived from the Latin word *saeculum*, meaning generation or age, and signifies belonging to this world or age as opposed to believing in something otherworldly or transcendent. Some regard any activity not directly associated with religion as secular. Taylor adds that the adjective *secular* came to be used in Latin Christendom as a term in several related contrasts. First, "as a description of time, it comes to mean ordinary time, the time which is measured in ages, over against higher time, God's time, or eternity."[34] *Secularism*[35] is a worldview that finds little place for the supernatural or transcendent and involves the belief that government institutions remain separated from religious institutions. Furthermore, both secular and secularism mark the absence of a reliance on a belief in God.

William Baker defines *secularization* as "a historical process in which religious beliefs, values, and institutions are increasingly marginalized and lose their plausibility

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[31] Taylor, *Secular Age*, 162. Taylor sets the premodern medieval social imaginary in contrast with the present modern social imaginary (from 1500 forward) in which unbelief becomes normative. James K. A. Smith, in *How Not to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), provides guidance along Taylor's zig-zag path and provides helpful summaries here and, as noted, in Chapter 2. Here, Smith summarizes the difference between a premodern medieval and modern social imaginary: "In the shift to the modern imaginary, minds are 'bounded,' inward spaces. So, the modern self, in contrast to this premodern, porous self, is a buffered self, insulated and isolated in its interiority" (p. 30).

[32] Taylor, *Secular Age*, 300. Previously, Taylor argues that the spiritual super nova is the result of the third stage of contemporary secularity (p. 299).

[33] William H. Baker, "Secularist, Secularism," *EDWM*:865.

[34] Taylor, *A Secular*, 265.

[35] Baker, "Secularist, Secularism," 865.

and power … and is often linked to modernization."[36] Christians usually understand secularism in this way and work to stave off secularization by fighting for the presence of Christian ideals in education and government. Conversely, the secular population regards religion as bizarre, an obscure ancient superstition. Taylor describes this secular age as being pluralistic—an age in which Christianity has been displaced from the default position. It is now competing with myriad religions, philosophies, takes, or "spins"[37] on life in which Westerners consider belief in God implausible—even unimaginable. This secular age is one of contested beliefs and an age that includes a plurality of belief options.

Taylor traces the unfolding story of secularization that moves "from a society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others."[38] Taylor labels this third version as Secular$_3$ culture and coins the term *fragilized* or *fragilization*[39] to describe the unsettling effects of uncertainty in the face of an explosion of options. This uncertainty

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[36] Baker, "Secularist, Secularism," 865.

[37] Taylor, in *Secular*, 550, uses this term to describes a particular way of looking at and understanding immanence or secularism, for example, "as a way of convincing oneself that one's reading is obvious, compelling, allowing of no cavil or demurral." James K. A. Smith, in *How Not to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 96, provides helpful definitions and descriptions for Taylor's concepts. Here Smith describes the secularist "spin" as "the denial of contestability [and] the refusal to recognize secularity$_3$. Secularist spin fails to honor and recognize the cross-pressure that inhabitants of our secular age sense."

[38] Taylor, *Secular Age*, 3. Taylor also describes secularization as "a titanic change in our western civilization. We have changed not just from a condition where most people lived 'naively' in a construal (part Christian, part related to "spirits" of pagan origin) as simple reality, to one in which almost no one is capable of this, but all see their option as one among many.… [We] have also changed from a condition in which belief was the default option, not just for the naïve but also for those who knew, considered, talked about atheism; to a condition in which for more and more people unbelieving construals seem at first blush the only plausible ones" (p. 12).

[39] Taylor, in *Secular Age*, 142, describes *fragilized* or *fragilization* as a notable consequence of galloping religious pluralism and is significant in the pursuit of meaningful gospel conversations (p. 329). Smith, in *How Not*, also offers a more succinct definition of Taylor's lengthy development of the concept: "Fragilization [occurs] in the face of different options, where people who lead 'normal' lives do not share my faith (and perhaps believe something very different), [and] my own faith becomes fragile—put into

results in a sense of being *cross-pressured*—caught between traditional beliefs and a myriad of available options. His assertion underscores the significant difference between Bright's context and today's secularized context.

Importance, Contribution, and Originality of this Study

This dissertation draws on Taylor's analysis of what he calls our secular age,[40] an age in which Christianity has been displaced from the default position and is considered by many Westerners to be implausible and even unimaginable. It further utilizes Taylor's concept of a social imaginary to suggest that the Bible's overarching narrative provides the necessary framework within which a Western person can understand the gospel and its implications for the whole of one's life. Secondarily, this study examines Rieff's *Sacred Order/Social Order* trilogy[41] to complement Taylor's analysis, drawing on his exploration of the current era's historically unprecedented attempt to minimize Christianity's influence on cultural institutions and society at large. By way of contrast, this dissertation then examines Bright's twentieth-century religious context, highlighting the theological and missiological influences that helped shape *Four Spiritual Laws* as an effective missiological approach in a previous era. Finally, this dissertation underscores the significant differences between Bright's twentieth-century context and America's

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question, dubitable."

[40] Taylor, *Secular Age*, 3. Taylor describes our Western society as secular, in an age of contested beliefs along with a plurality of options. He traces the unfolding story of secularization that moves "from a society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others" (p. 3).

[41] Philip Rieff, *My Life Among the Deathworks: Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority*, vol. 1 of *Sacred Order/Social Order*, ed. Kenneth S. Piver (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006);*The Crisis of the Officer Class: The Decline of the Tragic Sensibility*, vol. 2 of *Sacred Order/Social Order*, ed. Alan Woolfolk (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008); and *The Jew of Culture: Freud, Moses, and Modernity*, vol. 3 of *Sacred Order/Social Order*, eds. Arnold M. Eisen and Gideon Lewis-Kraus (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

twenty-first-century secularized context and asks the question, "How is the gospel best communicated in this secularized context?" This lays the groundwork for a reimagined narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations.

To date, no dissertation has been published that considers the works of Taylor and Rieff together related to the topic of secularization, nor in relation to a narrative approach to evangelism and gospel conversations. Furthermore, the topic of secularization has yet to be explored in regard to Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws* and the context of his twentieth-century approach to evangelism. This dissertation seeks to make an original contribution to the field of Applied Theology and Missiology in two ways: first, by researching Taylor's philosophical work and Rieff's sociological work surrounding our secular age and its impact on evangelism and meaningful gospel conversations in the twenty-first century; and second, by proposing four features of twenty-first-century recontextualization. Explicit in this dissertation is the desire to contribute to Cru's priority of evangelism by considering this research question: How can Cru honor Bill Bright's vision and maintain his commitment to evangelism by training others to present the gospel in an American twenty-first-century secularized context?

Based on a current search of the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global site with the keywords William R. Bright/Bill Bright; *Four Spiritual Laws*; and Campus Crusade for Christ, two published dissertations surface that specifically analyze Bright's contribution to twentieth-century evangelism, both of which provide useful insights for this dissertation. The first, John G. Turner's "Selling Jesus to Modern America: Campus Crusade for Christ, Evangelical Culture, and Conservative Politics,"[42] pinpoints facets of

[42] John G. Turner, "Selling Jesus to Modern America: Campus Crusade for Christ, Evangelical

renewal theology and revivalism implicit in Bright's contribution to evangelicalism and focuses primarily on the trajectory of the modern evangelical movement. Turner's work adds important insight into the complex cultural context in which Bright developed *Four Spiritual Laws*.

The second dissertation, Travis Dean Fleming's "An Analysis of Bill Bright's Theology and Methodology of Evangelism and Discipleship,"[43] provides a comprehensive evaluation of Bright's theology and approach to evangelism and discipleship. Fleming's research affirms as biblical Bright's theology of evangelism and his methodology. More specifically, his analysis provides detailed insight into Bright's midcentury context with important details regarding his witnessing strategy and the development of *Four Spiritual Laws*.[44] In addition to Fleming's and Turner's research, seven other dissertations include various analyses of Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws* in comparison to similar gospel presentations and their use within particular contexts, some of which provide useful insight for this dissertation.[45]

Culture, and Conservative Politics," PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2005.

[43] Travis Dean Fleming, "An Analysis of Bill Bright's Theology and Methodology of Evangelism and Discipleship," PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006.

[44] Fleming, "Analysis," 206–13.

[45] Based on a search of the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global website for work related to William R. Bright/Bill Bright, *Four Spiritual Laws*, and Campus Crusade for Christ, the following dissertations and theses provide research interest and information pertinent to this dissertation: David Lynn Bell's "Tracts to Christ: An Evaluation of American Gospel Tracts," PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005 provides a biblical, theological, philosophical, and historical analysis of the seven so-called best-selling gospel tracts in American history, of which *Four Spiritual Laws* was one. This analysis proves useful with relation to Bright's twentieth-century context; Paul Brent Dybdahl's "The Stairway to Heaven: A Critique of the Evangelical Gospel Presentation in North America," PhD diss., Andrews University, 2004 provides a two-stage critique of three evangelistic presentations, including *Four Spiritual Laws*, through the lens of communication theory and the conversion accounts found in Luke and Acts. Dybdahl's analysis through the lens of communication theory has the potential to add to Taylor and Rieff's philosophical and sociological contribution; and Patrick G. McLeod's "An Historical and Theological Analysis of Campus Crusade for Christ's Evangelistic Practice in Two American University Contexts," PhD diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2006.

The following theses include an analysis of *Four Spiritual Laws* and/or evangelism strategies related to *Four Spiritual Laws* in particular contexts and related to specific people groups within North

Research Methodology

This study relies primarily on a mixed method of research[46] and includes the following: archival research; an analysis of our secular age drawing primarily on the cultural analyses of philosopher Charles Taylor and sociologist Philip Rieff; quantitative research results compiled by Brooke Wright and Cyrano Marketing Collective; and qualitative research conducted by this researcher within Cru's City division.

The archival research is meant to aid the examination of Bright's twentieth-century context and the development of *Four Spiritual Laws* between 1945 and 1972. This research also helps to distinguish the contextual and theological underpinnings of

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America: Kurt A. Mueller's "Raising U.S. Army Spiritual Fitness Inventory Scores Through Chaplain Review of CRU Evangelism Materials," DMin thesis, Nyack College, Alliance Theological Seminary, 2017; and Ki Dong Kim's "Developing Personal Evangelists through Goguma Evangelism School at Precious Community Church in Placentia, California," DMin thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018. Both of these theses could provide additional insight into the insufficiency of *Four Spiritual Laws* in a twenty-first-century context.

The following theses are related to specific settings and specific people groups outside of North American context but are certainly worth mentioning: Sobana Dasaratha Somaratna's "Witnessing to Sinhalese Buddhists through the Four Spiritual Laws of the Campus Crusade for Christ," master's thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, 1996; and Tu Anh Truong's "Developing a Strategy for University Campus Evangelism in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam," ThM thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, 2002.

[46] John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, in *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018), "rely on a definition of core characteristics of mixed methods research…. In mixed methods, the researcher collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data rigorously in response to research questions and hypotheses, integrates (or mixes or combines) the two forms of data and their results, organizes these procedures into specific research designs that provide the logic and procedure for conducting the study, and frames these procedures within theory and philosophy" (p. 5).

The authors also state that using a mixed method approach is advantageous for a number of reasons. First, it provides a way to harness strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research. They posit that quantitative research is weak in understanding the context and hearing the voice of individual participants. Yet, because quantitative researchers are in the background they are less prone to personal bias. Conversely, qualitative researchers are more personally involved in research and prone to personal bias and interpretation. Creswell and Clark maintain that mixed methods research allows "the strengths of one approach [to] make up for the weaknesses of the other" (p. 12). Mixed methods research also provides more evidence for studying a research problem than quantitative or qualitative research and helps answer questions that cannot be answered by either approach alone. This approach also offers new insights that go beyond separate studies and provides a bridge across the divide between quantitative and qualitative researchers. Important for this study in particular, Creswell and Clark describe mixed methods as that which "encourages the use of multiple worldviews of paradigms (i.e. beliefs and values); and, a mixed methods research enables scholars to produce multiple written

this evangelistic tool by providing historical overviews that are intended to provide well-researched points of reference. Extensive archival research has taken place at Cru's headquarters, which houses Bright's earliest manuscripts, communiqués, and notes on evangelistic strategies developed in the mid-twentieth century. Unlike previous writers, this researcher has full access to CCC's Archives. The researcher recognizes the possibility of organizational and evangelical bias due to her years of service with Cru and she pursued a broad scope of research in order to provide a more balanced argument.[47] The overarching purpose behind this study is to provide historical moorings for Cru's present and ballast for Cru's future.

This dissertation also provides analysis of our secular age by drawing primarily on Taylor's argument that a secularized worldview, resulting from exclusive humanism, consists of new conditions of belief, experience, and context.[48] Based on Taylor's insights, this study contends that today's "galloping pluralism on the spiritual plane"[49] provides warrant for freshly contextualized gospel conversations. Secondarily, this study draws on Rieff's *Sacred Order/Social Order* trilogy[50] to complement Taylor's analysis. In particular, it draws on Rieff's exploration of the current era's historically

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publications from a single study (p. 13).

[47] In addition to regular input and analysis from Dr. Bruce Ashford and Dr. George Robinson, SEBTS major professors, this researcher is also in regular consultation with Dr. Craig Van Gelder, professor emeritus at Luther Seminary, and missiologist Bill Hogg, both of whom have had previous experience in parachurch organizations and are familiar with Cru; in addition, their critique of twentieth-century propositional methodologies, including Cru's, keeps the potential for bias in check. Furthermore, the combined research in this dissertation pushes against organizational traditions.

[48] Taylor, *Secular Age*, 146–58. Taylor describes "The Great Disembedding" as that which involved "the growth and entrenchment of a new understanding of our social existence, one that gave an unprecedented primacy to the individual" (p. 146).

[49] Taylor, *Secular Age*, 299. He develops his view of contemporary secularity in three stages. First, he explains how the option for exclusive humanism became a viable alternative to Christianity; second, he describes how a diversity of options unfolds over time; and third, he examines the ways in which this now fractured culture becomes generalized to whole societies (pp. 299–300).

[50] See note 38 earlier in this chapter.

unprecedented attempt to minimize Christianity's influence on cultural institutions, thus minimizing its influence on society at large. Moreover, by comparing Bright's twentieth-century religious context with America's twenty-first-century secularized context, as articulated by Taylor and Rieff, this study demonstrates that a narrative approach to gospel conversations provides existential meaning for all of life.

In addition to archival research, this study includes the results of an eighteen-month research project done by Cyrano Marketing Collective on behalf of Cru's City division.[51] This research includes a survey of four hundred ethnically and generationally diverse men and women from across the United States coupled with a qualitative study done with twenty-five of these respondents. Over fifty percent of those surveyed claimed to have no religious affiliation and most described Christianity as offensive, unsafe, or irrelevant. Significantly, eighty-four percent indicated a positive view of Jesus Christ and a willingness to participate in spiritual conversations. Equally profound, most of those surveyed doubted that Christians would willingly dialogue with people who are at odds with traditional Christian beliefs. The results of this survey provide warrant for Taylor's analysis and underscore Cru's need to reimagine an evangelistic approach that connects with a secularized worldview. This dissertation concludes by examining the practical implications of a reimagined narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations in a American twenty-first-century secularized context.

[51] Brooke Wright et al., *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City* (Atlanta: Cyrano Marketing Collective, 2016). The results of this research project and a report of Cyrano Marketing Collective's research are included in the appendices of this dissertation. Cyrano Marketing Collective is an outside marketing organization hired by Cru for the purpose of conducting quantitative and qualitative research free from organizational bias. The collected data is part of what informs a reimagined narrative approach to gospel conversations.

Availability of Resources

Two primary research locations have been available for this dissertation. The first is the locally accessible Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) Library, which provides extensive holdings for theological, missiological, and historical research. To supplement these resources, SEBTS also provides the services of Interlibrary Loan and access to a vast array of indexes to assist the research process, including the following: ATLA, JSTOR, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, Religious and Theological Abstracts, and Christian Periodical Index.

Second, the researcher utilized CCC's Archives, located at the organization's headquarters in Orlando, Florida, which contain thousands of items of Bright's written materials. These materials include personal notes and correspondence, outlines and content for early talks and lectures, documents outlining Bright's earliest strategic planning process, and original samples of evangelistic innovation. This dissertation took into consideration any type of document related to Bright's development of *Four Spiritual Laws* and other innovative tools for and strategies related to evangelism between 1945 and 1972.

Along with these primary research locations, the author also had access to Bright's son, Brad Bright, who currently gives oversight to Bright Media Foundation, a subsidiary of Cru; and to several of the original CCC staff members and administrative assistants who were available for interviews. Also, due to Henrietta Mears's significant influence in Bright's life, Gospel Light Archives, located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, was accessed for pertinent, yet-to-be referenced information related to her role in Bright's life and in the founding of CCC.

The research methodology and findings of Cyrano Marketing Collective have been made available to this author, with permission, for research purposes and are included in the body of this work. Finally, the author has been authorized by her supervisor to conduct this research, is sponsored by Cru to access necessary information for the completion of this dissertation, and is expected to give a report of these findings.

Chapter Summaries

The present chapter serves to introduce the thesis of this dissertation, which argues that Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws*, shaped within his twentieth-century context, is insufficient in our current American twenty-first-century secularized context, necessitating a reimagined narrative approach in order to facilitate more meaningful gospel conversations. The chapter defines the terms *Four Spiritual Laws*, *gospel*, *metanarrative*, *mission as missio Dei*, *modern social imaginary*, *and secular*,[52] each of which plays a significant role in the study. This chapter also includes the uniqueness of this study and its contribution to Applied Theology and Missiology, as well as research methodology, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions.

Chapter 2 argues that the twenty-first-century secularized context in the US is a very different context when compared with Bright's twentieth-century context in which *Four Spiritual Laws* was developed. This chapter draws on the work of Canadian philosopher Charles Margrave Taylor and of American sociologist Philip Rieff to reinforce this argument. The research in this chapter is meant to lay the foundation for a deeper discussion around secularization and exclusive humanism and the implications of

[52] Current research is being done concerning terminology and definitions, including but not limited to *gospel*, *insufficient*, and *meaningful gospel conversations*.

both on the communication of the gospel. The first section of this chapter introduces brief biographies of Charles Margrave Taylor (1931–) and Philip Rieff (1922–2006). The second section provides an overview of Taylor's genealogy of secularization and the emergence of what Taylor describes as exclusive humanism.[53] The third section examines Philip Rieff's genealogy of his first, second, and third worlds or cultures.[54] In particular, this section focuses on Rieff's prophetic analysis of the third world or culture's unprecedented attempt to eradicate sacred moral authority from the social order. This chapter concludes with a brief summary of Taylor's and Rieff's views of secularization and considers the implications and opportunities for meaningful gospel conversations in this twenty-first-century secularized context.[55]

Chapter 3, juxtaposed with Chapter 2, analyzes the historical and contemporary[56] influences that spurred Bill Bright to develop *Four Spiritual Laws* by way of six major sections: The first section provides background for Bright's mid-twentieth-century context; the second section examines his theological and historical genealogy; the third

[53] See note 47 earlier in this chapter.

[54] Rieff, in *My Life*, 6–7, describes this so-called "third world or culture" as "anti-culture," as having no sacred order, as an "unprecedented present age without moralities and religions." He asserts that "no culture has ever preserved itself where there is not a registration of sacred order" (p. 13). Similar to Taylor's assertion in *A Secular Age*, Rieff states, "The third culture notion of a culture that persists independent of all sacred orders is unprecedented in human history" (p. 13). Here Rieff adds weight to Taylor's aforementioned assertion—notably, both recognize the shifts in our secular context as "unprecedented" (p. 13). This contention underscores the importance of contextualization in twenty-first-century America.

[55] Those who oppose Taylor's point of view will be taken into consideration: Peter L. Berger, "The Modern Condition: How To Live in a (Supposedly) Secular Age," in *The American Interest*, March 11, 2014, https://www.the-american-interest.com/2014/03/11/how-to-live-in-a-supposedly-secular-age/, n.p.; *The Many Altars of Modernity: Toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age* (Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton, 2014); and James Tully, ed., *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), particularly, Richard Rorty, "Taylor on Truth," 20–36; Quentin Skinner, "Modernity and Disenchantment: Some Historical Reflections," 37–48; Michael L. Morgan, "Religion, History and Moral Discourse," 49–66; Jean Bethke Elshtain, "The Risks and Responsibilities of Affirming Ordinary Life," 67–82; Vincent Descombes, "Is There an Objective Spirit?," 96–120; and Richard Tuck, "Rights and Pluralism," 159–70.

[56] By contemporary I mean those people and events that directly influenced Bill Bright in his mid-

section provides an overview of Bright's life phases; the fourth section considers his early influences; the fifth section reveals his Great Commission influences; and the sixth section considers Enlightenment influences on his thinking and approach to ministry.

Chapter 4 calls for recontextualization in response to the contextual differences between a Secular$_3$ twenty-first-century context and Bright's mid-twentieth-century context. This chapter lays the groundwork for faithful recontextualization in three parts. Part One provides a missiological snapshot of America's twenty-first-century context and includes the following summaries: a synopsis of 2016 research conducted by Cyrano Marketing Collective on behalf of Cru, *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City*;[57] demographer William Frey's *Diversity Explosion*, an analysis of the US population based on the 2010 Census data;[58] and Barna Group's 2018 report, *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs, and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation*.[59]

Part Two provides a genealogy of the emergence of contextualization from four particular vantage points that are meant to sharpen our understanding of the emergence of contextualization. The first vantage point glances back across history and considers some of the ways in which contextualization has taken place since the first century. The second vantage point focuses on the 1910 World Missionary Conference (WMC) in Edinburgh and represents a substantive paradigm shift in missions—a watershed moment. It spurred, among other things, the rise of the ecumenical and evangelical movements and indirectly influenced the RCC and Vatican II in the 1960s. The third vantage point highlights the

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twentieth-century context.

[57] See note 51 earlier in this chapter.

[58] William H. Frey, *Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics are Remaking America* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press components, 2018).

[59] Barna Group, *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation*

ways in which contextualization emerged through both the ecumenical and evangelical traditions in the 1970s. The fourth vantage point provides a view of the ongoing missiological response within these traditions into the twenty-first century. Part Three reimagines an approach to contextualization for the twenty-first century that encourages a confluence of the ecumenical, evangelical, and RCC streams and proposes four prominent features of faithful recontextualization for a twenty-first-century secularized context.

Chapter 5 contends for a reimagined narrative approach to contextualization by way of the four prominent features of faithful recontextualization. Part One of this chapter provides a genealogy of biblical and narrative theology and bolsters the significance of a narrative theology in a twenty-first-century context. The first section of this discussion looks back to the impetus of biblical and narrative theology, while the second section argues for a narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations framed by the TSWW and nurtured by narrative inquiry. Part Two introduces in more detail four features of faithful recontextualization**.** Feature One (Faithful Recontextualization Affirms the Bible as the TSWW and the Gospel as Good News for All) highlights the four overarching themes inherent within God's narrative: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration or re-creation. These themes offer a transcendent framework within which a person—believer or unbeliever—can understand the all-encompassing implications of the gospel for the whole of one's life.

Feature Two (Faithful Recontextualization Yields to the Full Weight of the Triune God's Authority) is revealed in six ways: (1) in Scripture; (2) through creation; (3) the

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(Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2018).

mission of redemption is set into motion by the fall, first, through the nation of Israel; then (4) by the Spirit-empowered incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; (5) through Jesus's ascension and the sending of the Spirit in the book of Acts and the Epistles; and (6) in the restoration or re-creation of all things. In addition, this feature depends on a Trinitarian, Christocentric, eschatological hermeneutic of the TSWW and provides a key interpretive element.

Feature Three (Faithful Recontextualization, by Design, Reflects the Multicultural Reality of the Twenty-First Century) involves, first, developing an increased awareness of cultural variations in America and a willingness to learn through cross-cultural collaboration. Second, recontextualization must reflect this multicultural reality and lean on the framework of the TSWW. Third, recontextualization must be rooted in the missional nature of the triune God.

Feature Four (Faithful Recontextualization Necessitates a Dynamic and Dialogical Encounter with Culture) includes the following components: (1) an affirmation that the Spirit-created church lives as the very body of Christ in the world; (2) a dynamic and prophetic faith; (3) a cruciform way of discipleship; and (4) a heightened awareness of exclusive humanism and hyper- and non-religious faiths coupled with agility to engage in meaningful gospel conversations.

Chapter 6 provides a pathway for a reimagined narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations guided by the four prominent features of faithful recontextualization and it provides examples of emerging practices developed by various Cru staff framed by the four features. These four features reflect the research being conducted and are meant to enhance our view of the triune God, the *missio Dei*, and our understanding of the

missionary nature of the church. This chapter includes the researcher's active interaction with the four features that emerged through the research and the dynamic and reciprocal application of the research.

Quite surprisingly, the research for this dissertation led to a profoundly deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of the twentieth-century *evangelical* context of Bright's methodological zeal for personal evangelism. In addition, the research revealed that his theology for evangelism was closely tied to the missionary movements that surfaced after the WMC. This rich and complex vein of research provided significant insight into the reasons why Cru's traditional approach to evangelism is, in many cases, falling flat today.

This dissertation also includes four appendices—the aforementioned research conducted for Cru by Cyrano Marketing Collective.[60] Appendix 1: Cru City Qualboard Discussion Guide; Appendix 2: Cru City Brand Messaging Survey; Appendix 3: Cru City Insights and Planning: Quant Testing; and, Appendix 4: Cru City Qual Participant Faith Profile.

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[60] See note 41 earlier in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY SECULARIZATION: IN CONVERSATION WITH CHARLES MARGRAVE TAYLOR AND PHILIP RIEFF

Chapter 1 began by sounding a note of warning. The societal changes at hand in the twenty-first century are titanic and naturally affect American culture and religious institutions such as Cru and its approach to meaningful gospel conversations. The repercussions of these changes cannot be ignored, nor can the significant opportunities they afford. This chapter argues that the twenty-first-century secularized context in the US is a very different context when compared to Bright's twentieth-century context in which *Four Spiritual Laws* was developed, and the chapter draws on the work of Canadian philosopher Charles Margrave Taylor and of American sociologist Philip Rieff to reinforce this argument. The research in this chapter is meant to lay the foundation for a deeper discussion around secularization and exclusive humanism and the implications of both on the communication of the gospel.

As Chapter 3 demonstrates, Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws* was developed in the 1950s as a result of Bright's research with over a thousand student surveys taken on "scores of college campuses"[1] in the US in the 1950s. Strikingly, most of the students surveyed claimed the Protestant faith but did not know God loved them or that he had a plan for their lives. This one fact, perhaps more than any other, compelled Bright to develop *Four Spiritual Laws*. In addition, he believed leaders around the world were

[1] Michael Richardson, *Amazing Faith: The Authorized Biography of Bill Bright* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2000), 80. The date of these surveys is not available, but the context indicates the mid-1950s. According to Richardson, the surveys included the question, "In your opinion, how does one become a Christian?" The final results indicated that "an astounding 97 percent of the students said they did not know how to become a Christian."

"waiting to hear the good news of God's love and purpose for their lives,"[2] and he often stated, "Most of the people with whom you speak are interested."[3] For Bright, the underlying problem in evangelism was the Christian rank and file who lacked courage, commitment, and, most of all, training.[4] While the success of *Four Spiritual Laws* lends veracity to Bright's claim, why, then, was it so appealing to believe in God in 1951, while in 2020 many find not believing in God easy and even preferable? This chapter seeks to answer this question in conversation with Charles Taylor, drawing on his secularization and consequent exclusive humanism; and with Philip Rieff's third world or culture and its vacuous sacred center.

The first section of this chapter introduces cultural critics Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (1931–) and American sociologist Philip Rieff (1922–2006) by providing a brief biography of both. The second section provides an overview of Taylor's genealogy of secularization and the emergence of what Taylor describes as exclusive humanism. The third section examines Philip Rieff's genealogy of his first, second, and third worlds or cultures. In particular, this section focuses on Rieff's prophetic analysis of the third world or culture's unprecedented attempt to eradicate sacred moral authority from the social order. This chapter concludes with a brief summary of Taylor's and

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[2] Bill Bright, "Student Power, The Campus Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ," *Action Magazine: A Special Report* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 8.

[3] Bill Bright, "A Strategy for Fulfilling the Great Commission," Dallas Lay Institute for Evangelism, February 13–20, 1966, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL., 10. He referenced people's desire to hear throughout his lecture (pp. 10, 12, 16).

[4] Bright, in "Strategy," 1, states, "We've become an army of 65 million sleepy Christians, lethargic, fruitless, impotent and we're losing the world to communism." Bright also asserts, "Christians shrug their shoulders, read this great commission and say, 'Well, you know nobody's really serious about it.' We go to church Sunday and Sunday, if we go at all. No one receives Christ at the average church. [It takes] a thousand laymen, six pastors, one entire year to reach a single soul for Christ, according to statistics. We are not taking the command of our Lord seriously" (p. 7).

Rieff's views of secularization and considers the implications and opportunities for meaningful gospel conversations in this twenty-first-century secularized context.

Biographical Information for Charles Margrave Taylor (1931–) and Philip Rieff (1922–2006)

Charles Margrave Taylor (1931–)

Charles Margrave Taylor was born in Montréal, Québec on November 5, 1931 to Simone Beaubien and Walter Margrave Taylor. He was the youngest of three children (one brother and one sister) and was raised in a bilingual home—his mother spoke French and his father spoke English. Taylor was raised Roman Catholic in accordance with his mother's background. He married artist and social worker Alba Romer in 1956 and together they had five daughters. Alba Romer Taylor died in 1990.

Taylor attended Selwyn House School, a private boys' school, from 1936 to 1949 where he was introduced to the English poetry of the Romantic period and eventually nineteenth-century music—both of which became lifelong influences. He received his secondary education at Trinity College School in Port Hope, Ontario, and his Bachelor of Arts in 1952 in history from McGill University, Montréal, with First Class Honors. Then, in 1955 he received a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy, politics, and economics from Balliol College, Oxford University, with First Class Honors.

Between 1956 and 1961, he was named Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, where he studied under Isaiah Berlin, renowned twentieth-century political philosopher. In 1960 and 1961, consecutively, he received a Master of Arts followed by a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Oxford. He has held posts at numerous universities, including but not limited to McGill University, the University of Oxford, the Université

de Montréal, and the University of California, Berkeley. He taught in the areas of social and political science, as well as philosophy.

Taylor showed an interest in political activism, even from an early age, and was the president of the Oxford University Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. After finishing his postgraduate studies, he ran for federal office in Canada four times between 1962 and 1968 but failed to win a seat. Taylor credits his political activism with having an enormous influence on his philosophy. Bruce Ashford and Matthew Ng observe, "In many ways, Taylor's philosophical interests have been driven by the political problems faced by Canada's cultural, religious, and linguistic pluralism."[5] Taylor is best known for his deft contributions to political and social philosophy, intellectual history, and philosophy of language. He also provides insights into twentieth- and twenty-first-century apologetics.[6] American sociologist José Casanova describes Taylor's *A Secular Age* as "the best analytical, phenomenological, and genealogical account we have of our modern, secular condition."[7]

Philip Rieff (1922–2006)

Philip Rieff was an American sociologist and cultural critic who rose to prominence in the 1960s due to his interpretation of Sigmund Freud's work and its impact on society and the direction of Western culture. James Davison Hunter describes Rieff as "one of

[5] Bruce Ashford and Matthew Ng, "Charles Taylor: Apologetics in a Secular Age," in *A Legacy of Apologetics*, ed. Benjamin K. Forrest, Joshua D. Chatraw, and James K. Dew (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming), 677.

[6] Unless otherwise noted, facts recorded in the biographical section for Charles Margrave Taylor are taken from "Charles Taylor Bibliography" (http://charlestaylor.net/general.htm), n.p.

[7] José Casanova, "A Secular Age: Dawn or Twilight?" in *Varieties of Secularism In A Secular Age*, ed. Michael Warner, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, and Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 265.

the most innovative theorists of culture and cultural authority in the last century."[8] Rieff was born in Chicago on December 15, 1922 to Lithuanian refugees who fled to the US due to political violence—some of his family who remained behind died in the Holocaust. He described himself as a "post-Jew," and according to Jonathan Imber, "His heritage was Jewish … but he was someone who had lost faith in the God and the religious practices of his people."[9] His academic career began after serving in World War II. He attended the University of Chicago where he earned a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and a doctoral degree. There he taught sociology from 1947 to 1952 and during this time he met his first wife, Susan Sontag. Together they had one son, David, but they divorced in 1959, and Rieff later married Alison Douglas Knox.

Rieff went on to teach at Brandeis University; the University of California, Berkeley; and the University of Pennsylvania from 1961 until his death in 2006. His lectures were a blend of philosophy, economics, history, literature, and psychology, along with poetry, Picasso, and Plato. Readers often describe his writing style as difficult, but the content within as rewarding. He rose to prominence as the leading interpreter of Sigmund Freud's work and its influence on Western thought. Rieff established himself as an important sociologist in his first book, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist*,[10] in which he argued that Freudian ideas had a corrosive effect on Western morality and culture. He

[8] James Davison Hunter, "Introduction," in Philip Rieff, *My Life Among the Deathworks: Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006), xv.

[9] Jonathan B. Imber, "Introduction," in *The Anthem Companion to Philip Rieff*, ed. Jonathan B. Imber, Anthem Companions to Sociology, ed. Bryan S. Turner (New York: Anthem Press, 2018), 7. Christopher Cain Elliott, in *Fire Backstage: Philip Rieff and the Monastery of Culture*, Studies in Social Sciences, Philosophy and History of Ideas 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, 2013), 27, describes Rieff as "not the most original or insightful scholar related to politics, social reality, or culture. What belongs exclusively to him is their admixture."

[10] Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

proposed that "psychological man" was the dominant moral figure of the twentieth century.[11]

Very few secondary sources on Rieff's theories exist. This is due in part to his choice to remove himself from the public eye and academia. However, Jonathan Imber, who studied under Rieff and who has been instrumental in helping to publish Rieff's work, describes his mentor as a first rank pessimist. Imber notes that Rieff's prophetic voice "grated against a tone-deaf social science and politicized humanities"[12] not as a voice of "doom and gloom … but rather [as] a call back to higher hopes and finer exemplifications of character."[13] Rieff is best known for his early works on Freud and culture, published between 1959 and 1973, and for his Sacred Order/Social Order trilogy published just before and after his death. His work provides significant sociological insight into today's secular age. The trilogy includes the following works: *My Life Among the Deathworks: Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority*, Volume 1; *The Crisis of the Officer Class: The Decline of the Tragic Sensibility*, Volume 2; and *The Jew Of Culture: Freud, Moses, and Modernity,* Volume 3.[14] Dutch academic Antonius Zondervan

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[11] Robert D. McFadden, "Philip Rieff, Sociologist and Author on Freud, dies at 83," *The New York Times*, July 4, 2006 (https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/04/us/04rieff.html), n.p. Elliott, in *Fire Backstage*, 27, suggests that Rieff was not the most insightful or original political, sociological, or cultural scholar, but "what belongs exclusively to him is their admixture" (p. 27). In addition, Elliott contends that Rieff belonged mostly to the history of Jewish philosophy, "itself an exiled and speculative endeavor which necessarily trespasses between revelation and reason" and has an "expansive quality that is sufficient to address Rieff's broad interests and ambitions" (p. 27).

[12] Imber, "Introduction," 2.

[13] Imber, "Introduction," 2.

[14] Philip Rieff, *My Life Among the Deathworks: Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority*, vol. 1 of *Sacred Order/Social Order*, ed. Kenneth S. Piver (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006); *The Crisis of the Officer Class: The Decline of the Tragic Sensibility*, vol. 2 of *Sacred Order/Social Order*, ed. Alan Woolfolk (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008); and *The Jew of Culture: Freud, Moses, and Modernity*, vol. 3 of *Sacred Order/Social Order*, eds. Arnold M. Eisen and Gideon Lewis-Kraus (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

provides a synthesis of Rieff's work in *Sociology and the Sacred: An Introduction to Philip Rieff's Theory of Culture*.[15]

Bruce Ashford highlights Rieff's contribution: "Philip Rieff's sociological analyses explore the implications of Western Civilization's unprecedented attempt to maintain society and culture without reference to God. He argues that this attempt to desacralize the social order is deeply detrimental and encourages Westerners to resacralize the social order."[16] Over time, Rieff grew increasingly pessimistic and negative toward the culture and eventually faded from view; however, a renewed interest in his work promises to provide important insights for theologians and missiologists regarding the impact of a social order void of sacred authority.

Taylor and Rieff rely on the historical embeddedness of the sacred order—from different, even prophetic, vantage points. Taylor's inquiry seems to flow thoughtfully down a zig-zag path and invites conclusions and participation. On the other hand, Rieff, described as a jeremiadic prophet, lays bare the twenty-first-century late modern culture or anti-culture.

Charles Taylor's Genealogy of Secularization

The first section defines and describes Charles Taylor's secularization by highlighting his terminology—his twist on familiar terms and neologisms. The second section provides an overview of Taylor's "zig-zag"[17] genealogy of secularization and, in particular, the emergence of exclusive humanism.

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[15] Antonius A. W. Zondervan, *Sociology and the Sacred: An Introduction to Philip Rieff's Theory of Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), Kindle edition.

[16] Bruce Riley Ashford, "A Theological Sickness Unto Death: Philip Rieff's Prophetic Analysis of Our Secular Age," *Themelios* 43, no. 1 (2017): 34.

[17] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University

A Selection of Taylor's Terminology

Charles Taylor argues in *A Secular Age* that secularization originated particularly within Latin Christian reform movements beginning in the Middle Ages. Taylor describes the growing concern for reform as "the drive to make over the whole society with higher standards," as a significant factor in the emergence of exclusive humanism where meaning and significance are found within an immanent frame void of transcendence. Taylor argues that this exclusive humanism could only have come from Christianity. The purpose of this section seeks to further clarify Taylor's terminology used in this dissertation.

Secular, Secularism, Secularization

As previously stated in Chapter 1, the term *secular*[18] is derived from the Latin word *saeculum*, meaning generation or age, and signifies belonging to this world or age as opposed to believing in something otherworldly or transcendent. Some regard any activity not directly associated with religion as secular. Taylor adds that the adjective *secular* came to be used in Latin Christendom as a term in several related contrasts. First, "as a description of time, it comes to mean ordinary time, the time which is measured in ages, over against higher time, God's time, or eternity."[19] *Secularism*[20] is a worldview that finds little place for the supernatural or transcendent and involves the belief that government institutions remain separated from religious institutions. Furthermore, both secular and secularism mark the absence of a reliance on a belief in God.

Press, 2007), 94. Taylor makes clear that the pathway to secularization and exclusive humanism was not by way of a straight line but resembles something more like a zig-zag as demonstrated in the pages to follow.

[18] William H. Baker, "Secularist, Secularism," *EDWM*:865.

[19] Taylor, *A Secular*, 265.

[20] Baker, "Secularist, Secularism," 865.

William Baker defines *secularization* as "a historical process in which religious beliefs, values, and institutions are increasingly marginalized and lose their plausibility and power … and is often linked to modernization."[21] Christians usually understand secularism in this way and work to stave off secularization by fighting for the presence of Christian ideals in education and government. Conversely, the secular population regards religion as bizarre, an obscure ancient superstition. Taylor describes this secular age as being pluralistic—an age in which Christianity has been displaced from the default position. It is now competing with myriad religions, philosophies, takes, or "spins"[22] on life in which Westerners consider belief in God implausible—even unimaginable. This secular age is one of contested beliefs and an age that includes a plurality of belief options.

Taylor's analysis sheds light on the difficulty behind engaging in meaningful, or at least constructive, gospel conversations when options abound. Conspicuous here is Taylor's description of secularization. Secularization is not the absence but the presence of belief. He posits that, while secularization exists within an "immanent frame"[23] in which theistic belief has been displaced from the default position, secularization also

[21] Baker, "Secularist, Secularism," 865.

[22] Taylor, in *Secular*, 550, uses this term to describes a particular way of looking at and understanding immanence or secularism, for example, "as a way of convincing oneself that one's reading is obvious, compelling, allowing of no cavil or demurral." James K. A. Smith, in *How Not to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 96, provides helpful definitions and descriptions for Taylor's concepts. Here Smith describes the secularist "spin" as "the denial of contestability [and] the refusal to recognize secularity$_3$. Secularist spin fails to honor and recognize the cross-pressure that inhabitants of our secular age sense."

[23] Taylor, in *Secular*, 542, defines "immanent frame" as a constructed social space that holds instrumental rationality as a key value, where time is secular (this world). The immanent frame "constitutes a 'natural' order, to be contrasted to a 'supernatural' one, an 'immanent' world, over against a possible 'transcendent' one."

creates a new set of faith assumptions or conditions of belief about history, identity, morality, society, and rationality.

Taylor's work revolves around these two questions: "How did we move from a condition where, in Christendom, people lived naively within a theistic construal, to one in which we all shunt between two stances, in which everyone's construal shows up as such; and in which, moreover, unbelief has become for many the major default option?"[24] Or, stated another way, "Why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?"[25] The purpose of writing *A Secular Age* was to trace the process by which modern society shifted positions. Taylor claims,

> The coming of modern secularity in my sense has been coterminous with the rise of a society in which for the *first time in history* a purely self-sufficient humanism came to be a widely available option. I mean by this a humanism accepting no final goals beyond human flourishing, nor any allegiance to anything else beyond this flourishing. *Of no previous society was this true* [italics mine].[26]

Casanova affirms this exclusivism as a "phenomenological experience … the positive self-sufficient and self-limiting affirmation of human flourishing and as the critical rejection of transcendence beyond human flourishing as self-denial and self-defeating."[27] Furthermore, for Casanova, Taylor is describing modern unbelief as not just an absence of belief or indifference but as a historical condition that effects the present.

Social Imaginary

Significant to Taylor's genealogy of secularization is social imaginary. A social imaginary as discussed in Chapter 1 is "the way we collectively imagine, even pre-

[24] Taylor, *Secular*, 14.
[25] Taylor, *Secular*, 25.

theoretically, our social life in the contemporary Western world."[28] For Taylor, a social imaginary is, first, deeper and broader than intellectual schemes or a worldview—it is a way of constructing meaning and significance through images, stories, and legends:"It can never be adequately expressed in the form of explicit doctrines, because of its very unlimited and indefinite nature."[29] Second, social imaginaries are unconscious—"the largely unstructured and inarticulate understanding of our whole situation."[30] Third, a social imaginary is social—it has to do with how we live with others and involves a "common understanding … a widely shared sense of legitimacy."[31] This makes common practices possible and, therefore, needs no theoretical justification because there is an underlying confidence that everyone feels the same way.

Taylor's use of the term *social imaginary* helps to reveal the multi-faceted and complex nature of society where "homogeneity and instability work together to bring the fragilizing effect of pluralism to a maximum"[32] and helps to reveal the breadth of the nova effect. As noted in Chapter 4, Gen Z provides an excellent case in point. Barna describes Gen Z's worldview as highly inclusive and individualistic, open-minded and sensitive to others' feelings, atheistic and spiritual—all symptoms of the fragilizing effects of pluralism.[33]

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[26] Taylor, *Secular*, 18.
[27] Casanova, "Secular Age," 266.
[28] See Chapter 1, note 26.
[29] Taylor, *Secular*, 173.
[30] Taylor, *Secular*, 173.
[31] Taylor, *Secular*, 172.
[32] Taylor, *A Secular*, 304.
[33] Barna Group, *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2018), 13.

Stages of Secularization

Taylor's genealogy of secularization includes three stages: $Secular_1$, $Secular_2$, and $Secular_3$,[34] and each stage of secularization involves a social imaginary. The following provides a brief explanation of each of the three stages.

$Secular_1$

$Secular_1$ is understood in the more classical definition of the secular as that which is distinguished from the sacred—in terms of earthy, temporal, and public spaces. The medieval social imaginary envisioned a religious society living within a natural world that was also part of the cosmos, a world where earthly kingdoms were grounded in a heavenly reality. Taylor describes $Secular_1$ as transcendent, a place where eternal and temporal meet and co-exist, an enchanted world filled with good and bad spirits, a place where power and extra-human agencies reside and impinge on people's lives. Here people are described as "porous … open and vulnerable to spirits, demons, cosmic forces."[35] This was an era of transcendence.

Christianity and its designated religious leaders exercised authority over every domain of life during this period of time. However, as Smith points out, "It's not that these features guarantee that all medieval inhabitants 'believe in God'; but it does mean that, in a world so constituted, 'atheism' comes close to being inconceivable because one can't help but 'see' (or 'imagine') that world as sort of haunted—suffused with presences that are not 'natural.'"[36] On the one hand, Taylor describes the medieval social imaginary as an unchallenged and unproblematic belief in God—a time when religious life was

[34] Smith, in *How Not*, 21–24, distinguishes Taylor's three modes of secularity as $Secular_1$, $Secular_2$, and $Secular_3$. I am following his example throughout this dissertation.

inseparably linked to social life. On the other hand, Butler takes issue with Taylor's failure to mention the ways in which the church resorted to force to sustain Christian belief in the centuries before 1500 and with Taylor's only occasional mention of the physical dangers involved in the face of religious doubt in the age of enchantment.[37] Butler notes, "These other forms of enchantment, reconstructed by historians who specialize in 'popular religion' or 'lived religion,' represent both verification and challenge"[38] to Taylor's argument. He suggests, "the God in whom it was 'virtually impossible not to believe' may not have been the same God for everyone, or nearly the same, and that even the ubiquity of wide-ranging and varied enchantments could be questioned."[39]

Secular$_2$

Taylor then suggests, "[Secular$_2$] consists in the falling off of religious belief and practice, in people running away from God and no longer going to church."[40] This decline in belief has often been powered by the rise of other beliefs in science or reason. Smith adds, "Secular$_2$ is a more 'modern' definition of the secular as *a*religious—neutral,

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[35] Taylor, *Secular*, 38.

[36] Smith, *How Not*, 27.

[37] Jon Butler, "Disquieted History in *A Secular Age*," in *Varieties of Secularism in A Secular Age*, ed. Michael Warner, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, and Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 203. Butler makes a good point to remember when considering Taylor's contribution—while his argument is compelling, particularly as it winds through the history of Protestant reform, it is based on an assumption.

[38] Butler, "Disquieted," 203. Butler makes note of numerous historians with various viewpoints, including, but not limited to the following: Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, A.D. 100–400 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984) who writes from a secular rather than ecclesiastical viewpoint; Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977); and John Raymond Shinners, *Medieval Popular Religion, 1000–1500: A Reader* (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview, 1977).

[39] Butler, "Disquieted," 203.

[40] Taylor, *Secular*, 2.

unbiased, 'objective'—as in a 'secular' public square."[41] Standard secular theories suggest that the rise of science and reason made God-centered explanations untenable, unnecessary, even obsolete.

Peter Berger follows Taylor's line of reasoning and describes the development of secularization theory. He states, "We can see from the beginnings of modern social science there continued to be an Enlightenment bias concerning religion. This wasn't necessarily anti-religious in a philosophical way but rather in the assumption that modernity and religion were antagonistic in empirical fact."[42] Such theories as evolution or advances in medical science subtracted the superstitious belief in God and the supernatural. Taylor argues against the notion of these so-called subtraction stories, and instead he posits that secularization came about gradually as a positive construction—a creation of a new set of beliefs that led to $Secular_3$.

$Secular_3$

$Secular_3$, the focus of Taylor's work, is closely related to $Secular_2$. It stands out as that which contains new "conditions of belief"[43] and puts an end to the "naïve acknowledgement of the transcendent."[44] $Secular_3$ indicates "a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace."[45] Notably, Taylor refuses to accept $Secular_3$ as an unfortunate result of modernization and

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[41] Smith, *How Not*, 142.

[42] Peter Berger, in *The Many Altars of Modernity: Toward A Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age*, (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 18, also refers to August Comte, Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber (the third founding father of sociology) as contributors to secularization theory, which simply put, says Berger, means "the more modernity, the less religion."

[43] Taylor, *Secular*, 20.

[44] Taylor, *Secular*, 21.

refutes the so-called subtraction theories. He, instead, takes a surprising turn, pointing to Latin reform movements as the instigators of secularization.

Taylor's surprising turn sets in motion his central thesis that the denial of the transcendent, or disenchantment, is the result of church reform movements out of which naturalism emerges. He traces this zig-zag[46] descent from $secular_1$, which is framed by an immanence and self-sufficiency in which transcendence was experience and expected, to $secular_3$, which is framed by exclusive humanism void of God, governed and understood by nature and science. The following section highlights six periods along the zig-zag path to a secularized twenty-first-century context.

Taylor's Zig-Zag: Six Vantage Points on the Road to Secularization

This section highlights Taylor's zig-zag by looking at six vantage points on the road to secularization while bearing in mind Taylor's warning against "the anachronism of seeing this as a step along a straight path."[47] In other words, the road to secularization is not a single straight line from point A to point B, but it winds its way along the zig-zag road to reform and begins late in the fourteenth century.

The Reform Master Narrative (1200s–1500s)

During this period, various aspects of church reform began to take place in the thirteenth century, followed by the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation—all of which, according to Taylor, are complicit in the Great Disembedding. This

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[45] Taylor, *Secular*, 3.

[46] Taylor, in *Secular*, 95, describes this zig-zag as an account "full of unintended consequences" that arose from a renewed interest in nature and an identification of two motives, "devotion to God as creator of an ordered cosmos … and a new evangelical turning to the world, to bring Christ among the people" (p. 94).

[47] Taylor, *Secular*, 117.

disembedding, first, empties the natural world of enchantment as described in Secular$_1$, and it closes off the possibility of meaning beyond the rational. Second, it diminishes the space between the sacred and profane. The power of God is no longer evident in the sacramentals or apprehended from particular people or locations. Christian liberty now enables the individual to obtain salvation and to serve God in any and every occupation. Taylor adds, “We can cast aside all the myriad rituals and acts of propitiation of the old religion. Serving God now in our ordinary life, guided by the Spirit, we can re-order things freely.”[48] Taylor takes this further by stating that the energy of disenchantment is both negative and positive.

Third, from the negative point of view, Taylor avers, “We must reject everything which smacks of idolatry. We combat the enchanted world, without quarter.”[49] From a positive point of view, a new sense of freedom dawns. He describes the world as now “shorn of the sacred, and the limits it set for us.”[50] This Great Disembedding, or disenchantment, allows the world to be rationalized, undeterred by the old religion, to move from an enchanted world toward a more responsible life based on the goodness of ordinary life and nature, individual thinking, and individual will.[51] This leads to the next vantage point—the Rise of the Disciplinary Society and Individualism.

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[48] Taylor, *Secular*, 80.

[49] Taylor, *Secular*, 79.

[50] Taylor, *Secular*, 80.

[51] Berger, in *Many Altars*, 27, commenting on evangelicalism’s post-Reformation emphasis on the personal act of individual decision, asserts, “Nothing is more modern than this principle of individual agency.”

The Rise of the Disciplinary Society and Individualism (1600s–1700s)

Here, Taylor contends that various Christian movements emerged alongside the rise of the "disciplinary society"[52] and the "rage for order,"[53] and were influenced by instrumental reason. This disciplinary society was meant to reflect the desire for everyone to live up to the demands of the gospel, which in turn improve society. These improvements, at first, were in the service of God's purposes rather than the rise of science. However, "efficient causation"[54] opened the way for a Baconian view of science: "A good test of the truth of a hypothesis is what it enables you to effect."[55] This marks a radical shift. While the world is still considered to be God's creation, the order of the world is no longer normative. Instead, it is a "vast field of mutually affecting parts, designed to work in certain ways, that is, to produce certain results."[56] These results, while established by God, are now accessible from both general and special revelation.

This shift, then, requires a choice between two incompatible stances. The first choice is to abandon the attempt to look to the cosmos for illusory signs and meaning. The second choice is to take an instrumental stance and look at the universe as "a silent but beneficent machine."[57] Taylor couples this disenchantment with a Reformation theology that emphasizes an "active instrumental stance towards the world [and] the following of God's purposes, which means beneficence."[58] These are key features of the new and emerging exclusive humanism.

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[52] Taylor, *Secular*, 90.
[53] Taylor, *Secular*, 85.
[54] Taylor, *Secular*, 98.
[55] Taylor, *Secular*, 98.
[56] Taylor, *Secular*, 98.
[57] Taylor, *Secular*, 98.
[58] Taylor, *Secular*, 98.

Furthermore, The Rise of the Disciplinary Society also included a more demanding religious order and required all people of faith—the hierarchal and the ordinary—to fully live out their faith. Here Taylor notes, "There was a drive here to make certain norms universal, conceived in part as a demand of charity towards fellow human beings, but given an edge of urgency by the thought that God will punish our community for the blasphemy of its wayward members."[59] Taylor claims that some of these demands rubbed off on the general population, insisting, "The good order of civility, and the good order of piety, didn't remain in separate uncommunicating compartments. They, to some extent merged, and inflected each other."[60] The Puritans held significant influence here, with their notion of a good life and a well-ordered society emerging in areas such as spiritual recovery and the rescue of civil order and sexual morality.[61]

A consequence of the rise of the disciplinary society is the "buffered self"[62]—no longer porous—confident of his own powers of moral ordering. The buffered self is bounded, no longer haunted by the transcendent, and able to disengage from anything beyond the boundary or outside the mind. The buffered self finds purpose within, while at the same time, he is faced with the inevitability of "cross-pressures"[63]—the simultaneous pressure that arises when there are myriad options. Smith adds, cross-pressure is "the feeling of being caught between an echo of transcendence and the drive toward immanentization … a kind of enclosure"[64] where meaning, fullness, and significance are sought within the immanent, naturalistic frame. Here, the nova effect, the continuous and

[59] Taylor, *Secular*, 105.
[60] Taylor, *Secular*, 105.
[61] Taylor, *Secular*, 106.
[62] Taylor, *Secular*, 27.
[63] Taylor, *Secular*, 303.

ever-changing options for belief and lifestyle apart from belief in God, pushes people to explore new options. But inevitably, this leads to fragilization[65] in the face of these sometimes competing, and other times, compelling options.

The rise of the disciplinary society is coupled with the rise of individualism. Here Taylor tries to " … link the undoubted primacy of the individual in modern Western culture … to the earlier attempts to transform society along the principles of Axial spirituality, tracing in other words, how our present self-understandings grew."[66] He describes this "revolution of moral order"[67] as that which is disembedded from the cosmic sacred and the social sacred. Instead, moral principles for all behavior are now possible without a particular religious faith. Taylor avers that God becomes dispensable because the underlying order of the world is made by God to benefit us, to make us happy, and to flourish. He adds, "This final phase of the Great Disembedding was largely powered by Christianity."[68]

Deism and Anthropocentric Shifts (1700s–1800s)

Taylor sets Providential Deism as an intermediate stage—and a turning point—on the road to exclusive humanism, and he suggests three facets of Deism and four anthropocentric shifts that reduced the role and place of the transcendent. The first facet of Deism "turns around the notion of the world as designed by God"[69] and goes through an anthropocentric shift Taylor labels as "providential Deism."[70] Providential Deists

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[64] Smith, *How Not*, 141.
[65] See Chapter 1, note 30.
[66] Taylor, *Secular*, 156.
[67] Taylor, *Secular*, 157.
[68] Taylor, *Secular*, 158.
[69] Taylor, *Secular*, 221.
[70] Taylor, *Secular*, 221.

believe that God did indeed create the world, not for God's benefit but for the good and benefit of humankind.

The second facet of Deism is "the shift towards the primacy of impersonal order." Here God relates to humankind by "establishing a certain order of things, whose moral shape we can easily grasp, if we are not misled by false and superstitious notions."[71] The third facet of Deism is set free from these corruptions that have obscured the idea of a true, original, and natural religion. In other words, religion is part of society's problem.

Taylor then describes four directions of change that emerge as a result of the rise of Deism. These anthropocentric shifts each reduce the role and place of transcendence. The first shift brings with it an "eclipse of this sense of further purpose."[72] We now owe God nothing more than the realization of God's plan and the achievement of our own good. Taylor maintains that Deism and the shift toward a primacy of order also gave rise to the second anthropocentric shift—"the eclipse of grace."[73] God endowed humankind with reason, benevolence, and an ability to recognize God's order and to achieve our own good. Humankind no longer needed divine grace or the biblical revelation to achieve happiness and fulfillment. Reason alone was enough to show that violence and murder along with selfishness and greed hinder peace, prosperity, and human flourishing. If estrangement from God is no longer a possibility, and if human flourishing is the ultimate goal, then attending to self-interest and feelings of benevolence seems reasonable.

The third anthropocentric shift eclipsed the world of God's mystery and providence. Taylor explains, "If God's purposes for us encompass only our good, and this

[71] Taylor, *Secular*, 221.
[72] Taylor, *Secular*, 222.
[73] Taylor, *Secular*, 222.

can be read from the design of our nature, then no further mystery can hide there."[74] Hence, reason enables us to grasp God's universal laws and carry out his plan without miraculous intervention. The fourth anthropocentric shift "… came with the eclipse of the idea that God was planning a transformation of human beings, which would take them beyond the limitations which inhere in their present condition."[75] Casanova, reflecting on Taylor's fourth shift, describes this modern unbelief as "not simply a condition of absence of belief, nor merely indifference. It is a historical condition that requires the perfect tense, 'a condition of having overcome the irrationality of belief.'"[76] So, this stadial consciousness, Taylor's "ratchet at the end of the anthropocentric shift,"[77] confirms the superiority of modern over earlier, more primitive beliefs.

With these three facets of Deism and four anthropocentric shifts in place, Taylor reflects on its effect on moral order: "We need to see how it became possible to experience moral fullness, to identify the locus of our highest moral capacity and inspiration, without reference to God, but within the range of purely intra-human powers."[78] He points out that in order for exclusive humanism to emerge, a new moral source had to be created or discovered within the immanent frame. This new moral source understands human society from a functional point of view and accepts the good

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[74] Taylor, *Secular*, 223.

[75] Taylor, *Secular*, 224.

[76] José Casanova, "Global Religious and Secular Dynamics: The Modern System of Classification," *Religion and Politics* 1, no. 1 (2019): 17, https://doi.org/10.1163/25895850-12340001.

Kevin Hector, "Theology and Philosophy of Religion," 376, in "Grappling with Charles Taylor's A Secular Age," *Journal of Religion* 90, no. 3 (July 2010): 374–377, suggests an alternative to Taylor's secularism. He surmises, "Secularism isn't an unfortunate consequence of reform, but is instead an historical achievement. Reform made possible a new kind of freedom with respect to belief" (p. 376). He asserts, "Christianity is now recognizably and authentically one's own. Secularism introduces new possibilities—fulfillment of reform's own project" (p. 376).

[77] Taylor, *Secular*, 289.

[78] Taylor, *Secular*, 245.

of everyone as necessary for the reordering of things. It assumes that humankind is motivated to act for the good of others. According to Taylor, exclusive humanism's active reordering, instrumental rationality, universalism, and benevolence draw on forms of the Christian faith, without which humanism would otherwise be impossible.

Resistance Movements (late 1700s)

Taylor continues the master narrative of reform and highlights the seventeenth-century Counter-Reformation and its reintegrating of marginal followers. He, next, highlights the missions and revival movements in the Protestant cultures of Britain and America where the goal was to church the unchurched. He states, "In the British and French cases, one clear aim of those who sponsored these missions … was to prevent the diffusion of the fractured metaphysical-religious culture of the upper crust and intelligentsia, for whom unbelief was a real option."[79] He describes a steady rise in church practice in the US from the Revolution to the 1960s, "a watershed moment"[80] in many countries in the Western world.

The Age of Mobilization (1800s–mid-1900s)

An "elite pluralization"[81] emerged in the nineteenth century and led to what Taylor describes as the Age of Mobilization. The Age of Mobilization brought to light, particularly among the social elites and intellectuals, the notion that human rationality provided the answers necessary for a full human life. Society now functioned without shared moral and religious beliefs, meaning was found through individual freedom of

[79] Taylor, *Secular*, 255
[80] Taylor, *Secular*, 425.
[81] Taylor, *Secular*, 423.

expression, and self-reform was the impetus for societal reform. Taylor offers a profound observation: this elite pluralization continues throughout the nineteenth century, at different paces. But somehow, in the intervening two centuries, the predicament of the then upper strata has become that of whole societies. Not only has the palette of options (religious and areligious) widened, but the very locus of the religious, or the spiritual, in social life has shifted.[82] In other words, exclusive humanism became a viable alternative to Christianity.

As the viability of exclusive humanism increased, the growth of Protestant revivalism, by way of the Great Awakenings, introduced denominations—a "denominational imaginary."[83] Protestant revivalism was enhanced by a voluntarist culture of mobilization, which led to an increased focus on the individual's choice. Conversion, here, became a personal act, undertaken for oneself. Revivalists like Edwards, Wesley and Whitefield, Finney and Moody, and eventually Bright then mobilized individuals for the sake of spreading the gospel and building their respective churches or institutions. Taylor notes, "Evangelicalism was basically an anti-hierarchical force, part of the drive for democracy."[84] The unintended consequences of reform resulted in the nova effect—continuous and ever-changing options for belief and lifestyle apart from belief in God—exclusive humanism.[85]

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[82] Taylor, *Secular*, 423.
[83] Taylor, *Secular*, 450.
[84] Taylor, *Secular*, 455.
[85] Berger, in *Many Altars*, 32, in essence agrees with the notion of a nova effect and suggests that pluralism, by its very nature, multiplies the plausibility structures in an individual's social environment. He states, "Nowhere in a modern or even incipiently modernizing society is the individual immune to the corrosive effects of relativization. The management of doubt becomes a problem for every religious tradition." Casanova, in "Global," 32, affirms Berger's change in focus from secularization to pluralism. He points out that with the emergence of global denominationalism—the global system of religions—it is necessary to account for "secular-religious pluralism … the emergence of differentiated by co-existing

The Age of Authenticity (mid-1900s to the Present)

The Age of Authenticity deepens this sense of individualism and choice. Taylor states, "[In this] culture of 'authenticity,' or expressive individualism, people are encouraged to find their own way, discover their own fulfillment, 'do their own thing.'"[86] Here Taylor draws a line from Romanticism—the origin of this ethic of authenticity—to the present and highlights a substantial shift in authenticity in the 1960s when this "self-orientation seems to have become a mass phenomenon"[87] evident in the consumer and sexual revolutions. Taylor says that at the heart of this Age of Authenticity is "its sexual mores—the relativization of chastity and monogamy, the affirmation of homosexuality as a legitimate option."[88] Research on Gen Z, discussed in Chapter 4, gives evidence of this self-orientation toward sexuality as the basis for identity—the ultimate in expressive individualism.

Implications of Taylor's Work

Of note, Christian Smith and Melissa Lundquist's Moral Therapeutic Deism enhances the Age of Authenticity for the twenty-first century, particularly related to galloping pluralism in the US. They describe moral, therapeutic deists as "… religious and spiritual consumers by defining themselves as individual seekers, the authoritative judges of truth and relevance in faith according to how things subjectively feel to them.… They are not religiously rooted or settled but are spiritual nomads on a perpetual quest for greater insight and more authentic and fulfilling experiences."[89]

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religious and secular spheres, both in social space and in the mind of individuals."

[86] Taylor, *Secular*, 299.

[87] Taylor, *Secular*, 473.

[88] Taylor, *Secular*, 485.

[89] Christian Smith and Melissa Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual*

Notably, Barna's report on Gen Z, a research project conducted in 2018 that is also discussed in Chapter 4, demonstrates that youth in the US, in greater numbers than in 2005, are slipping further away from a traditional belief in God or religion. Their social imaginary, influenced in large part by their global community, underscores Taylor's galloping pluralism. Missiologist J. Andrew Kirk notes that secularization ameliorates the utter emptiness of profane time; it cripples our ability to handle death properly, and it produces ethical predicaments that are especially challenging without a moral source.[90] Hauntingly, Taylor's zig-zag path to secularization highlights activities that on the surface look Christian—activism and good deeds performed on behalf of the marginalized, benevolence and care for fellow humans, sacrifice and service, provision and love—but up close and underneath it is a cheap imitation.

Philip Rieff's First, Second, and Third Worlds or Cultures

This third section introduces Rieff's first, second, and third worlds or cultures and demonstrates the emergence of an areligious, modern, anti-culture. The first part introduces Philip Rieff's sociology of the sacred, which, similarly to Taylor, recognized the absence and even irrelevance of the transcendent in modern culture. The second part provides an overview of Rieff's view of culture, followed by an introduction to his first, second, and third worlds or cultures. The third part provides an analysis of Rieff's prophetic assault on modernism—the anti-culture of our day. The downward motion of Rieff's first three worlds or cultures results from a growing absence of authority, which,

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Lives of American Teenagers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 73.

[90] J. Andrew Kirk, "*A Secular Age* in a Mission Perspective: A Review Article," *Transformation* 28, no. 3 (July 2011): 172–181.

according to Rieff, stems from Freud's modernism and the effort to liberate the individual from oppressive structures and enable free self-expression.

Theory of Culture

Rieff describes the task of culture as "… world creation [that] comprises the historical task of culture: namely, to transliterate otherwise invisible sacred orders into their visible modalities—social orders.… Cultures are the habitus of human beings universal only in their particularities symbolically inhabited."[91] The first task of every culture is to ground the normative order in a sacred order of transcendence—something beyond merely human desires and goods. Rieff argues that modernity has created a culture that is unable to adequately serve in the creation and maintenance of symbolic worlds. He maintains that Freud's anti-metaphysical and anti-sacral view of modernity has enabled the individual to abandon all exalted ideals and to take up self-expression. For Freud, true self-expression requires liberation from oppressive structures and authority.[92] This was counter to Rieff's theory of authority—he maintained that foundations for a philosophy of life must center around a theory of authority and not self.

Rieff's Three Worlds or Cultures

Rieff first describes four character types, which, according to his theory, have prevailed in Western culture over the course of time and can be traced along the lines of history similar to Taylor's zig-zag. These characters included political man, who was the ideal of classical antiquity; religious man, handed down from Judaism through Christianity; the

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[91] Rieff, *My Life*, 2.

[92] Antonius A. W. Zondervan, *Sociology and the Sacred: An Introduction to Philip Rieff's Theory of Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), Kindle edition, location 1062.

third, a transitional figure, economic man—the model manifestation of Enlightenment liberalism; and finally, the "… psychological man of the twentieth century, a child not of nature but of technology. He is not the pagan ideal, political man, for he is not committed to the public life. He is most unlike the religious man"[93] and possesses the "… nervous habits of his father economic man: he is anti-heroic, shrewd, carefully counting his satisfactions and dissatisfactions."[94] George Scialabba adds that psychological man represents "… a society without hierarchy, whose members 'cannot conceive any salvation other than amplitude in living itself,' and must end in moral squalor, chaos, anomie, and universal boredom."[95] Rieff later renamed these men as first, second, and third world or culture, noting that each world until the third answered to an ultimate authority.

First World or Culture

Rieff's first world or culture is a typology for pagan cultures. He states,

> Ultimate authorities in pagan worlds, various as Platonic Athens and aboriginal Australia, had something essential in common: mythic primacies of possibility (or 'pop') from which derived all agencies of authority including its god-terms … whether Platonic essences or aboriginal dreamtimes, an all-inclusive *pop* once characterized highest authority there.[96]

In Rieff's first world or culture, belief was a naïve theistic construal united by transcendent realities that emerged from out there—beyond this material world. His leitmotif for the first world or culture is *fate*. In first worlds or cultures, the vertical in

[93] Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (New York: Viking Press, 1959), 356.
[94] Rieff, *Freud*, 356.
[95] George Scialabba, "The Curse of Modernity: Philip Rieff's Problem With Freedom," *Boston Review: A Political and Literary Forum*, July 1, 2007, http://bostonreview.net/scialabba-the-curse-of-modernity, n.p.
[96] Rieff, *My Life*, 5.

authority was defined less by a system of morality than by the regulation of passions by non-negotiable taboos.

Second World or Culture

Rieff's second world or culture was basically the Christian world—the world formed by the belief in the Bible and dominated by monotheism. God the Creator is the transcendent reality; therefore, authority is rooted in either God's creation or his revelation (Judaic law) and is the sacred foundation on which Western society was built. Rieff avers, "In a word, faith, not fate, sounds the motif of our second world. Faith is in and of that creator-character that once and forever revealed himself in the family words from Exodus 3:14: *I am that I am*. Faith means trust and obedience to the highest most absolute authority: the one and only God who acts in history uniquely by commandment and grace."[97] He summarizes the first and second worlds or cultures as "… constituted by a system of moral Demands that are underwritten by an authority that is vertical in its structure: 'vertical in authority—the via'."[98] Rieff defines these moral demands as interdicts, the "highest formal principle of limitation."[99] This is followed by the third world or culture, which Rieff described as anti-culture: void of truth, leaving only desire, the fruit of which is *deathworks*.

Third World or Culture

In Rieff's third world or culture, the economic man signals a transition from the second religious world or culture to the third world or culture where psychological man reigns.

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[97] Rieff, *My Life*, 5.

[98] Rieff, *My Life*, 12. Rieff defines via as "my acronym for order that is in its vertical structure immutable and therefore reasonably called 'sacred.'"

[99] Philip Rieff, *Fellow Teachers* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1975), 69.

Here, fiction is the leitmotif. Unique to this world is that nothing transcends above or beyond the material world or the self, it is without religion or morality, and emerges from *deathworks* mounted against the second world interdictions. Rieff explains, "By deathwork I mean an all-out assault upon something vital to the established culture. Every deathwork represents an admiring final assault on the objects of its admiration.… [D]eathworks are battles in the war against second culture and are themselves tests of highest authority."[100] Rieff warns, "The third culture notion of a culture that persists independent of all sacred orders is unprecedented in human history."[101] This does not mean that everything is permitted in the third world or culture but that the interdictions of the second world and the taboos of the first are now replaced by endlessly contestable and infinitely changeable rules.[102] The result—a vacuous sacred center filled with primordial sexual desire and power.

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[100] Rieff, *My Life*, 7. Rieff's third culture or anti-culture eventually leads to the negation of the human, a notion which, at first is symbolic but becomes a reality in the death camps at Auschwitz. Rieff states, "The unconscious art of everyday deathworks depends entirely upon the blindness of both the deathworker and those upon whom the work works" (p. 8). Another example of anti-culture for Rieff is the practice of abortion, which he considers to be a profound illustration of what has become an everyday deathwork. Abortion works against the sacredness of each unique and unrepeatable human life. Rieff laments this practice and describes it as "the unspoken doxology of our *abolitionist/abortionist* movements, identities are to be flushed as away far down the memory hole as our flush-away technologies of repression permit" (p. 106).

Lesslie Newbigin, in *Honest Religion for Secular Man* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 37, affirms, "I think there is a real continuity between the prophetic resistance to the claims of a sacral kingship, the Christian refusal to acknowledge the divinity of the Emperor, and the secular spirit which refuses to acknowledge the final authority of any sacred tradition of any official ideology, which overrides the right and the dignity of human person. My question is whether the truly secular spirit can be sustained if it loses contact with that which gave the prophet his authority to speak—namely a reality transcending every human tradition and every earthly society, a God who is for man against all the 'powers'."

[101] Rieff, *My Life*, 13.

[102] Hunter, Introduction, xxii.

Newbigin, in *Honest Religion*, 39, adds depth of insight here: "If the mastery which is given to man through the process of secularization is not held within the context of man's responsibility to God, the result will be a new slavery; if the dynamism of 'development', the drive to a new kind of human society, is not informed by the biblical faith concerning the nature of the Kingdom of God it will end in totalitarianism; and if the secular critique of all established orders isn't informed and directed by the knowledge of God it will end in self-destructive nihilism." Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, in *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Mission for the Church in America* (Grand Rapids:

The Problem of Modernity

Rieff's assault on the third world or culture is as relentless as it is prophetic. He describes this world as all-consuming and godless and "far more dangerous than archaic nature or pagan mythologizing and polytheisms."[103] Central to Rieff's concern is the modern deconstruction of authority in all its cultural forms, which he traces back to Freud's emphasis on liberation from oppressive structures and promotion of free self-expression and the "triumph of the therapeutic." Pre-modern theory, according to Rieff, was conformative,[104] and individuals worked for the common and greater good, exercised discipline and self-denial.

On the one hand, "moral life begins with renunciation,"[105] but on the other hand, "the therapeutic life begins with renunciation of the renunciation."[106] The third culture is to steer clear of authority altogether. John Dickson notes, "Rieff is interested in all the ways in which we say 'No'—his is a remarkable, sophisticated modern theory of original sin. Supplementing the sense of guilt and sin, he conceptualizes true culture in a Hebraic sense as obedience to a body of law."[107] Elliott adds, "Rieff understands culture and subjectivity not simply through analogy and transposition of the sacred but utilizes the

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Eerdmans, 2018), 47, assert that a threat of meaninglessness lurks beneath the breakdown of traditional authority.

[103] Rieff, *My Life*, 8.

[104] Zondervan, *Sociology*, location 522, notes that "… the transformative character of modern positivist theory is the opposite of what Rieff calls the conformative character of premodern science." Philip Rieff, ed., *The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*, vol. 1, *The Collected Papers of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1963), 10, describes positivist theory as follows: "When psychoanalysis frees a patient from the tyranny of his inner compulsions, it gives him a power to choose that is not otherwise his. Thus the aim of psychoanalysis is the aim of science—power, in this case a transformative technology of the inner life. Where science is, there technology will be."

[105] Rieff, *Fellow Teachers*, 207.

[106] Rieff, *Fellow Teachers*, 208.

[107] John Dickson, "Philip Rieff and the Impossible Culture," in *The Anthem Companion To Philip Rieff*, ed. Jonathan B. Imber (New York: Anthem Press, 2018), 38.

sacred as an interdictory method of setting limits."[108] He credits Rieff for underscoring the importance of guilt and fear—the very things to be revolted against according to modern theorists, and surmises, "It is precisely guilt and the fear of God that serves to individuate and grant uniqueness to men in ways that refuse the consumptive logics of natural or technical orders. It is this uniqueness that Rieff would like to preserve."[109] For Rieff, the transformative theory of modernity is without directive authority.

The modern theory of *being* insists there is no higher authority than self. There is no one transcendental moral order or ultimate purpose to which people conform, the universe is there for consumption, and power, not faith, is the highest aim. Dickson points out that Rieff considered moral judgment to be the foundation of culture and cites Rieff's self-declared mission: "to revive theology from within modern sociology."[110] However, Dickson criticizes Rieff for failing to offer a stable definition of faith—the very thing he was after. Grosby, while acknowledging the relevance of Rieff's claims, lashes out against his lack of follow-through as a social theorist. He pleads, "Now, what we want and need to know from Rieff is an explicit, appropriately detailed description and explanation of what is fact and what is fiction."[111] He labors to demonstrate Rieff's contributions but also laments his lack of a social-theoretical framework.

The Lens of Charisma

Rieff's work in *Charisma: The Gift of Grace, and How It Has Been Taken Away from Us*, published in 2006 but written mostly in the early 1970s, is important for this dissertation

[108] Elliott, *Fire Backstage*, 29.

[109] Elliott, *Fire Backstage*, 29.

[110] Daniel Frank and Aaron Manson, foreword to *Charisma: The Gift of Grace and How It Has Been Taken Away from Us*, by Philip Rieff (New York: Pantheon, 2007), x.

[111] Steven Grosby, "Philip Rieff as Cultural Critic," *The Anthem Companion to Philip Rieff* (New

and for a twenty-first-century secularized context. Daniel Frank and Aaron Mason describe *Charisma* as Rieff's investigation of Western civilization in its entirety. They state, "He did not intend to dwell nostalgically on an irretrievable past, but to understand how genuine faith has been lost in modern times, and what has been lost in the process."[112] Here again Rieff refers to Nietzsche, Weber, and Freud as "the supreme anti-religious theorists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the 'transitional geniuses' who announced the death of divine authority and who called into question the very possibility of faith and true charisma. They are the true heralds of 'the therapeutic.'"[113] Rieff stopped his work on *Charisma* in the early 1970s because of the anti-theologic age in which we live.[114]

Summary of Chapter 2

Both Taylor's and Rieff's arguments underscore the fact that the twenty-first century is indeed secularized—exclusively humanistic. The certainty of this conclusion emerged from different vantage points historically, philosophically, and sociologically in this conversation with Taylor and Rieff. Significant to this conversation is the assertion that exclusive humanism is not the absence of religion but is in fact a super nova—a galloping pluralism on a spiritual plane. If, as Taylor claims, twenty-first-century exclusive humanism derives from Christianity and has as its final goal human flourishing, then it is no wonder that it holds some appeal. In fact, exclusive humanism, in a flimsy way, resembles the gospel—a fake gospel.

York: Anthem Press, 2018), 51.

[112] Frank and Manson, foreword to *Charisma*, ix.

[113] Frank and Manson, foreword to *Charisma*, x.

[114] Frank and Manson, foreword to *Charisma*, x.

As Rieff points out, the third world or culture is anti-culture, void of moral authority, and now occupied by a cacophony of life philosophies, most of which embrace human reason, secular ethics, and philosophical naturalism and reject religious dogma and supernaturalism. There is a growing contingent that gathers around this humanist ideology and holds very specific points of view. Jill Cray asserts,

> Humanism in the present era signifies an ideological doctrine that places human beings, as opposed to God, at the center of the universe. Although a focus on human nature and human life can be traced back ultimately to ancient Greek thought, humanism in the modern sense, with its unfettered human reason and its secular conviction that human destiny is entirely in human hands, has its roots in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.[115]

The opportunities for meaningful gospel conversations are significant. If secularization and exclusive humanism best describe the American landscape, then Christians have an important responsibility to respond with the good news of the gospel in culturally relevant and significant ways. If secularization best describes the American landscape, then, as Chapter 3 argues, Bill Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws*, designed in a mid-twentieth-century context, is insufficient for engaging in meaningful gospel conversations in the twenty-first century. This realization opens wide the door of opportunity for recontextualization—and innovation.

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[115] Jill Cray, "Humanism," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 4:477. Notably, Humanists International, https://humanists.international/, is a world union present in more than forty countries, consisting of more than 100 humanist, rationalist, irreligious, and atheist freethought organizations. The "Minimum Statement on Humanism," https://humanists.international/what-is-humanism/, is as follows: "Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirm human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their lives. It stands for the building of a more human society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and scientific inquiry. It is not theistic and does not promote supernatural views of reality." Further, although Humanism affirms every human's right and responsibility to create meaning, it also requires the use of the word Humanism with no added adjective (like "secular"); all Humanists nationally and internationally should use a clear symbol for identification, and all Humanists should seek to establish recognition that Humanism is a life stance.

CHAPTER 3

AN ANALYSIS OF BILL BRIGHT'S *FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS*: HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORARY INFLUENCES

The primary argument set forth in this dissertation is that Bill Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws*, shaped within a twentieth-century context, is insufficient for engaging in evangelism in most cases in a twenty-first-century context. Chapter 2 demonstrated, through an examination of Charles Taylor's philosophy and Philip Rieff's sociology, that the twenty-first-century is experiencing the fruit of secularization—exclusive humanism.

This chapter, juxtaposed with Chapter 2, analyzes historical and contemporary[1] influences that spurred Bill Bright to develop *Four Spiritual Laws* by way of six major sections: The first section provides background for Bright's mid-twentieth-century context; the second section examines his theological and historical genealogy; the third section provides an overview of Bright's life phases; the fourth section considers his early influences; the fifth section reveals his Great Commission influences; and the sixth section considers Enlightenment influences on his thinking and approach to ministry.

Mid-Twentieth-Century American Religious and Secular Context

The first section of this chapter provides a brief overview of Bright's mid-twentieth-century religious and secular context. This brief overview seeks to situate Bright in context and begins to illustrate the difference between the circumstances in which he developed *Four Spiritual Laws* and those of a twenty-first century secularized context.

[1] By contemporary, I mean those people and events that directly influenced Bill Bright in his mid-twentieth-century context.

As discussed later in this chapter, Bright, after graduating from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, moved to Southern California in 1944 and experienced a conversion in 1945 just as World War II came to an end. Historians Edwin Gaustad, Mark Noll, and Heath Carter describe some of the positive domestic effects of World War II —"a national effort, reviving the economy, unifying the nation internally, and elevating the United States to the highest peak of world influence and power."[2] Conversely, this "good war" also included the use of the atom bomb and the obliteration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki along with the internment of Japanese Americans, and continued racial segregation in the US military, all of which have had lasting effects.

In addition, a key factor in Bright's development of *Four Spiritual Laws* was the Cold War and his dogged determination to fend off the evolving threat of communism.[3] As demonstrated later, CCC was built around this commitment to stand against communist atheism. Absent from Bright's early writings is any mention of the postwar emergence of the civil rights movement, spearheaded by Black activists at the local, state, and national levels and backed by Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. This absence is due in part to the religious context of the 1950s, described by Gaustad, Noll, and Carter as "tri-faith"[4] that included Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish traditions. Jewish sociologist-theologian Will Herberg described the context:

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[2] Edwin S. Gaustad, Mark A. Noll, and Heath W. Carter, eds., *A Documentary History of Religion in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 483.

[3] Gaustad, Noll, and Carter, in *Documentary History*, 484, add, "As the Cold War cast its pall, the whole world seemed divided between communist (despotic and atheistic) and noncommunist (free and godly) halves. In the 1950s the Americans' pledge of allegiance to the flag was amended to include the phrase 'under God,' as if to emphasize that the Cold War was also, to some degree, a Holy War." The passions aroused on all sides were equal to such a crusade. This comes to bear in Bright's "crusade" and his early statements of purpose and urgency.

[4] Gaustad, Noll, and Carter, *Documentary History*, 485.

> The outstanding feature of the religious situation in America today is the pervasiveness of religious self-identification along the tripartite scheme of Protestant, Catholic, and Jew.… America has, as we have seen, become the "triple melting pot," restructured in three great communities with religious labels, defining three great "communions" or "faiths."[5]

The great community of Protestants in the 1950s included those involved in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening, many of whom spearheaded the emergence of the NAE formed in 1942 in response to the ongoing Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. Instructively, the 1950 census records that 89.5 percent of American's population was White, 10 percent was Black or African American, and a sliver of the population registered as "some other race."[6] According to Gallup, 66 percent of Americans in 1950 were Protestant, 24 percent were Catholic, and 4 percent were Jewish.[7] The fact that 66 percent of Americans registered as Protestant in 1950 corroborates Bright's findings from the same time frame. In addition, his research compiled from student surveys taken in the 1950s indicated that many who claimed the Protestant faith did not know God loved them or that God had a plan for their lives. This one fact, perhaps more than any other, compelled him to develop *Four Spiritual Laws*.[8]

Significant for understanding Bright's mid-twentieth-century context is a survey of his spiritual genealogy and the stream of evangelicalism that shaped his early faith

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[5] Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1960), 256.

[6] United States Census Bureau, "A Look at the 1940 Census," https://www.census.gov/newsroom/cspan/1940census/CSPAN_1940slides.pdf, 9.

[7] Gallup, "Religion: Survey of American's population from 1948–2014," https://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/religion.aspx, n.p. This survey records responses to various questions, including the following: "What is your religious preference – are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Jewish, Muslim, another religion, or no religion?"

[8] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 77.

journey. The next section traces four prominent themes of evangelicalism[9] that shaped his twentieth-century experience.

Bright's Theological and Historical Genealogy: Pietism, the Great Awakenings, and Revivalism

The second section of this chapter concerns the intersection of Bright's experience with four powerful religious currents: the First Great Awakening and the rise of Pietism and evangelical revivalism; the Second Great Awakening and the rise of Arminianism; the Third Great Awakening and the advent of fundamentalism and premillennial dispensationalism, liberalism, and the Social Gospel; and the surprising Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening in the wake of neo-evangelical revivalism.[10] This section traces both the rise and pattern of revivalism in the Great Awakenings and its influence on Bright's theology and methodology.

The First Great Awakening (1730–1755): Calvinist Leanings

Importantly, the First Great Awakening began at a point of crisis for post-Reformation Protestants whose continued infighting eventually created a great fracture within the

[9] Evangelicalism is difficult to define. Although some characteristics remain consistent, there is little agreement on a coherent definition. In fact, Donald Dayton, in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 291, argues that "evangelicalism is theologically incoherent, sociologically confusing, and ecumenically harmful" and calls for a moratorium on the use of the word. Arguably the best-known definition is furnished by David Bebbington in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1890s* (Milton Park, Abingdon: Taylor & Francis e-library, 2005), 2–3. He places evangelicalism within the frame of four particular marks: *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Douglas A. Sweeney, in *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 24–25, suggests, "Evangelicals comprise a movement that is rooted in classical Christian orthodoxy, shaped by a largely Protestant understanding of the gospel … distinguished from other such movements by an eighteenth-century twist."

[10] Although this chapter examines Bill Bright's influences stemming primarily from the Protestant Great Awakenings, it is important to note that Protestant missions represents only a slice of missions history. In addition, there are various points of view on the First, Second, and Third Great Awakenings and the Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening noted in footnote 6.

Protestant tradition. Douglas A. Sweeney attributes this "pattern of schism"[11] to the reverberating effects of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) that resulted in a required alliance to the Catholics, Lutherans, or Reformed, all of which excluded the subversive Anabaptists.[12] Pietism began to surface within this milieu in response to a cold and impersonal Scholasticism. The predominant characteristics of pietism included individual crisis conversion, personal transformation, and an intense commitment to evangelism. These same characteristics also marked evangelical revivalism.

Pietism: Philipp Jakob Spener, August Hermann Francke, F. A. Lampe, and Nicholas von Zinzendorf

Early revivalist leanings were influenced in large part by the Pietists, led initially by Lutheran theologian and Father of Pietism, Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), and August Hermann Francke (1663–1727). Spener's *Pia Desideria* called for a revival of the Protestant Reformers' concerns and emphasized the importance of an individual crisis conversion experience leading to spiritual birth and renewal with a transformed life of devotion.[13] Ultimately, the resultant sanctification would lead to evangelistic zeal and missionary vision. F. A. Lampe (1683–1729), the first Pietist leader from a Calvinist perspective, enhanced the movement with his hymns, sermons, and literature. Later, under the leadership of Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700–1760), Moravian missionaries

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[11] Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 28.

[12] The Thirty Years War, 1618–1648, was a brutal Central European conflict that started between the Catholic and Protestant states within the Roman Empire. The Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648, put an end to the conflict. According to Justo L. Gonzales in *The Reformation to the Present Day*, Vol. 2 of *The History of Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 183, "In religious matters, it was agreed that all—princes as well as their subjects—would be free to follow their own religion, as long as they were Catholics, Lutherans, or Reformed."

[13] Phillip Jakob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1964).

played a major role in catalyzing revivals and missions in the eighteenth century.[14] Pietism's missionary vision provided the impetus for Protestant missions, and the modern missions movement was exemplified, in particular, by the missionary zeal of the Moravians.

In the early 1700s, Pietism began to appear in the Dutch Reformed congregation of Theodorus Frelinghuysen (1691–1747) in New Jersey's Raritan Valley; Frelinghuysen preached that conviction of sin would lead to a conversion experience. Similarly, in the Presbyterian congregation of Gilbert Tennent (1703–1764), Tennent preached the need for conversion with an emphasis on growth in the Christian life. Tennent's father, William (1673–1746), started the Log College in Warminster, Pennsylvania for the training of pastors. Significantly, emphasis on a personalized Calvinism stimulated the theology and soteriology of the First Great Awakening, shaped in large part by Congregationalist theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) and the itinerant Anglican cleric George Whitefield (1714–1770).[15]

Revivalism: Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and John Wesley and Charles Wesley

Edwards played a critical role in the First Great Awakening and established a Calvinistic soteriology based on the sovereignty of God, original sin, and the human inability to choose God because of Adam's fall. Only God's irresistible grace, through election,

[14] Paul E. Pierson, in "Moravian Missions," *EDWM:*660 records that Moravian missionaries, descendants of the fifteenth-century Hussites, settled on the estate of Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf near Dresden, Germany in 1722. They named their settlement *Herrnhut*, the "Lord's watch." Following a "mighty visitation of the Holy Spirit," Zinzendorf introduced plans for an evangelistic outreach to the West Indies, Greenland, Turkey, and Lapland. In 1732 the first of the Moravian missionaries were sent. By 1739 they were serving in sixteen locations, including Asia, Africa, North America, Europe, the Baltics, and Russia. Only those missionaries with a strong sense of call were sent, and they often endured harsh conditions. They focused primarily on renewal and unity.

could bring about transformation. Edwards sought to counter the Arminian tendency to rely on oneself and natural abilities for obtaining salvation before God and began to preach the "unequivocal"[16] doctrine of justification by faith. He argued, "When it is said that God justifies the ungodly, it is absurd to suppose that our godliness, taken as some goodness in us, is the ground of our justification.… *We are justified only by faith in Christ, and not by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own*."[17] Edwards's attention to this doctrine lit the flames of revival in New England that eventually spread to Great Britain.

In turn, George Whitefield's sermon, *The Nature and Necessity of our New Birth in Christ Jesus*, also played an important role during the Awakening.[18] Whitefield, known as the "Grand Itinerant,"[19] became a worldwide sensation by captivating large crowds with skillful oratory and encouraging interdenominational cooperation. His approach reflected a growing revivalism that was characterized by personal conversion, an assurance of salvation, and a personal faith that resulted in a Christian way of life.

Significantly, Methodists John Wesley (1703–1791) and his brother Charles Wesley (1707–1788) changed the world through their Methodism, music, and hymn writing. Early in his career, John Wesley struggled with doubt about his salvation and sought the advice of Moravian[20] Gottlieb Spangenberg, who in turn challenged the

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[15] Noll, "Great Awakenings," 522–23.

[16] Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 74.

[17] Jonathan Edwards, *Justification by Faith Alone: Two Sermons*, November 1734, Bible Bulletin Board's Jonathan Edwards Collection, http://www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/justification.htm, n.p.

[18] Bruce Demarest and John S. Feinberg, eds., *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation, Foundations of Evangelical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), 209.

[19] Peter Choi, "George Whitefield, the Imperial Itinerant: Religion, Economics, and Politics in the Era of the Great Awakening," PhD diss., University of Notre Dame (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2014), 4.

[20] Pierson, in "Moravian Missions," *EDWM*:660.

veracity of Wesley's faith. Then, in Aldersgate, London, on hearing Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, Wesley "felt his heart strangely warmed"[21] and found assurance for his salvation. From that point on, he "combined the religious zeal of Moravians with the social activism that had long characterized the Reformed tradition."[22]

Bruce Demarest and John S. Feinberg assert, "Wesley held that entire sanctification is a prerequisite for final justification at the last judgment. Thus Christians should fervently seek moral perfection that God graciously gives by faith via an instantaneous crisis experience known as the 'second work of grace' or 'second blessing.'"[23] In a significant departure from tradition, Whitefield and Wesley eschewed High Church practices and preached on the streets and in outdoor fields, which often resulted in thousands of conversions.[24] They eventually parted ways due to theological differences.

During the First Great Awakening, revivalism began to take shape through transatlantic networks, volunteer associations, and itinerant preaching on small and large scales. Bright's evangelistic tool *Four Spiritual Laws* bears similarities to the evangelistic messages characteristic of late eighteenth-century revivalism. The basic aim of *Four Spiritual Laws* was to equip people with a simple tool for personal evangelism and CCC's basic follow-up was designed for personal growth in the Christian life. Bright's emphasis on personal evangelism is evident in a lecture delivered in 1966 to the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, "If the Great Commission is to be fulfilled in our

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[21] John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, ed., Percy Livingstone Parker (Chicago: Moody Press, 1951), https://ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal/journal, n.p.

[22] Gonzales, *Reformation*, 265–66.

[23] Demarest and Feinberg, *Cross and Salvation*, 391.

[24] Sweeney, *American Evangelical*, 49.

generation, then there must be a dramatic new emphasis on personal evangelism,"[25] because, he reasoned, of the "10,500 students surveyed from scores of campuses across the United States, 89.1% didn't know how to become a Christian."[26] Bright believed that the Christianizing of America would stave off the threat of communism, which is covered later in this chapter.

Summary

The First Great Awakening, stimulated by Edwards's personalized Calvinism, was also influenced by Pietism's emphasis on an individual crisis conversion experience, personal transformation evidenced by spiritual growth, and evangelistic zeal. Personalized Calvinism also included the sovereignty of God, original sin, and justification by faith in the face of God's irresistible grace. These revivalist characteristics held steady until the late eighteenth century. Noticeably, Whitefield's alternate emphasis on spiritual regeneration through rebirth compared to Edwards's emphasis on justification by faith, the Wesley brothers' emphasis on a second blessing, and an expansive volunteerism added important dimensions to revivalism well into the twentieth century. But as America braced for a revolution, the First Great Awakening waned and gave way to the Second Great Awakening and an emphasis on Arminianism.

The Second Great Awakening (1790–1840): Secular Humanism Meets Arminianism

Conspicuously, by the end of the eighteenth century, secular humanism and rationalism, fast becoming the dominant worldviews, added to a lull in religious fervor and

[25] Bill Bright, "Methods and Philosophy of Personal Evangelism," paper presented at the World Congress on Evangelism, Kongresshalle, Berlin, October 26–November 4, 1966, Campus Crusade for

consequently led to the belief that salvation could be attained by human ability. Evidence of this belief seeped into the theology and practice of revivalism and missions during the Second and Third Great Awakenings.

The end of the eighteenth century marked the dawn of the Second Great Awakening, aided in part by the spread of Great Britain's Concerts of Prayer and prayer meetings hosted by the interdenominational London Missionary Society formed in 1791.[27] This emphasis on prayer began to add new contours to the boundaries of revivalism. In addition to highlighting the effects of prayer, the Second Great Awakening also provided the impetus for the formation of new denominations and societies that were a catalyst for revival and expansion.[28] Moreover, the optimism of Protestants in America was due in large part to the dominant theological position of postmillennialism. Protestant denominations, now influenced by the modified Calvinism of Congregationalist Samuel Hopkins, looked forward to a gradual unfolding of God's kingdom where, according to missiologist David Bosch, "… evil passions would gradually fade away. Licentiousness and injustice would disappear. Strife and dissention would be wiped out. There would be no more war, famine, oppression, or slavery, neither in the United States or the mission fields."[29] Hopkins, a former student of Edwards, developed a practical ethic that vigorously opposed slavery, and he argued that sinful behavior resulted from the sinful acts of all people, not as a direct result of Adam's guilt.

Christ Archives, Orlando, FL, 1.

[26] Bright, "Methods and Philosophy," 2.

[27] Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2003), 109.

[28] Noll, "Great Awakenings," *DTIB:522*.

[29] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012), 288.

Arminianism: Nathaniel Taylor, Timothy Dwight, and Charles Finney

This increasing optimism and confidence in human ability was evidenced in the growth of an Arminian theology. It focused not on one's inability to save oneself apart from God's irresistible grace but instead on one's already-possessed ability to come to Christ based on God's prevenient grace. Nathaniel Taylor (1786–1858), a leading nineteenth-century revivalist, provided momentum for Arminian soteriology. Noll points out that Taylor, influenced by psychology and Scottish Common Sense philosophy, believed "that the will was an independent arbiter that chose among options presented to it by the mind and emotions."[30] This triumphant faith in human ability was reinforced particularly by the revivals at Yale University and Williams College.

In fact, Yale professor Timothy Dwight (1752–1817), grandson of Jonathan Edwards and a proponent of New Divinity,[31] took a broad view of human ability in salvation. Influenced by Samuel Hopkins, Dwight held that sin was an accumulation of actions rather than a state of being, and that revival and conversion resulted from a natural ability to believe. A reported one-third of the Yale student body in 1802 came to Christ under his teaching. In nearby Williamstown, Massachusetts, only a few years later, the Haystack Prayer Meeting marked the beginning of a surge of mission activity and provided the catalyst for the modern missions movement.[32]

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[30] Noll, "Great Awakenings," 523.

[31] Mark Noll in "New England Theology," *EDT*:828, describes The New Divinity as the "next phase" of New England theology following the First Great Awakening and the profound influence of Jonathan Edwards.

[32] The modern missions movement profoundly influenced Bright and his call to reach university students and to world evangelization, as will be demonstrated in this chapter.

In addition to revivals on university campuses, this Arminian-based Awakening spread rapidly through camp meetings such as the well-known Cane Ridge Revival[33] and through the work of American Methodist circuit riders such as Bishop Francis Asbury (1745–1816).[34] Notably, Charles Finney (1792–1875), an influential Arminian revivalist of the day,[35] took the revival spirit from camp meetings to urban centers and gave shape to a more measured revivalism. Finney was a Presbyterian turned Congregationalist and pragmatist who did not experience conversion until his mid-twenties. He reflects: “Indeed the offer of Gospel salvation seemed to me to be an offer of something to be accepted, and that it was full and complete; and that all that was necessary on my part, was to get my own consent to give up my sins, and give myself to Christ.”[36] Finney did not believe that his conversion was complete until he received a second baptism of the Holy Spirit, which he experienced just days after his initial conversion.[37]

With this experience, Finney threw himself into evangelistic preaching, although his lack of formal training garnered attention to his approach. For example, he advocated

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[33] Paul Pierson, “Great Awakenings,” *EDWM*:407.

[34] Mark A. Noll, in “Asbury, Francis (1745–1816),” *EDT*:102–3, describes Asbury as the father of Methodism. Born in Birmingham, England, Asbury joined John Wesley in America in 1771 as a missionary. His ardent desire to spread the gospel compelled him to travel some three hundred thousand miles, mostly on horseback. In 1784 he became the chief organizer of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. The success of Methodism in America is credited to Asbury’s organization of circuit riders.

Jim Craddock, former University of Oklahoma staff member, compared Methodist circuit riders with CCC’s goal “to win men to Christ and build men for Christ.” Instead of riding a horse, “they [CCC staff] drive a car from campus to campus preaching the Gospel,” quoted in Bill Bright, “Campus Crusade History,” 1957, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL, 4–5.

[35] Robert W. Caldwell III, in *Theologies of the American Revivalists: From Whitefield to Finney* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), describes Finney as a latecomer to the Second Great Awakening and suggests viewing Finney as “one who epitomized the theological trajectories of the age, rather than as a central figure who embodied the essence of the Second Great Awakening” (p. 102). For the purposes of this paper, Finney provides an example of the Arminian and “pragmatic” aspect of this Awakening that influenced revivalism in the twentieth century.

[36] Charles Finney, *Autobiography of Charles Finney: Memoirs of Revivals and Religions* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1876), 11.

[37] Finney, in *Autobiography*, 16, describes receiving the “mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost” in an experience filled with great emotion and the tangible sense of God’s presence.

for certain God-ordained laws that would bring about and govern spiritual revival. Finney taught that religion is the work of man and revivals are the result of the right use of the right means.[38] He chose to preach directly to the individual, often calling out specific sinners and sins, and he instigated the Anxious Bench, placed near the preacher, where serious seekers would sit in order to indicate their desire to convert.[39]

Although Finney was firmly committed to prayer and reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit for conversion, his controversial emphasis on the human ability to bring about revival by following prescribed means was a clear departure from the Calvinist emphasis on the sovereignty of God and irresistible grace. Practically, Finney instituted new measures requiring massive advertising campaigns, and he relied on lay leadership. Although criticized by Edwardsian preachers, his theology, pragmatic resolve, and unprecedented approach to revivals integrated well with American volunteerism.[40]

Summary

Revivals took place in a variety of denominations during Finney's era. In addition, societies emphasizing volunteerism organized around specific goals were a byproduct of the Second Awakening's efforts to Christianize and reform America. These evangelical parachurch organizations created institutions to meet a variety of social needs and helped pave the way for the "nationalization of United States public culture."[41] In addition,

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[38] Finney, *Autobiography,* 93.

[39] Sweeney, *American Evangelical*, 69.

[40] Bosch, in *Transforming Mission*, 289, describes Finney's era as "yet another revival period" that underscored the fact that awakenings were not destined to last; he states, "They all run out of steam and need to be revived. The uniqueness of the renewal experience, still sensed in the first two Awakenings, was lost." Eventually, these Awakenings turned into revivals or techniques to maintain a Christianized America. This mindset is evident in Bright's energetic appeals to stave off the communist horde and to revitalize the universities in America by helping them to return to their Christian foundations.

[41] Sweeney, *American Evangelical*, 74.

Protestants' postmillennial orientation included the belief that the closer society got to perfection, the sooner Christ would return. Postmillennialism fueled evangelism and societal reform in an effort to create a Christian America.

These parachurch organizations also paved the way for the aforementioned modern missions movement and provided a template for mid-twentieth-century parachurch organizations such as CCC, Youth for Christ, Navigators, and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. The revivalist characteristics of the past remained strong, such as the Pietist focus on the individual's crisis conversion, personal transformation through spiritual birth, and personal holiness. In addition, the Second Great Awakening, by emphasizing human ability, required specialized training for effective evangelism and a means for measuring personal conversion that lasted well into the twentieth century.

The Third Great Awakening (1850–1920): The Introduction of Premillennialism, Fundamentalism, Liberalism, and the Social Gospel

The Third Great Awakening sparked to life in New York City during the Mid-Century Prayer Revival of 1857. This noontime businessmen's prayer meeting, started by Dutch Reformed missionary Jeremiah Lanphier, attracted only a few participants at first. But, within a short amount of time, hundreds of similar noontime meetings were taking place across the nation and even spread to the northern part of Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.[42]

Premillennialism and Fundamentalism: D. L. Moody

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the fundamentalist movement began to take shape. Joel Carpenter describes this movement as an "interdenominational revivalist

network formed around the era's greatest evangelist, Dwight L. Moody."[43] This revival network turned movement arose primarily on the Calvinist wing of American Protestantism and gained momentum as the threat of Darwinism surfaced. But for the time being, revivalism remained characterized by an intense focus on evangelism; a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit; the imminent, premillennial second coming; and the divinely inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word of God.

By 1861 America was once again at war, but unlike during the American Revolution when revivals waned, the Civil War brought large-scale revivals within both the Union and Confederate armies.[44] With these revivals came an increasing number of itinerant evangelists, including D. L. Moody (1837–1899), a prominent revivalist in the fundamentalist movement. Moody, an uneducated shoe salesman, was converted to Christianity at the age of eighteen and received ministry training through the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), a recently formed parachurch organization (of which he would eventually serve as president).

After the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, he experienced a "second conversion"[45] similar to Finney's and received a specific call from God to evangelize and preach the kingdom of God. From that point on, Moody prioritized evangelism and individual decisions as catalysts of reform, making significant contributions to nineteenth-century revivalism. Notably, various Enlightenment features permeated his approach, including an emphasis on the individual's choice, attention to innovation, and modern elements of

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[42] R. E. Davies, "Revival, Spiritual," *EDT*:1028.

[43] Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 6.

[44] Davies, "Revival, Spiritual," *EDT:*1028.

[45] James F. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist 1837–1899* (Eugene, OR: Wipf &

pragmatism. John Mark Terry avers that Moody's theology can be summarized by three R's. Mankind is "ruined by the fall … redeemed by the blood … and regenerated by the Spirit."[46] Although Moody refused to claim a theological point of view, Terry describes him as a "Biblicist"[47] because he based his doctrinal beliefs on the Bible.

Moody's theological approach, at times, was compatible with Arminianism because he believed anyone could be saved, but at other times, his approach conformed to fundamentalist doctrines. For example, Moody is described by George Marsden as "a progenitor of fundamentalism.… He did as much as anyone in America to promote the forms of holiness teaching and the ethical emphases that were accepted by many fundamentalists."[48] Biblical inerrancy and, eventually, a militant anti-modernist stand were of particular importance to fundamentalists at the time.

Importantly, Moody preached a millenarian (or dispensational premillennial) eschatology.[49] Premillennial pessimism subordinated concern to soul-saving and practical Christianity, and the revivalist tradition of crisis conversion became all the more urgent. No longer was the emphasis on God's deep and abiding love but was instead on an impending and horrible judgment. This dichotomized view is evidenced in Moody's

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Stock, 1969), 132.

[46] John Mark Terry, *Evangelism: A Concise History* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 152.

[47] Terry, *Evangelism*, 152.

[48] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 33.

[49] Joel A. Carpenter in, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 248, notes, "In Protestant parlance, dispensations are ages in divine history in which God's plan of salvation for humanity is marked by special characteristics. Traditional Christian teaching designates the periods of the Old and New Testaments—or of Israel and the church—as two major dispensations. Dispensational theology was first propagated in North America in the late 1860s and 1870s by British Plymouth Brethren Bible teacher, John Nelson Darby (1800–1882). Darby broke with the Church of Ireland and eventually became the leader of the Plymouth Brethren in North America. He was a Calvinist whose dispensational interpretation divided all of history into distinct eras or dispensations, the final being Christ's one-thousand-year reign on earth. Darby's point of view was enthusiastically embraced by many Presbyterian and Baptist clergymen.

evangelism and epitomized by his oft-quoted phrase— "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.'"[50]

Moody's impact on revivalism is evident in his natural innovative tendencies, strikingly similar to Whitefield's. David Bebbington notes, "[Moody] observed the direction of change, identified himself with it, organized it, and accelerated it."[51] For example, he masterfully combined powerful preaching with the moving spiritual music of Ira Sankey and created the "enquiry room" where seekers could seek guidance after the evangelistic message. Like Finney before him, he emphasized interdenominational cooperation and lay participation at every level of society. He acknowledged a link between revivalism and social reform, evidenced by the number of institutions he founded, such as Northfield Seminary for Young Ladies (1879) and the Mount Hermon School for Boys (1881), in particular for impoverished children.[52] However, his primary concern was evangelism. Bosch avers, "As revivalism and evangelicalism slowly adopted premillennialism the emphasis shifted away from social involvement to exclusively verbal evangelism."[53] Like other revivalists, Moody preached that an individual's conversion (the root) would result in social change (the fruit). This unwitting response to controversy, and his seeming unwillingness to acknowledge social or structural sin, produced long-lasting consequences for evangelicalism.

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[50] Timothy K. Beougher, "Moody, Dwight Lyman," *EDWM*:657.

[51] David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 46.

[52] Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 37.

[53] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 325.

The influential Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) was formed as part of Moody's Northfield Conferences that began in 1895.[54] The SVM in 1902, hastened by the leadership of John R. Mott, chose to include foreign missions under this banner: "The evangelization of the world in this generation."[55] Bill Bright, driven by a similar zeal for world evangelization, propelled CCC's mid-to-late twentieth-century evangelistic efforts at home and abroad. Bright, in a 1966 lecture entitled "A Strategy for Fulfilling the Great Commission,"[56] asserts, "We have the power in this country, which was established as a Christian country—we have the power to evangelize the whole world for Christ and God may well hold us accountable.… You and I have an accountability to God to see that the Great Commission is fulfilled and if you are given special gifts, special capabilities, you dare not be disobedient to invest those to help fulfill his command."[57] Bright's fervor for fulfilling the Great Commission was evident in his desire to expand globally early in his ministry; later, in 1996 he was recognized by the Templeton Prize organization for his entrepreneurial efforts and progress in religion.[58]

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[54] Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 35.

[55] John R. Mott, *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation* (London: Student Volunteer Movement, 1902), 2.

[56] Bill Bright, *A Strategy for Fulfilling the Great Commission* (Dallas Lay Institute for Evangelism, 1966), Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL, 3.

[57] Bright, *Strategy*, 3.

[58] Bill Bright, in his "Memo to Prayer Partners" (Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL), addresses his prayer partners and describes the honor of receiving the Templeton Prize and one million dollars for "progress in religion" in 1996. His vision for fulfilling the Great Commission remained consistent. In his memo, he details a conversation he had with Prince Philip, who asked him what he planned to do with the money. He replied, "The goals of Campus Crusade for Christ were to help take the gospel to everybody on planet earth by the end of 2000 A.D." He then notes, "I cannot think of a better way of investing the Templeton Prize than to promote worldwide revival and the fulfillment of the Great Commission."

According to the Templeton Prize organization (Templeton Prize, "Purpose," http://www.templetonprize.org/purpose.html, n.p.), "The Templeton Prize honors a living person who has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension, whether through insight, discovery, or practical works. Established in 1972 by the late Sir John Templeton, the Prize aims, in his words, to identify 'entrepreneurs of the spirit'—outstanding individuals who have devoted their talents to expanding our vision of human purpose and ultimate reality. The Prize celebrates no particular faith

The fundamentalist movement surfaced out of a theological project conceived and funded by Lyman Stewart for the purpose of "stemming the tide" of liberalism and modernism.[59] It defended orthodox Christianity and attacking liberalism, higher criticism, evolution, and modernism. He galvanized a group of theologians and academics[60] who responded in force and catalyzed their core tenets in a ninety-essay, twelve-volume series entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of the Truth*.[61] The core fundamentals included such topics as the inspiration and authority of Scripture; the virgin birth of Christ; Christ's substitutionary atonement for sin; Christ's bodily resurrection; and the historical reality of Christ's miracles.

These fundamentals and aforementioned revivalist characteristics defined Bright's Christian experience, due in large part to Henrietta Mears's influence as demonstrated later in this chapter. Mears, like revivalists before her, experienced moments of surrender to the Holy Spirit and modeled both an ardent commitment to evangelism and a fierce determination to teach biblical fundamentals.

Overall, nineteenth-century evangelical Protestantism appeared to be both institutionally and theologically secure as successful revivals and awakenings resulted in thousands of conversions. Furthermore, as Christian Smith and Michael Emerson point out, nineteenth-century evangelicals led the way in civic reform and American education,

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tradition or notion of God but rather the quest for progress in humanity's efforts to comprehend the many and diverse manifestations of the Divine."

[59] Paul R. Rood II, "The Untold Story of the Fundamentals," Summer 2014, http://magazine.biola.edu/article/14-summer/the-untold-story-of-the-fundamentals/, n.p.

[60] Rood, in "Untold Story," discusses Stewart's ability to mobilize a group of theologians to respond to the growing influence of liberalism and modernism. Participants in the project included theologians A. C. Dixon, Bible expositor and evangelist; R. A. Torrey, a Yale graduate and Europe-educated evangelist; James A. Gray, a Reformed Episcopal Bible Scholar; Louis Meyer, a scholarly former Darwinist and Reformed Jew; and W. J. Erdman, a Presbyterian Bible Scholar.

[61] R. A. Torrey and A. C. Dixon, *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of the Truth* (Grand Rapids:

advancing the belief that "America was truly a Christian nation, blessed by God and destined to become the kingdom of heaven on earth."[62] However, the optimism of early nineteenth-century evangelicalism nearly collapsed in the midst of World War I as well as from increased immigration, urbanization, and industrialization.

Liberalism and the Social Gospel: Friedrich Schleiermacher and Walter Rauschenbusch

Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768–1834)[63] theological liberalism and his revisionist Christian theology contributed to the raging dispute between modernists and fundamentalists concerning the authority of Scripture and the deity and bodily resurrection of Christ. Additionally, Schleiermacher denied original sin. According to Hoffecker, he believed that "… human nature has always been a mixture of 'original righteousness' (potential God-consciousness) and 'original sinfulness' (God-forgetfulness). Righteousness and sin coexist within human nature from the beginning; they do not distinguish between man as originally created and man after the fall."[64] According to Demarest, liberalism includes the denial of such doctrines as "the fall of the race, human depravity, divine wrath, Christ's substitutionary atonement, and the need for definitive, individual conversion."[65] The advance of theological liberalism and a

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Baker Books, 2003).

[62] Christian Smith and Michael Emerson, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 5.

[63] W. A. Hoffecker, in "Schleiermacher Friedrich Daniel Ernst," *EDT*:1064–65, describes Schleiermacher as the "father of the liberal Protestant theology or the theology of religious experience" and states, "Schleiermacher … redefined religion as a unique element of human experience, not located in the cognitive or moral faculties, which produce an indirect knowledge of God by inference, but in intuition which yields immediate experience for God" thus making religion "radically subjective." Fredrich Schleiermacher, in *The Christian Faith* (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 303, discusses his views on God-consciousness and God-forgetfulness.

[64] Hoffecker, "Schleiermacher," 1065.

[65] Demarest and Feinberg, *Cross and Salvation*, 255.

menacing Darwinism began to severely threaten biblical authority and gave rise to the fundamentalist movement.

The turn of the century brought with it an expanding American population that was religiously diverse due to immigration. This increase in immigration led to an increase of social needs. Previously successful and theologically conservative volunteer societies buckled under the growing demand. The significance of these burgeoning needs is evidenced in the theology of Walter Rauschenbusch (1861–1918), a key figure in the Social Gospel movement. This "Social Gospel," coupled with secular humanism's Baconian ideals (the empirical method of observing and determining facts), began to undermine the very core of orthodox tradition. In fact, evangelical attention, riveted on Darwinism at the time, avoided social justice issues until the mid-twentieth century.

Summary

Soon the horrors of World War I raised questions about the veracity of humankind's goodness and the reliability of scientific progress, particularly with the threat of Darwinism. Charles Hodge in his 1874 book, *What is Darwinism*?, describes Darwin's theory as "atheistical"[66] and utterly inconsistent with Scripture. He declared, "Mr. Darwin's theory does deny all design in nature"[67] and "banishes God from the world."[68] As the twentieth century dawned, fundamentalists began to fight back with a growing sense of militancy. By the middle of the twentieth century, after winning the battle but losing the war over Darwinism in the infamous Scopes Trial of 1925, it appeared as

[66] Charles Hodge, *What is Darwinism*?, Michigan Historical Reprint Series (Ann Arbor: Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan Library, 2006), 173.
[67] Hodge, *What Is Darwinism*?, 173.
[68] Hodge, *What Is Darwinism*?, 174.

though evangelicals had retreated from American culture. Christian Smith explains, "Among some, the doctrine of 'double separation' became the litmus test of purity: a good fundamentalist had to separate not only from modernists and liberals, but also from any otherwise orthodox believer who refused to break all ties with liberals."[69] Not all fundamentalists separated or retreated but instead began to reimagine American fundamentalism. The following section introduces the Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening and the rise of neo-evangelicalism.

The Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening (1940s–early 1950s): Bill Bright and *Four Spiritual Laws*

A handful of conservative American Protestant leaders emerged early in the 1940s. These included Harold J. Ockenga, pastor of Boston's Park Street Church and eventual leader of the neo-evangelical movement, and Charles Fuller, radio host of *The Old Fashioned Revival Hour*. They were both intent on forming a new evangelical movement rooted in orthodoxy and tilled in the soil of nineteenth-century evangelical revivalism. Smith avers, "These founders of modern evangelicalism believed that what conservative Protestantism had become in their lifetimes was not the best of what it had been or could be but a sad deviation from a more impressive, respectable tradition."[70] These neo-evangelicals were committed to Calvinist theology and formed the NAE around respected leaders who were culturally and socially engaged.

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[69] Smith and Emerson, *American Evangelicalism*, 2.
[70] Smith and Emerson, *American Evangelicalism*, 2.

National Association of Evangelicals

The NAE, in the true revivalist tradition, remained committed to effective evangelism and evangelistic campaigns and crusades. It believed in the importance of engaging intellectually, of providing a respectable Christian voice, and of taking social and political action. Many of the same leaders who started the NAE had also been praying for revival for years. By the late 1940s, they began to experience what Garth M. Rosell describes as a "veritable downpour of spiritual awakening."[71] Bright concurred in an article entitled "The Movement Among Ministers":

> It seems very apparent that the Lord is preparing His ministers in every denomination for the times of refreshing that lie ahead. Especially in the Pacific Coast States there are ever-increasing groups of ministers meeting quietly but faithfully for the simple purpose of intercession, interceding with God for a revival of religion.[72]

Charles Fuller, commenting on Billy Graham's Los Angeles crusade in 1949, stated, "Many of us have prayed and worked for years toward a real heaven-sent revival and [we are] now permitted to see that revival in our midst."[73] Historian J. Edwin Orr compared the events of the 1949 crusade to the Third Great Awakening that began in the middle of the nineteenth century. He cited decades of spiritual decline, the rise of totalitarianism, theological compromise, and two World Wars as responsible for "the forty years of dearth."[74] Orr maintained that the beginnings of a worldwide Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening had begun.

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[71] Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 129.

[72] Bill Bright, quoted in Orr, *Second Evangelical*, Appendix A.

[73] Charles Fuller, quoted in Dorothy C. Haskin, "Spiritual Awakening in California," *Moody Monthly* (January 1950): 329.

[74] Orr, *Second Evangelical*, 202.

During this same period of time, scores of institutions formed around the NAE, including CCC. Turner adds, "The spirit of engaged orthodoxy had become incarnate in one giant, national transdenominational network of evangelical organizations."[75] In fact, once Bright launched CCC, he enlisted several of the NAE members to serve on the first Board of Advisors, including Harold Ockenga, Billy Graham, and Wilbur Smith. Throughout his career, Bright described CCC as an interdenominational Christian organization, creating distance between himself and the more militant fundamentalists, which added to the shifting pattern of the evangelical kaleidoscope.[76]

Marsden describes this twentieth-century theology as a blend of pietistic and Calvinist traditions. He asserts,

> This amalgamation had been an important aspect of American revivalism since its origins in the Great Awakening. Seventeenth-century Puritanism had combined highly intellectual theology with intense piety and the Awakening of the eighteenth century introduced into an essentially Calvinist context a new style of personal commitment to Christ, and holy living inspired directly by German and Methodist pietism.[77]

Bright, then a senior at the newly formed Fuller Theological Seminary, was at the center of this neo-evangelical resurgence and the Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening that ensued and that served to connect the aforementioned eighteenth-century pietistic priorities within Bright's context. However, before attending to the details of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening as it relates to Bright, the following section explores his upbringing, family, and education, all of which lends insight going forward.

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[75] Turner, "Power," 13.

[76] Bright, in *Come Help*, provides evidence of the ways in which Cru has served alongside churches from a wide range of denominations, in the US and around the world.

[77] Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 44.

Bright's Life Phases

The third major section of this chapter provides a brief overview of Bright's significant life phases, covering his early years in Oklahoma, education and achievements, his eventual move to California, his conversion, and marriage.

Bright's Early Years (1921–1945)

Bright's upbringing in rural Oklahoma demonstrates how his background served to shape his work ethic and worldview. Born on October 19, 1921, William R. Bright embodied the American spirit. Born and raised on a cattle ranch in Coweta, Oklahoma, his development was shaped by the prayers of his "saintly mother"[78] and honed by the self-reliant, "macho"[79] image of his father.

Oklahoma Homestead

Bright described the reality of his childhood in a college essay: "It was there [on the family farm in Coweta] that I learned the things that are synonymous with farm-ranch life.… I learned to work and work hard, to chop corn when the sun was so hot that weeds withered and wilted.… I learned what it was like to get up at four o'clock in the morning and to work until dark."[80] His daily chores included collecting eggs, gathering dried corn cobs, and chopping wood to heat the family stove. As he grew older, he joined his four brothers and other hired men in milking cows, feeding hogs, caring for the horses and cattle, and working the fields. Bright was raised in a home without electricity or running water. His work ethic was forged during the Great Depression, along with the values of

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[78] Michael Lewis Richardson, *Amazing Faith: The Authorized Biography of Bill Bright* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2000), 4.
[79] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 4.
[80] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 5.

community, mutual respect, and generosity. The Bright's resources kept food on the table and helped to provide necessities for others in the area more deeply affected by the trying times.

Notably, the Bright 5000-acre ranch was provided by Bill's grandfather Samuel Bright, who made a small fortune in the Oklahoma oil boom and bought large ranches for his sons shortly after the federal government opened the Indian Territory to White settlement.[81] Bright's father and grandfather, both of whom exercised influence in his life, were civically and politically minded. His grandfather, Samuel, served as mayor of Begg, Oklahoma, and his father, Forest Dale, served as Chairman of the Republican Party of Waggoner County, Oklahoma. Richardson notes, "As candidates for public office came through the area, Dale Bright arranged for them to speak in Coweta. Bill often acted as the master of ceremonies, introducing the candidates in meetings at the high school gym or in the open air on Main Street … including candidates for governor and Congress."[82] Many of these leaders also attended dinner parties at the Bright's home. Dale's work centered primarily on cattle ranching, but he also bought and sold livestock. Additionally, Bright described his father as a "superb horseman [who] taught his five sons how to break and ride wild broncos."[83]

However, Bright credits his mother, Mary Lee Rohl, as having the most profound impact on his life. Mary Lee experienced conversion at the age of sixteen in a Methodist church, and her brother eventually became a Methodist minister. According to Bright's

[81] Richardson, in *Amazing Faith*, 3, adds interesting texture to Bright's background. He describes Samuel Bright, a former schoolteacher, as "one of the brave souls who 'made the run'–those who saddled up for the great land-rushes in 1889 and 1885 that so transformed the Indian Territory."

[82] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 9.

[83] Bill Bright, *Living Supernaturally in Christ* (Orlando, FL: NewLife, 2000), 199.

recollection, her godly influence permeated the home. He remembers his mother praying daily, singing hymns while doing housework, and taking her children to the Coweta Methodist Church. Her care for the family and the surrounding community made a lasting impression in her son's life. Notably, Mary Lee lost a son at birth (her fifth son and sixth child), and while pregnant with Bill, both the baby's life and her own were at risk. During this difficult period, she prayed in faith for a healthy baby and dedicated the child to God for his service.[84] Bright first professed faith as a twelve-year-old boy but did not experience true conversion until his mid-twenties.

Early Education and Achievements

Although Bright's formal education began in Coweta's one-room schoolhouse, his mother, a teacher by trade, taught her children to love reading and learning. She also cultivated Bright's innate curiosity, desire to learn, and drive to achieve. Later in high school, Bright organized and was president of the 4-H Club,[85] competed as a member of the debate team, and enjoyed public speaking. He also served as president of the Epworth League,[86] despite having no real interest in religion at the time. He was also involved in the Future Farmers of America and served as business manager for the school newspaper and yearbook. He was also awarded the Security National Bank Award for "best all-

[84] Judy Douglass, "A Brief History of Campus Crusade for Christ," in *Principles of Leadership: What We Can Learn from the Life and Ministry of Bill Bright*, ed. Ted Martin and Michael Cozzens (Orlando, FL: New Life, 2001), 399.

[85] The 4-H Club, founded in 1902 in Clark County, Ohio. 4-H is a "youth development program designed to help young people and their families gain the skill necessary to be proactive forces in the community and develop ideas for a more innovative economy," https://4-h.org/about/history/.

[86] "Epworth," Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, https://case.edu/ech/articles/e/epworth-league, n.p. The Epworth League was a Methodist association for young people between the ages of 18 and 35 that existed for the purpose of encouraging and cultivating Christ-centered character in young adults around the world, for community building, missions, and spiritual growth. The league was founded at Cleveland, Ohio's Central Methodist Church in May 1889. Within ten years, it claimed over 1.75 million members in 19,500 chapters internationally.

round student" upon graduation in 1939.[87] Significant to Bright's future was his brief stint as a 125-pound football player. After attempting to tackle a 250-pound fullback, he remarkably sustained only an inner ear injury that would eventually prevent him from enlisting in the military.

After graduating from high school, Bright attended Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, a former "normal school."[88] Bright's natural skills and capacity to lead earned him the position of president of his junior and senior classes, president of the Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity, editor of his college yearbook, and president and member of the Oklahoma Federation of Student Councils. He was also a member of Rho Theta Sigma honorary fraternity, Delta Psi Omega dramatics fraternity, the Debate Congress, and the International Relations Club. He was listed in Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities and graduated in 1943 with a Bachelor of Arts in Education.[89]

Bright demonstrated an aptitude for speaking and an interest in political topics and world affairs. He gave speeches for the International Relations Club on world peace; he played the role of Franklin Roosevelt in a mock debate against Wendell Wilkie; and in 1941 he won first prize and $25 in the statewide Inter-Collegiate Prohibition Oratorical Contest sponsored by the Anti-Saloon League.[90] Notably, during this time Bright continued to show little interest in church or religion.

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[87] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 19.

[88] John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), Kindle edition, location 220. In 1919 Oklahoma's six normal schools, including Northeastern State University, became designated teacher's colleges. In 1939 these same institutions became state colleges and began granting degrees in other fields ("Colleges and Universities, Normal," in *Oklahoma Historical Society Encyclopedia*, https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=CO027, n.p.).

[89] Turner, *Bill Bright*, location 234.

[90] Turner, *Bill Bright*, location 222.

California, Confections, and Conversions

The bombing on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941) occurred during Bright's junior year of college and marked a significant turn in his life. He, like many young men in America, wanted to join the military and defend his country, particularly after his friends either lost their lives or returned home injured. After graduating with honors from Northeastern in 1944, he enlisted in the army but was subsequently turned down due to the football injury noted earlier. Reluctantly, he returned to the family ranch and worked for his father until he was offered a job with the Oklahoma Higher Education system. He became a county agent of Muskogee County, Oklahoma as "faculty in the field."[91] He trained men "at their places of work—farms, factories, and shops—for maximum productivity to support the war effort."[92] However, he could not shake the nagging desire to join the war himself.

So, Bright headed to California in 1944 with the hope that the military there would overlook his health issue—to no avail. However, this obstacle did not dampen Bright's spirit but, in fact, seemed to strengthen his drive to succeed and to achieve material wealth. Bright reflects, "Spiritually, I was an agnostic, not knowing whether God existed and not really caring if He did. I believed that 'a man can do anything he wants to, on his own.' My father and grandfather had modeled that philosophy for me and I had proven it to myself in college."[93] New opportunities fueled his entrepreneurial imagination, and soon he was living the good life in a Hollywood apartment and running Bright's California Confections, a fancy food business.[94] Providentially, on his first night

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[91] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 15.

[92] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 15.

[93] Bill Bright, *Come Help Change the World* (Peachtree, GA: Bright Media Foundation and Campus Crusade for Christ, 1999), Kindle edition, locations 195–96.

[94] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 18.

in Los Angeles on his way to a play at the Pasadena Playhouse, he picked up a hitchhiker—Dawson Trotman's roommate and member of The Navigators. He invited Bright to attend a birthday party celebrating Daniel Fuller's[95] birthday. Both Daniel and his father, Charles E. Fuller, would eventually play important roles in Bright's life and ministry.

An important moment in Bright's life came when he began attending Hollywood Presbyterian Church (HPC) and met Henrietta Mears. Bright recalls that his landlords, an elderly couple who rented him a small apartment, repeatedly invited him to attend HPC. Eventually he relented, slipping in and out of a few services unnoticed until someone from the College Department invited him to attend their event. He describes the party and the people who attended as different from what he expected—they were friendly and outgoing. The party was held in the home of a businessman whose material wealth impressed Bright. However, the businessman described his material trappings as nothing in comparison to knowing Jesus Christ. Bright reflects,

> A number of successful businessmen in the church, including a prominent builder, would invite small groups of young people to their homes for picnics and swims in the pool. During one of those popular events, I asked the builder about his business and what it was like to be so successful. His answer startled me. "Material success is not where you find happiness," he stated firmly. "There are rich people all over this city who are the most miserable people you'll ever meet. Knowing and serving Jesus Christ is what's important. He is the only way to find happiness."[96]

Before long, Bright found himself in a Sunday school class taught by Henrietta Mears. He was soon impressed by her teaching and genuine care for the people in the class.

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[95] Daniel Fuller was a friend and fellow seminary student with Bill Bright at both Princeton Seminary and Fuller Seminary in the mid-1940s. He is the only child of Charles Fuller, co-founder of Fuller Seminary, and Grace Payton Fuller.

[96] Bright, *Come Help*, location 211.

Bright recalls, "I was deeply aware of her wisdom, her boldness, and her love for us. She was another proof that my stereotype of Christianity had been wrong. She spoke with authority, yet I saw a genuine concern for each of the young men and women to whom she spoke."[97] Mears, teaching from the book of Acts, described Paul's conversion and subsequent questions, "Lord, who are you and what will you have me to do?"[98] One Sunday in 1945, she urged the members of the class with these words:

> The happiest people in the world are those who are in the center of God's will. The most miserable are those who are not doing God's will. Paul deceived himself into thinking he was doing God's will by persecuting the Christians. In reality, he was pursuing his own ambitions. So God set him straight with this dramatic experience on the road to Damascus. Not many of us have dramatic, emotional conversion experiences as Paul did.… But the circumstances don't really matter. What matters is your response to the same question: "Who are you Lord, and what will you have me to do?"[99]

Through his experience with people in the class and his personal study of the Bible—inspired by HPC pastor Louis H. Evans's preaching and Mears's dynamic teaching—Bright found God's love palpable. He remembers kneeling by his bed one night: "[I] asked the question with which Dr. Mears had challenged us.… Through my study I now believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that he died for my sin, and that, as Dr. Mears had shared with us, if I invited him into my life as Savior and Lord, he would come in."[100] After yielding his life to Christ, Bright's natural leadership ability and enthusiasm quickly earned him the position of Sunday school president under Mears's tutelage. Richardson adds, "Bright became a sparkplug in the Mears ministry machine.… When it came to forging ahead with ways of pressing the message of Christ, Bill would

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[97] Bright, *Come Help*, location 228.
[98] Bright, *Come Help*, location 236.
[99] Bright, *Come Help*, locations 229–37.
[100] Bright, *Come Help*, location 237.

try almost anything."[101] Within a few short years, Mears helped to clarify the plan of salvation for Bright's skeptical fiancée Vonette Zachery (1926–2015) at Forest Home Conference Center in 1948.[102]

Vonette Zachery

Vonette, also from Coweta, graduated from Texas Woman's University in 1948 with a degree in Home Economics. She later did graduate work at the University of Southern California in the field of education. Bright recalls Vonette nearly calling off their engagement due to his "religious fanaticism"[103] and his own hesitancy because of her expressed lack of faith in the necessity of "a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."[104] Bright was afraid of losing the woman he loved but was also concerned about her eternal destiny.

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[101] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 27. Additionally, George Marsden, in *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 89, commenting on Mears's remarkable influence, describes Bright as "[falling] under the spell of the revered Henrietta Mears, director of Christian Education at Hollywood Presbyterian Church and teacher of the remarkably successful 'college department' class."

[102] In Henrietta Mears and Earl O. Roe, eds., *Dream Big: The Henrietta Mears Story* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 246, Roe recalls that in 1937 "a nonprofit corporation was formed known as Forest Home, Incorporated" and was acquired by Henrietta Mears for $30,000. The conference center fulfilled Mears's vision to provide camping adventures for young people. Prior to her acquisition of Forest Home in the San Bernardino mountains, Mears provided such adventures for children in Switzer's Camp, Mount Hermon, and Camp Bethel. Roe states, "Henrietta Mears had a definite philosophy of camping, the crux of which could be summed up on one word: decision. If the Sunday School was the place where people were built up in the faith, then the camp was where they made their decisions" (p. 252). The revivalist tradition of Christian camping traces back to D. L. Moody's Northfield Student Conference of 1886 that became the catalyst for the SVM and is credited with providing vision for the Mount Hermon retreat center. In 1958, Bright received a "gift of land" located in Mound, Minnesota from Bill Greig, Jr., then chairman of Midwest Keswick, a large coalition of Christian camp meetings. He carried on the tradition of Christian camping by holding training sessions in Minnesota. Eventually, the trainings would be held at CCC's headquarters in Arrowhead Springs, California, acquired in 1962 (Bright, *Come Help*, location 893).

[103] Bright, *Come Help*, location 262.

[104] Bright, *Come Help*, location 271.

As one last favor, Bill asked Vonette to have a conversation with Mears. He was confident that Mears could explain spiritual concepts in a way that would satisfy Vonette's scientific mind. Vonette recollects,

> I had minored in chemistry in college, and everything had to be practical and workable to me. This was one of the reasons I had questioned the validity of Christianity.… She used terminology very familiar to me. She explained that, just as a person going into a chemistry laboratory experiment follows the table of chemical valence, so it is possible for a person to enter Gods [sic] spiritual laboratory and follow His formula for knowing Him.[105]

On December 30, 1948 Bill and Vonette were married and together made a formidable mark on evangelicalism, due in large part to Mears's tutelage early in their lives.

Summary

Bright showed great respect and love for Henrietta Mears throughout his life and often referred to her as the most influential person in his life second only to his mother. As the next section reveals, Mears along with leaders in the neo-evangelical movement helped to shape Bright's early theology and methodology.

Bright's Early Influences

The fourth major section of this chapter focuses on Bright's early influences. This section highlights the combined influence of Henrietta Mears, Director of Christian Education at HPC, and the rise of neo-evangelicalism—both of which influenced his call to ministry, theological foundations, and consequent vision for CCC. Understanding the impact of Bright's midcentury context as it relates to the development of *Four Spiritual Laws*

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[105] Bright, *Come Help*, locations 287–94.

requires an understanding of the stories and assumptions that shaped his perspective and experience.[106]

Henrietta Mears

An examination of Mears's evangelical theology and revivalist underpinnings explains the foundation of Bright's quintessential revivalist theology and development of *Four Spiritual Laws*. In fact, the reach of Mears's influence at the time extended beyond HPC's College Department into a wide variety of evangelical institutions.[107] Significantly, evangelicalism and revivalism share similar and deeply-rooted theological presuppositions that have taken shape over several centuries. Although evangelicalism is an amalgamation of various Protestant traditions, the following common threads are evident: a commitment to the authority and reliability of Scripture, the appeal of exegetical preaching, the universal need for spiritual rebirth as the basis for repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and the active participation of every believer in the fulfillment of the Great Commission through personal witness and world missions.[108] The Third Great Awakening and the Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening included these same

[106] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, in *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 43, state, "The Christian confession of an incarnate Jesus within a culturally embodied faith points toward a deep truth: all human life is shaped by cultural narratives. The stories in which we live shape our perspective and experience." They go on to suggest that "we make sense of the world by virtue of frameworks, assumptions, and a given repertoire of meanings, much of which we rarely notice or reflect on. They are like the air we breathe" (p. 43).

[107] Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, in *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 142, describes Mears in her heyday as "the most famous religious educator and perhaps the best-known woman in fundamentalist and evangelical circles" (p. 87). Turner, in "Power," states, "Mears's contributions to mid-century evangelicalism are substantial. [She] helped to revitalize an evangelical Sunday school movement, encouraged revivalism in southern California, and cultivated a more open, ecumenical evangelicalism."

[108] M. E. Dieter, "Revivalism," *EDT*:1030–31.

characteristics, along with premillennial eschatology, a commitment to holiness doctrine or victorious living, and a pronounced dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

Mears inherited her revivalist spirit and ardent commitment to worldwide evangelism from her maternal grandfather, W. W. Everts (1814–1890), an American Baptist pastor in Chicago, and his wife, Margaret K. Everts (1817–1866). They exemplified a strong commitment to evangelism and social activism and exerted quite an influence in Mears's life.[109] Likewise, Mears's mother modeled serious devotion through prayer, Bible study, and a zealous commitment to personal evangelism. She shared the gospel with everyone who came across her path and taught Henrietta to do the same both in word and deed. Henrietta's aptitude for teaching the Bible surfaced at age eleven when she taught her first Sunday school class; at the same time, she experienced a growing awareness of those less fortunate than herself. In response, she and her cousin organized the Willing Workers[110] for the purpose of helping those less fortunate.

In college, while studying chemistry at the University of Minnesota, Mears continued to teach Bible classes, engage in evangelism, and remain interested in the foreign mission field. After graduating, she served at the First Baptist Church of Minneapolis under pastor William B. Riley (1861–1947), a reputed fundamentalist architect who provided Mears with a firm theological foundation.[111] She taught Bible

[109]Joseph Aaron Tombrella, in "Mears Christianity: The Birth of the Modern Discipleship Movement," PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, December 2017, 67, notes, "In his early twenties [W. W.] Everts became known as a revivalist preacher,"

[110] Andrea V. B. Madden, "Henrietta C. Mears 1890–1963," (master's thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1997), 11. Mears, at age ten, started a group called "The Willing Workers" for the purpose of caring for and serving women in destitute and unfortunate circumstances.

[111] Barbara Hudson Powers, *The Henrietta Mears Story* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1957), 113. Powers notes that Mears sat under Riley's teaching until she was thirty-eight years old. Tombrella, in "Mears Christianity," 89, adds that when Mears was a child, her parents often invited Riley and other fundamentalist leaders over for dinner, including William Graham Scroggie, R. A. Torrey, G.

classes at Northwestern Bible and Missionary Training School (founded by Riley), gave leadership to a Sunday school class of high school girls, developed a system of evangelism and discipleship, and encouraged spiritual multiplication. By the end of the first year, over 250 girls were involved, and within ten years over 3000 girls were enrolled in this system of discipleship.[112]

Mears's early years of ministry, remarkable as they were, did not compare with her eventual impact as the Director of Christian Education for HPC. She served in this position at the church from 1928 until 1963. There Mears created a similar structure to her system of discipleship, mentioned in the previous paragraph, for training in evangelism and discipleship for HPC's College Department. She launched Gospel Light Press in the 1930s and published her own "age-graded" Sunday school curriculum, reputedly one of the most popular fundamentalist Sunday school curricula at the time.[113] Bright followed her lead and patterned not only his development of *Four Spiritual Laws* but also CCC's transferable curriculum and organizational structure, in strikingly similar ways.

Like many revivalists before her, Mears's personal life and ministry were imbued with prayer and specific moments of surrender and fresh fillings of the Holy Spirit. During her second year in college, struggling with grief following her mother's death, Mears experienced confusion regarding her calling. Then, after hearing a sermon preached by evangelist and Moody Bible Church pastor, Paul Rader (1878–1938),[114] she

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Campbell Morgan, Harry Rimmer, and Gypsy Smith. In addition to Riley's influence, Mears also leaned on the Scofield Reference Bible in her teaching on Dispensationalism.

[112] Madden, "Henrietta C. Mears," 28.

[113] Madden, "Henrietta C. Mears," 44.

[114] Madden, "Henrietta C. Mears," 19.

recognized “a need for the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to live a life of faith and to fulfill a ministry that would be pleasing to God.”[115] Through her own study, Mears was familiar with the Holy Spirit’s presence as the seal of redemption, but, as Madden adds, “She wanted power for ministry. Realizing it was there, she asked for his power, and then immediately thanked God”[116] and by faith believed God had answered her. Rader, a revival preacher, also exerted an important influence on Mears’s life and teaching.

Mears’s ongoing emphasis and dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit is evidenced throughout her life. She asserts, “A soul winner must be a Spirit-led man or woman—not only in the matter of soul-winning but in all things.”[117] She would encourage, “Don’t be impatient or in a hurry. Don’t force the issue. Remember you cannot win a man to Christ. The Holy Spirit does the work of regeneration. You are only a witness. If anyone will not accept your witness, then you can do no more.”[118] Her admonitions are evident in Bright’s philosophy of evangelism and his understanding of the Spirit-filled life. His oft-remembered phrase, “Share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God,”[119] rings true to Mears’s teaching. Significantly, Mears’s system of evangelism and discipleship, her commitment to teaching and training, her surrender and subsequent healing, and her dependence on the Holy Spirit flowed out of a long history of revivalism into Bright’s midcentury context.

[115] Madden, “Henrietta C. Mears,” 19.
[116] Madden, “Henrietta C. Mears,” 20.
[117] Henrietta Mears, quoted in Madden, “Henrietta C. Mears,” 159.
[118] Henrietta Mears, quoted in Madden, “Henrietta C. Mears,” 159.
[119] Bill Bright, “How You Can Be A Fruitful Witness,” Transferable Concepts (https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/transferable-concepts/be-a-fruitful-witness.html), no date.

Revival at Forest Home

Bright's involvement with Mears's ministry extended from the Sunday school class to Forest Home Conference Center, where in 1947 he attended a Sunday school teacher's training.[120] Bright was greatly moved as Mears, having just returned from Europe, shared her firsthand account of World War II's catastrophic destruction and upheaval. She was devastated by the effects of the war. She declared, "The seeds of decay—atheism and moral expedience had long before created a putrid garden where Hitler Nazism had grown."[121] She believed that the same thing was taking place in America and believed God was providing an answer during these troubling times. She urged, "God is looking for men and women of total commitment. During the war, men of special courage were called upon for difficult assignments; often these volunteers did not return. They were called 'expendable.' We must be expendables for Christ.… If we fail God's call to us tonight, we will be held responsible."[122] Bright, along with several others in attendance, was compelled by this ominous warning and gathered with Mears to pray. The group included Louis Evans Jr. (1926–2008)[123] and Richard Halverson.[124]

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[120] Mears purchased Forest Home Conference Center in 1938. The 750-acre property was sold to Mears for $30,000. Madden, in "Henrietta C. Mears," 92, notes, "She asked God to use the camp for His glory, drawing men and women to himself and sending them to the world to tell of his love." Her goal included three objectives: "To help individuals accept Jesus as Savior and Lord; to provide for growth in the Christian life; and to expand the vision believers had of God's work in the world" (p. 93).

[121] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 35.

[122] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 37.

[123] Louis Evans Jr. was the son of Dr. Louis H. Evans Sr. (1897–1981), pastor of HPC during Mears's tenure.

[124] Richard Halverson (1916–1995) earned a Bachelor of Theology from Princeton Theological Seminary and was a minister of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America between 1958 and 1981. Halverson's trajectory in ministry, like Bright's, was also influenced by Henrietta Mears. From 1981 to 1994 he served as Chaplain of the United States Senate, was an associate with Bill Bright of the National Prayer Breakfast movement that began in 1954, was a member of the board of World Vision, and was president of Concern Ministries, a charitable foundation in Washington, DC.

Bright recalls, "We were overwhelmed with the presence of God.… We knew the living God had come to take control. And we were so excited we were like intoxicated people. It was my first real encounter with the Holy Spirit."[125] Bright's encounter with the Holy Spirit is reminiscent of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century revivalists John Wesley, Charles Finney, and D. L. Moody. Bright, along with those in attendance, formed the Fellowship of the Burning Hearts that pledged "in all sobriety to be expendable for Christ."[126] He recalls being "carried away with the sense of the holy presence of God.… God wanted to call 'expendables' from the campuses."[127] According to Bright, they "saw the nation's teeming college campuses, where an army could be recruited for God."[128] Their ardent response resembled the student revival at Yale in 1802 in the midst of the Second Great Awakening (1790–1840); the Haystack Prayer Meeting of 1806 in Williamstown, Massachusetts, which provided a catalyst for the modern missions movement; and the Cambridge Seven, who in 1885 committed to serving as missionaries in China.

Bright, during the early days of the Fellowship of the Burning Hearts, remembers addressing a group of more than five hundred young people: "I challenged them to be expendable for God, to join the Fellowship of the Burning Hearts and to live for Christ totally. I gave the invitation and everybody leaped from their seats. God spoke."[129] From this point on, the expendables prayed, telephoned pastors, spoke in churches, and

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[125] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 36–37.

[126] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 38. In addition, Richardson notes, "The 'Fellowship of the Burning Hearts' was derived from John Calvin's seal showing a hand offering a heart afire with the inscription, 'My heart I give Thee, Lord, eagerly and sincerely'" (p. 37).

[127] Bill Bright, quoted in Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 37.

[128] Bill Bright, quoted in Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 36.

[129] Bill Bright, from telephone interview conducted by Andrea Madden, February 25, 1997, quoted in Madden, "Henrietta C. Mears," 126.

recruited hundreds of students to Forest Home's first College Briefing in August 1947. A brochure was printed for the event titled "Call to Arms."[130] The contents recalled Moody's influence that birthed the 1886 SVM's commitment to foreign missions. The brochure read in part: "In this the twentieth century, He is calling for greater numbers. Youth from all walks of life, from our colleges and universities, from our businesses and industries must go forth to carry this same gospel to millions still in darkness."[131]

In like manner, the briefing in August 1947 attracted 600 students from all over the United States. Mears, along with notable speakers such as Louis H. Evans Sr., David L. Cowie, and Robert B. Munger, spoke on the topics of sin, confession, forgiveness, cleansing, and the Holy Spirit. Some in attendance became Christians and many volunteered for mission work. The briefing was met with such success that it continued as an annual event. To many involved, this unexpected work of God was reminiscent of the First, Second, and Third Great Awakenings.

Neo-Evangelicalism and Fuller Seminary

Bright attended both Princeton Theological Seminary (1946) and Fuller Theological Seminary (1947) and, consequently, was influenced by neo-evangelicalism and the NAE. In the background of his early studies, evangelical leaders and some Princeton professors, including Harold Ockenga, rallied to start a new movement and a new seminary in Southern California. They, along with others who joined them, were unhappy with

[130] Roe, *Dream Big*, 285.
[131] In Madden, "Henrietta C. Mears," 128.

Princeton's modernist leanings as well as the militant separatism of conservative fundamentalists.[132]

During this time, Mears, as a Presbyterian, remained supportive of Princeton, and as an evangelical, stood behind and sent many men from her class to Fuller. Marsden notes, "The connections between Fuller and Henrietta Mears and students such as Bright illustrate the early success of the seminary."[133] Importantly, he adds, "The school was built on a solid network of fundamentalist-evangelical agencies and leaders"[134] and provided the perfect atmosphere for aspiring young leaders such as Bill Bright. Initially, Mears cautioned Bright about making an abrupt change, since being on the ground floor of a new endeavor could create a challenge. But he was intrigued by the opportunity to join Fuller, particularly because of its emphasis on missions and the training of effective evangelists.[135] Then, in the spring of 1951, while studying for a Hebrew exam, Bright had another life-changing experience, reminiscent once again of the experiences of aforementioned revivalists.

Bright's Vision: Campus Crusade for Christ

Bright, throughout his life, told the story of this vision tentatively and with emotion. He describes sensing God's presence in a most powerful and tangible way:

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[132] Marsden, in *Reforming*, 22, describes a modernist shift at Princeton Theological Seminary that was enhanced by John W. Bowman's message while delivering the prestigious L. Stone Lectures in 1946. Wilbur Smith, then professor at Princeton, described Bowman's position as denying the "great verities of our faith" (p. 22). Smith was among the first professors appointed to Fuller Theological Seminary's faculty in 1947, where he would become integral to Bright's CCC vision.

[133] Marsden, *Reforming*, 89.

[134] Marsden, *Reforming*, 89.

[135] Marsden, in *Reforming*, 2, states, "Fuller Seminary, as an American *evangelical* institution, is in the tradition marked first with zeal to proclaim the biblical revealed gospel of salvation from sin to the atoning work of Christ."

> There was no audible voice; no heavenly choirs; no bright lights or bolts of lightning. However, the presence of the Almighty seemed so real that all I could do was wait expectantly for what He had to say. Within minutes I felt an amazing combination of peace and excitement, for I had the overwhelming impression that God had flashed on the screen of my mind His instructions for my life and ministry.[136]

He describes how that night God, in a very definite way, called him to invest his life in helping to fulfill the Great Commission in this generation. He recalls, "I was to begin by helping to win and disciple college students for Christ, since they are the leaders and influencers of tomorrow."[137] Bright recounted his vision to Fuller Seminary professor and NAE associate, Dr. Wilbur Smith, and the following day Smith handed him a small piece of paper on which he suggested a name for this new effort—"CCC, Campus Crusade for Christ."[138] Similar to student movements born out of Great Awakenings, CCC emerged as a result of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening. Just hours shy of completing his seminary degree, Bright left Fuller with Smith's blessing to follow God's call. In a letter of endorsement dated June 22, 1951, Smith writes,

> From the time that the Lord laid upon his heart a great burden for a definite advance movement for evangelism on the campuses of our colleges and universities, Mr. William R. Bright has honored me by coming into my office to discuss ways and means, and personnel, for such a campaign as he visions.… My own opinion is that the Campus Crusade for Christ has the possibility, under the blessing of God, of being a milestone in the notable history of work among college students in our beloved land. Mr. Bright is worthy of all confidence.[139]

In the fall of 1951, Bill, his wife Vonette, and Dr. Mears launched the first CCC ministry at UCLA. Mears purchased a "Moorish castle-style home"[140] in Bel Air in 1953, right across the street from campus, and she invited Bill and Vonette to move in and share

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[136] Bright, *Come Help*, location 370.

[137] Bright, *Come Help*, location 375.

[138] Bright, *Come Help*, location 386.

[139] Wilbur Smith, *Letter of Endorsement*, June 22, 1951, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL.

expenses with her. The home became CCC's base of operation until Mears's death in 1963.[141]

Summary

Bright was profoundly influenced by Henrietta Mears, the NAE, and professors from Fuller Seminary such as Dr. Wilbur Smith. Fueled by the fire of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakening, their combined emphasis on evangelism and the fulfillment of the Great Commission compelled Bright to action in the wake of World War II and in view of the rapid growth of the communist movement. As the next section demonstrates, William Carey and the 1910 World Missionary Conference (WMC) in Edinburgh, Scotland, also profoundly impacted Bright's trajectory.

Bright's Great Commission: Direct and Indirect Influences

This fifth section demonstrates Bright's understanding of the Great Commission and points out ways in which his passion and zeal resembled that of William Carey. This section also introduces the ways in which the WMC and the emergent ecumenical-evangelical divide informed Bright's context discussed further in Chapter 4.

Williams Carey's Enquiry

Bright's commitment and passion to fulfill the Great Commission and involve others in personal evangelism was similar to William Carey's (1761–1834) zeal. Carey, a Particular Baptist pastor and missionary to India, is widely known as the Father of the Modern Missionary Movement.[142] Carey argued that the Great Commission was a

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[140] Bright, *Come Help*, location 547.
[141] Bright, *Come Help*, location 548.
[142] Noteworthy here is first, William Carey the man and his contribution to the modern missions

binding call not only for the apostles of Jesus Christ but also for every Christian, including the Particular Baptists. He held that the Great Commission was the impetus for the spread of the gospel from the time of the book of Acts to his present day.

He cited the efforts of "popish missionaries"[143] and the *Unitas Fratrum* (Moravian Church) engaged in converting the heathens. He adjured, "If the prophecies concerning the increase of the kingdom be true, and if what has been advanced, concerning the commission given by him to his disciples being obligatory on us, be just, it must be inferred that all Christians ought heartily to concur with God in promoting his glorious designs, *for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit* [sic]."[144] Carey called the Baptists to follow suit.

Similarly, Bright's resolve is evidenced in his paper presented at the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin in 1966. Therein, he presented an all-encompassing vision and asserted, "If the Great Commission is to be fulfilled in our generation, there must be a dramatic new emphasis on personal evangelism."[145] He emphasized that the

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movement, and second, his interpretation of the Great Commission and its impact on succeeding generations. Bosch, in *Transforming Mission*, 286, describes Carey as one of many figures from the same period who sought to "Propagate the Gospel Among the Heathen; … he was as much a product as a shaper of the time." Van Gelder and Zscheile, in *Participating*, 113, describe Carey as a transitionary figure, similar to Bosch's reminder that Carey was one of many figures to contribute to the spirit of the time.

Regarding his interpretation of the Great Commission, Bosch states, "[Carey] demolished the conventional interpretation of Matthew 28:18–20" (p. 348). He points out, "By the end of the nineteenth century Matt 28:18–20 had completely superseded other verses from Scripture as principal 'mission text. Now the emphasis was on obedience'" (p. 349). He also points out that by the end of the mid-nineteenth century, Matthew 28:18–20 had become the primary mission text with an emphasis on obedience. Furthermore, he considers the post-World-War II "reinstatement of the Great Commission as the leading justification for missions" (p. 349), but in some cases the Great Commission was plucked out of the context in which it appears in Scripture.

[143] Carey, *Enquiry*, 11.

[144] Carey, *Enquiry*, 77.

[145] Bill Bright, "Methods and Philosophy of Personal Evangelism," presented at the *World Congress on Evangelism*, Kongresshalle, Berlin, October 26–November 4, 1966, 2, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL.

Bright, in "A Strategy Designed to Present the Claims of Christ to the World and to Make Disciples of Every Nation," *Staff Manual*, 1968, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL, iii,

solution for anemic evangelism requires a greater understanding of the Spirit-filled life, training in evangelism for lay leaders and pastors. Bright's commitment to help fulfill the Great Commission goes hand-in-hand with his emphasis on training and mobilizing believers to engage in personal evangelism. Although World War II ended with the Allies defeating Germany and Italy in the spring of 1945 and Japan in August of that year, the Cold War between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had begun.[146]

Bright was determined to defeat communism, evident in his address entitled "A Strategy for Fulfilling the Great Commission" given at CCC's Dallas Lay Institute of Evangelism in 1966.[147] In this address, Bright emphasized the moral and spiritual decadence of the day and lamented, "[We're] living in a desperate hour—not only internally but without the threat of communism greater than ever [sic].… The communists are determined to take the world and they are taking the world."[148] He calls for an "aggressive movement for God—instead of communism taking the world, I'm personally persuaded that we are going to see the fulfillment of the Great

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asserts, "I believe that we are about the see the greatest spiritual awakening since Pentecost and the fulfillment of the Great Commission in this generation."

Later, Bright in, "Dictation" dated January 21, 1970, instructs, "What do we mean by the fulfillment of the Great Commission? We mean we will be discipling men of all nations in sufficient quantities that these disciples will be in sufficient number that they, through the use of all techniques, modern technologies, communication medium, be able to saturate their respective countries with the gospel … that every living creature who hears—we've already discussed, there are mongoloids and people mentally incompetent and unable of comprehending [sic]—but even these we should not take for granted" (p. 1).

[146] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 157.

[147] Bill Bright, "A Strategy for Fulfilling the Great Commission," *Dallas Lay Institute of Evangelism*, February 13–20, 1966, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL. Here Bright describes an "aggressive movement for God – instead of communism taking the world, I'm personally persuaded that we are going to see the fulfillment of the Great Commission" (p. 3). He reflects on the faith of Korean believers who have "suffered – they've lost loved ones and they have given everything they had because communism took it …. God, God keep us from making that same tragic mistake" (p.3).

[148] Bright, "Strategy," 2.

Commission."[149] He also presents four reasons why the Great Commission must be taken seriously—"because Christ commanded it; men are lost without Christ; men are hungry for God everywhere; and because, if we have a strategy this world can be reached in this generation and instead of the communist horde sweeping over the world, the Gospel of Jesus Christ … can go to the world."[150]

In a lecture prepared for Berlin's World Congress on Evangelism (October 26–November 4, 1966) entitled "Methods and Philosophy of Personal Evangelism,"[151] Bright refined his vision. He asserted, "If the Great Commission is to be fulfilled in our generation, there must be a dramatic new emphasis on personal evangelism."[152] He based his argument on a special project that focused on thousands of respondents. There he discovered four reasons for the lack of personal evangelism. First, Christian leaders fail to set an example in the area of personal evangelism. Most of them are untrained, unfruitful, afraid, and too busy. Second, he asserts, "Approximately ninety-five percent of all Christians are living defeated, fruitless, carnal lives."[153] Third, Christians lack expertise and courage to share their faith. Fourth, Bright suggests that unbelief is at the root of ineffectiveness.

He states, "The Christian has been brainwashed into presupposing a negative response to a personal witness for Christ."[154] His solution includes three simple imperatives: Christians must understand how to abide in Christ and to appropriate the power of the Holy Spirit moment by moment; Christians must be trained in personal

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[149] Bright, "Strategy," 3.
[150] Bright, "Strategy," 4.
[151] Bright, "Methods."
[152] Bright, "Methods."
[153] Bright, "Methods."

evangelism; and Christian leaders must place greater emphasis on personal evangelism. He concludes, “The Great Commission can and by God’s grace shall be fulfilled only through a renewed emphasis on personal evangelism.”[155] Bright’s burden always included a call for personal evangelism.

His desire to share God’s love through an increase in personal evangelism was coupled with a solemn awareness of the battle raging on college campuses. In the early 1960s he wrote,

> During this time of unprecedented campus unrest and revolt, another revolution is taking place on the campuses of the world—a revolution of love, the total unconditional love of God. All around the world, the forces of materialism, secularism, atheism and communism are battling for the minds of students. But students are seeking commitment to a cause big enough to demand their all, and the cause of Jesus Christ is proving to be just that big.… Staff members are serving on strategic campuses all across the nation.… It is their privilege daily to introduce students to Jesus Christ.[156]

Carey’s call to provide means for the conversion of heathens provided a springboard for the development of structures or missionary societies whose primary goal was to send missionaries to win heathens to Christ through evangelism and conversion. These missionary societies and parachurches created a pattern and structure for the institutional church to send out missionaries and helped to launch the modern missions movement and hundreds of foreign mission societies. These included the Baptist Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, the Religious Tract Society, and the British and Foreign Bible Society.[157]

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[154] Bright, “Methods.”

[155] Bright, “Methods.”

[156] Bill Bright, “Student Power, The Campus Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ,” *Action Magazine–A Special Report* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 8. Remarkably, over 150 years later, Bright’s vision and strategies for CCC’s global structure closely resembled Carey’s.

[157] Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 62. Carey’s *Enquiry* outlined four practical steps of response. First, he called for

By 1970 Bright began to consider setting a 1980 date for its fulfillment. The reason for the specific date rests on the command of the Great Commission. He reasons, "Every generation is to be responsible for the fulfillment of the Great Commission and a generation is approximately 30–35 years. Having started in 1951, in those days we talked about the Great Commission fulfilled, now it became apparent that we needed a definite date."[158] If this does not come to pass, Bright encouraged, there is no cause for embarrassment. He states, "[W]ith the conviction that God has given us to this date, as a goal, I personally want to commit my life, my time and my talent and everything I posses [sic] to the goal and encourage everyone else to do the same."[159] Confident in the ability of the United States to perfect technology, methods, and strategy, Bright predicts, "We can move into a totally new country and accomplish in two-to-three years what we've done in the United States in twenty. So, therefore, our goal is not just to reach the United States … but the whole world."[160] Bright's *Come Help Change the World*,[161] published this same year (1970), typifies his zeal.[162]

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fervent and united prayer; second, a willing "exertion" (p. 81); third, the formation of a committee among the Baptist denomination to provide means by creating a structure and supplying funds to send missionaries to reach the world; and fourth, he suggested ways in which people from every strata of society could contribute to this endeavor. Notably, these mission societies and agencies also created a dichotomy between church and mission. As a result, the focus on human and/or church agency as the primary motivation for engaging mission work produced a task-oriented approach to missions and complicated the relationship between the newly established churches on the mission field and the missions agencies at home. This complicated relationship is evident in Bright's early staff manual (Bill and Vonette Bright, *Campus Crusade for Christ Handbook: A Program Designed to Reach the Collegiate World for Christ,* September 1953, Revised 1956, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL). Church involvement is listed as one of CCC's fourfold purposes for new converts; staff members are to "cooperate in every way with churches who are sympathetic to our emphasis and to remain aware of CCC's primary calling to the college campus, not over involvement in the church program.

[158] Bill Bright, "Dictation," January 1, 1970, Bill Bright Papers on The Great Commission, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL.

[159] Bright, "Dictation."

[160] Bright, "Dictation."

[161] See note 93 earlier in this chapter.

[162] James Davison Hunter, in *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), adroitly criticizes the

The World Missionary Conference (1910)

This era of missionary zeal coincided with the "political and economic reality of [Western] colonialism"[163] and peaked at the WMC held in Edinburgh, Scotland, June 14–23, 1910.[164] This transdenominational gathering included 1,200 delegates representing Western churches and mission societies and is considered a landmark of missions history. The missionaries in attendance mobilized around John R. Mott's vision for the SVM—"the evangelization of the world in our generation."[165] These missionaries were hailed as "standard-bearers of the churches as they advance with the gospel of Christ for the

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assumption that revival or evangelism brings about change. He asserts, "The model on which various strategies are based not only does not work, [it] cannot work. On the basis of this working theory, Christians cannot 'change the world' in a way that they, even in their diversity, desire" (p. 5). The notion of changing the world is deeply embedded in Cru's strategy sixty-six years later, and, while it makes much more sense when viewed through the lens of the mid-twentieth century, it remains a formidable strand of Bright's DNA woven into the organization. Hunter mimics the twentieth-century Christian mindset: "The reason Christians do not have more influence in shaping the culture is that Christians are just not trying hard enough, acting decisively enough, or believing thoroughly or Christianly enough.… The [fatal] lesson: believers simply need to be more determined and to work harder" (p. 22). He argues that this flawed point of view resides in a self-centered idealism, well-meaning perhaps, but misguided. Cru must address this core organizational issue.

[163] Van Gelder and Zscheile, in *Participating*, 144, cite that colonialism "… encompassed 95 percent of the global South by the beginning of the twentieth century. The missionaries and their supporting churches worked, for the most part, under the protection of the colonial governments, even while they protested the excesses of these systems abusing the native populations."

[164] *World Missionary Conference Records, Edinburgh, 1910*, Missionary Research Library Archives, Section 12 (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 2006), 2. The WMC was preceded by a missionary conference held in London in 1888 that sought to study and distribute information regarding missionary work around the world. Allen Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology: Twenty-first-Century Mission From Everyone to Everywhere* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 17–18, considers the 1910 WMC in Edinburgh to be the seventh world missionary conference. The first two were held in New York and London consecutively in 1854, Liverpool in 1860, London in 1878 and 1888, and New York in 1900. It also can be seen as a third in a series of ecumenical missionary conferences—the 1888 Centenary Missionary Conference, the 1900 Ecumenical Missionary Conference in New York, and the 1910 WMC in Edinburgh, which was initially titled "The Third Ecumenical Missionary Conference" (p. 18).

Bosch, in *Transforming Mission*, 308, provides information surrounding the second Ecumenical Missionary Conference held in 1900 in New York. The purpose of this conference was to represent the work of Protestant missionaries serving around the world. The conference reportedly attracted between 170,000 and 200,000 people, making it the largest gathering in American religious history at the time. Speakers included US President William McKinley and the governor of New York, Theodore Roosevelt. Former president, Benjamin Harrison, served as honorary chair. Despite the success and size of the conference, organizers felt the need for a conference that focused on the challenge of missions in the non-Christian world.

[165] Mott, *Evangelization*, 1.

conquest of the world."[166] The organizers agreed on three points regarding the purpose of the conference: first, to focus on missionary work done among non-Christian peoples; second, to give attention to the most urgent and immediate problems; and third, to exclude all ecclesiastical opinions and doctrinal questions.[167] Although missionary delegates represented many different countries around the world from various Protestant denominations and missionary societies, the vast majority of delegates hailed from Great Britain and Europe and represented the evangelical-pietistic-puritan spirit of Protestantism at the time.[168]

The spirit of the gathering included a tone of obligation and urgency and called for a unified effort to fulfill the Great Commission. Most notably, the conference marked an ecumenical-evangelical unanimity and was meant to serve as a catalyst for a final initiative—the fulfillment of the Great Commission in this generation. Not long after this momentous occasion, however, World War I began and quickly dispelled foreign missionary optimism. The significance of the WMC is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The Ecumenical and Evangelical Divide

The WMC gathering in 1910 set its sights on the evangelization of the world in this generation. This was not unlike the Western drive toward the geographical and historical conquest of the non-Christian world. Van Gelder and Zscheile state, "[The WMC] clearly

[166] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 301. Also, Mark Galli ("Missions and Ecumenism: John R. Mott," *Christianity Today, Christian History*, https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-65/missions-and-ecumenism-john-r-mott.html, n.p.) records that Mott, raised in a Methodist home, was inspired by missionary C. T. Studd. Mott's missionary zeal was born at D. L. Moody's 1886 Northfield (Massachusetts) Student Conference, where he, along with ninety-nine others, volunteered for foreign missions. He would eventually become the college secretary for the YMCA and YWCA, and he helped to organize the SVM and the World Student Christian Association. Bright shared Mott's vision for the evangelization of university students and honored his legacy.

[167] *World Missionary Conference*, 2.

marked a time of transition, serving more as a culmination point for the success of the nineteenth century's foreign missions enterprise than as a staging area—as it had planned—for a major and final initiative."[169] This was due in large part to World War I.

World War I shattered postmillennial optimism, revealed the spiritual poverty of Western civilization, and soon gave way to liberalism and relativism. In addition, the threat of Darwinism, the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, and the dispute over the primacy of social reform or verbal proclamation intensified. In hindsight, these shifts in focus provided the catalyst for what became a growing divide between ecumenicals and evangelicals and is discussed further in Chapter 4.

By the end of World War I, these various missiologies were at odds with one another and often in conflict. The conservative fundamentalists committed to maintaining traditional faith, retreated from societal engagement, and, with premillennial zeal, emphasized the individual's salvation. D. L. Moody's dispensational theology informed his approach to evangelism, prioritizing personal salvation over social reform, and markedly influenced the revivalist strain of evangelicalism.[170] This is evidenced by the NAE that was formed in 1942 on the heels of the Mid-Century Prayer Revival (mentioned earlier in this chapter). The NAE sought to stem the tide of fundamentalist separation by bringing together a wider circle of evangelical churches and organizations. The NAE formed the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) in 1945[171] with a renewed commitment to the Great Commission, calling for an unwavering pledge to

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[168] *World Missionary Conference*, 2.

[169] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 145.

[170] Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 33.

[171] Wade T. Coggins, "Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies," *EDWM:*332 also notes that since 1960 the EFMA has partnered with the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association (IFMA).

foreign mission and the evangelization of the world. Through the influence of Henrietta Mears, leaders within the neo-evangelical movement, and some of the professors at the newly formed Fuller Seminary, Bill Bright was compelled by the call to help fulfill the Great Commission, which was the impetus behind his dogged commitment to world evangelization.[172]

Summary

Over the course of CCC's first twenty years, Bright's organizational resolve pivoted around his commitment to the Great Commission and personal evangelism. Bright, prolific in his personal evangelism, also shared the burden of gospel proclamation by providing a simple tool to aid in gospel proclamation. Indeed, he dedicated his life to training others in personal evangelism. He firmly believed that the key to fulfilling the Great Commission was fruitful Christian witness. If Moody's call was to "Save all you can!" then Bright's was to "Train and mobilize all you can!"

Bright's Enlightenment Influences

The sixth and final theme calls attention to the overarching influence of the Enlightenment in Bright's theology and methodology. This section analyzes the ways in which seeds of the Enlightenment were sown in Pietism, took root in evangelical revivalism, and came to full flower in Bright's midcentury methodology and development of *Four Spiritual Laws*. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Protestant Reformation (1517) marked new beginnings as corrupt religious orders were challenged to reform. In addition, the discovery of new worlds propped open a door of opportunity,

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[172] Jim Craddock, "CCC History," 1957, University of Oklahoma staff member, Campus Crusade

but these discoveries also brought uncertainty. In time, Christian unity gave way to religious instability, new states were formed, and old loyalties were challenged. Scientific discoveries upended long-held beliefs about the created world and unleashed what Hannah Arendt hauntingly describes as "a betrayal of the senses."[173] Rene Descartes's (1596–1650) rationalism served to further destabilize the theological center, in favor of, according to Goudzwaard and Bartholomew, "the liberating logic of the human intellect."[174] Although a thorough study of the Enlightenment is well beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to highlight its presence in the themes of influence that are discussed in this chapter.

The Enlightenment began early in the seventeenth century and was undergirded by the belief that true light came from individual reasoning. James Schmidt explains that for some, the term Enlightenment "… designates a period in European history stretching from the 1680s to the close of the eighteenth century, but this usage is not without ambiguities and controversies."[175] Furthermore, Schmidt adds that during the eighteenth century, Kant emphasized that the Enlightenment referred not to a period but to a process—a set of activities in which individuals engage. These activities involved the application of philosophy and would subsequently be classified as the natural sciences, the humanities, and social sciences.[176]

Furthermore, Schmidt avers that the application of the term "enlightenment" to a particular historical period was influenced by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in German

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for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL.

[173] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 274.

[174] Bob Goudzwaard and Craig Bartholomew, *Beyond the Modern Age: An Archaeology of Contemporary Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 24.

[175] James Schmidt, "Enlightenment," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Donald M.

histories of philosophy. The French term for the period—*siècle des Lumières*—"suggested a more elastic understanding of the period: a century of 'lights' rather than a single movement."[177] The English usage was similar to the German—*the Enlightenment* replacing *the illumination* as a label for the period only in the later years of the nineteenth century.[178]

The Enlightenment also emphasized naturalism, which added to the destabilizing effects of the Reformation. According to Newbigin, by the eighteenth century, "… science has been avowedly non-teleological. It cannot answer the question by whom and for what purpose the universe came into being; it is not even interested in the question."[179] Goudzwaard and Bartholomew classify the Enlightenment as significant to the Classical Modern worldview that espoused the priority of the individual and a personal privatized religion and left the public sphere to reason. The Classical Modern worldview advocated for a philosophical quest for certainty and placed a high value on pragmatism and progress.[180]

Individualism

Looking back over the history of Protestant missions, particularly as it relates to the First, Second, and Third Great Awakenings, it is not difficult to find evidence of Enlightenment

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Borchert (New York: Macmillan Resources, 2006), 3:342.

[176] Schmidt, "Enlightenment," 242.

[177] Schmidt, "Enlightenment," 243.

[178] Schmidt, "Enlightenment," 243.

[179] Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*: *The Gospel in Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 14. In addition, Bosch, in *Transforming Mission*, 271–73, highlights seven characteristics of the Enlightenment, summarized here: the ideal of progress; the factual, neutral, and value-free aspect of scientific knowledge; the subject-object scheme where humans, separate from their environment, are enabled to examine the animal and mineral world with scientific objectivity; the elimination of purpose from science and the introduction of direct causality as the clue to the understanding of reality; the paradigm that all problems were in principle solvable; sixth, all problems are in principle solvable; and finally, the Enlightenment regarded people as emancipated, autonomous individuals.

influences. Initially, Pietists sought to awaken the soul of the individual, to provide avenue for personal conversion and growth, and to enliven the spirit for evangelism and missionary zeal. By the mid-nineteenth century, evangelicalism's emphasis on premillennialism and individualism intensified. For example, Bosch points out that the British Evangelical Alliance of 1846 emphasized every believer's right to study the Scriptures privately and independent of ecclesial authority.[181] Moody's revivalist approach epitomized this sense of individualism. He preached the message of salvation to each person who stood before God. He believed the Holy Spirit was working in each individual heart and could be known primarily by personal experience.

In like manner, Bill Bright, acting on a vision from God, founded CCC in 1951. This vision compelled Bright to reach the world for Christ and help fulfill the Great Commission in his lifetime. His vision included reaching leaders on college campuses around the world under the banner "Reach the campus for Christ today—reach the world for Christ tomorrow."[182] When Bright, his wife Vonette, and Henrietta Mears launched CCC, their goal was to "reach student leaders who would be the future's decision-makers"[183] on campus, targeting men and women involved in sororities and fraternities, athletic departments, the student newspaper, and student government. They designed surveys in order to discover those who already knew Christ or had yet to hear the gospel, and they eventually trained and equipped CCC staff to present their personal testimonies and to share a simple version of the gospel. This earliest strategy involved memorizing a twenty-minute presentation entitled "God's Plan." Bright recalls,

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[180] Goudzwaard and Bartholomew, *Beyond*, 34.
[181] Bosch, *Transforming*, 323.
[182] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 61.

> Winning men and women to Christ was the essential starting point, but we did not wish to stop there. By investing the time to help build these new believers in their faith and to train them to share their faith with confidence, they would then repeat the process within their own spheres of influence—with or without our presence. The result would be not only spiritual addition, but also spiritual multiplication—the potential for exponential growth in the kingdom of God.[184]

In an effort to hone his methodology, in 1956 Bright invited a salesman to speak to his growing staff force about developing a simply crafted and clearly stated message. The salesman, for the sake of example, referred to Bill Bright's simple, clear, and repetitious gospel presentation as his "spiritual pitch."[185] Bright initially took offense. His intention was not to "sell" the gospel but instead to make it simple enough for anyone to understand; however, as he prayerfully considered the speaker's description, he found inspiration. After re-creating on paper what he typically shared, he sharpened his presentation of "God's Plan" and retitled it "God's Plan for Your Life," which focused on the person of Christ, his claims, his purpose, and his invitation to know him personally.[186]

At the same time, despite criticism and the risk of going against the grain of traditional evangelical approaches to the gospel that began with the problem of man's sin, Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws* began with an affirmation of God's love. He had been captivated by God's love and had researched the topic thoroughly from a theological standpoint; "How could anyone say no to Christ if they truly understood how much He loves them? We needed to start with the positive!"[187] Some of his staff questioned his decision for fear that he was minimizing the seriousness of sin, but Bright insisted on leading with God's love. Within a short period, other ministries and churches followed

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[183] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 64.
[184] Bright, *Come Help*, location 582 of 4167.
[185] Bright, *Come Help*, location 605.
[186] Bright, *Come Help*, location 620.

suit—including Billy Graham's Evangelistic Association. In addition to "God's Plan for Your Life" and *Four Spiritual Laws*, Bright also introduced the *Van Deusen Letter*, a letter to a wealthy businessman that provided a template for starting a conversation and included *Four Spiritual Laws*.[188]

Bright's early strategies resulted from rigorous research that led to the discovery that most students surveyed were familiar with the content in the first three Spiritual Laws: "God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life; Man is sinful and separated from God, therefore he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life; and, Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin."[189] However, many had no idea they could know God personally. This realization helped to shape the Fourth Spiritual Law: "You must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, then you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life." The Fourth Spiritual Law also included diagrams depicting a life separated from Jesus Christ and a life yielded to Jesus Christ and included a sample prayer expressing repentance and surrender. The first edition of *Four Spiritual Laws* was complete by 1957. Some critics touted this approach as "too simplistic,"[190] but Bright believed *Four Spiritual Laws* provided a simple and clear explanation on how each individual could know God personally.

Rationalism: Quest for Certainty

In addition to individualism, rationalism and a quest for certainty are also evident in Bright's approach. The term *rationalism*, which comes from the Latin *ratio*, or "reason,"

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[187] Bright, *Come Help*, location 647.

[188] Bright, *Come Help*, locations 626–28. Bright's enthusiasm for reaching wealthy businessmen is preserved in a letter written in 1947 to American business magnate Howard Hughes.

[189] Bright, *Four Spiritual Laws* (Los Angeles: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1964).

[190] Turner, *Bill Bright*, location 1305.

has been used to refer to several different outlooks and movements of ideas. Bernard Williams states, "The most important of these is the outlook or program that stresses the power of *a priori* reason to grasp substantial truths about the world and correspondingly tends to regard natural science as a basically *a priori* enterprise."[191] Bright sought to bring the power of reason to bear. In response to questions surrounding the viability of Jesus's resurrection, Bright designed an evangelistic tool called "The Uniqueness of Jesus"[192] that emphasized historical truths about Jesus.

Bright encouraged apologist Josh McDowell to join CCC in 1964 provide "well-documented historical, scientific, and biblical evidences for the Christian faith."[193] McDowell's experience with Marxist and Fascist students in Latin America in the late 1960s prepared him to interact effectively with American students in the 1970s.[194] His written apologetics and subsequent lecture series include *Evidence that Demands A Verdict*[195] and *The Resurrection Factor*.[196] His most widely distributed resource, *More Than A Carpenter*,[197] provides a simple apologetic on the claims of Christ, the reliability of Scripture, and the purpose behind Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.[198]

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[191] Bernard Williams, "Rationalism," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Donald M. Borchert (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomason Gale, 2006), 8:239.

[192] Bill Bright, *A Handbook for Christian Maturity: Ten Basic Steps Toward Christian Maturity*, (Orlando, FL: New Life Publications, 1994).

[193] Bright, *Come Help*, location 1178.

[194] McDowell, "My Story," n.p.

[195] Josh Mc Dowell and Sean McDowell, *Evidence that Demands A Verdict* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017).

[196] Josh McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor* (Crownhill, Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2005).

[197] Josh McDowell, *More Than A Carpenter* (San Francisco: Living Books, 1986).

[198] McDowell, "My Story," n.p.

Pragmatism and Progress

Another feature of the Enlightenment is an emphasis on pragmatism and progress. Turner describes Bright as an "evangelical entrepreneur"[199] and describes his innovative efforts as indicative of "dynamic and adaptive evangelicalism."[200] Bright committed himself and CCC to the creation of simple and transferable evangelistic materials and provided training accessible to anyone—regardless of academic training or background.

Here again, Mears's influence is significant. Her philosophy of education, steeped in pragmatism,[201] was reflected in Bright's philosophy and method of ministry. Bright's vision and consequent efforts to make Christianity practical very much reflected Mears's tutelage and pragmatic mindset. Bright emphasized the need for practical, comprehensive, and repetitive instruction, particularly evangelism.

Similar to Moody, Bright focused primarily on relevant and innovative ways to present *Four Spiritual Laws*. Bright, along with 600 staff and students involved in CCC, launched the Berkeley Blitz in 1967 with the goal of exposing the 27,000 students on the UC Berkeley campus to the message of Jesus Christ. A syndicated news release reported a "new kind of revolution"[202] on campus, proclaiming Christ as the answer to the world's problems. The release went on to say, "The Christian message was revolutionary because

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[199] Turner, *Bill Bright*, location 1195.

[200] Turner, *Bill Bright*, location 1204. Furthermore, Turner makes the astute observation that Bright's evangelistic impulse eventually drew him into the world of partisan politics. His upbringing, exposure to politics as a child, and Puritan theological underpinnings validate Turner's claim—although Bright vigorously denied political motivation.

[201] Tombrella, in "Mears Christianity," 105–113, provides a thorough explanation of the philosophy of pragmatism.

[202] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 116.

it has changed history, creating vast social reforms through reshaping the lives and attitudes of individuals."[203]

CCC began training laypeople and pastors in 1959 to share their faith and developed the Lay Institute For Evangelism (LIFE).[204] In 1961, CCC pioneered a weekly radio broadcast, [205] and in 1963 illusionist Andre Kole joined staff and developed a presentation of *Four Spiritual Laws* through illusions.[206] Several new ministries were launched in 1966 for the purpose of reaching the lost: Student Venture (a ministry to reach high school students), the Military Ministry, Athletes in Action, and Music Evangelism (later called Keynote). In 1970 Paragon Productions was introduced—a multimedia approach to evangelism.[207]

In summary, this section has demonstrated the ways in which Bright's development of *Four Spiritual Laws* and his approach to evangelism were influenced by Pietism and Enlightenment individualism handed down from the revivalist tradition. Bright was influenced by rationalism and the quest for certainty and he innovated evangelistic tools that sought to give evidence for the existence of God and the uniqueness of Jesus. He was also influenced in large part by Mears's pragmatic mindset and tutelage, and inherent in his strategies and materials was a drive toward the progress and eventual fulfillment of the Great Commission. The aforementioned strategies and materials were designed to be transferable, easily passed on from one believer to the next

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[203] Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 116.
[204] Bright, *Come Help*, location 753.
[205] Bright, *Come Help*, location 4167
[206] Bright, *Come Help*, location 1170.
[207] Bright, *Come Help*, locations 1185–1224.

with the goal to win students to Christ, build them in their faith, send them to the world, and repeat the process until the Great Commission was fulfilled.

Summary of Chapter 3

The purpose of this chapter has been to demonstrate the various ways in which Bill Bright's mid-twentieth-century context influenced his development of *Four Spiritual Laws*. The chapter introduced the historical and contemporary influences that spurred Bright's development of *Four Spiritual Laws* by focusing on six overarching themes: (1) a brief overview of the religious and secular context of the mid-twentieth century; (2) the advent of the First, Second, Third, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Awakenings and the intense revivalism that emerged within the ebb and flow of Calvinist and Arminian theological and eschatological emphases; (3) Bright's life phases; (4) the influence of Henrietta Mears and neo-evangelicalism on Bright's conversion and call to ministry; (5) the impact of William Carey's *Enquiry*, the modern missions movement, and the ecumenical/evangelical divide on Bright's understanding of the Great Commission; and (6) the far-reaching effects of the Enlightenment. This chapter also highlighted the fact that Bright's development of *Four Spiritual Laws* together with his commitment to help fulfill the Great Commission were largely born out of a post-World War II mindset—fueled, in part, by Bright's desire to defeat communism and undergirded by an urgency fueled by premillennial dispensationalism.

Bright's vision to see the fulfillment of the Great Commission was not realized in his lifetime, and yet his zealous passion for the evangelization of the world remained intact throughout his life. Based on this brief outline of his story, Bright would most certainly recognize the cultural shifts evident in the world today and would strive for

evangelistic effectiveness. It is being argued here that, due to secularization, increased diversity, and globalization, Cru should consider a reimagined and recontextualized approach to meaningful gospel conversations in today's world.

CHAPTER 4

RECONTEXTUALIZING FOR A SECULAR AGE

A Call for Recontextualization

As stated in Chapter 2, Charles Taylor argues that twenty-first-century secularization, or Secular_3, exists within the immanent frame where theistic belief has been displaced from the default position, creating a new set of faith assumptions or conditions of belief. Christianity is now one among many options for belief. Furthermore, Taylor contends, this secularization has led to a self-sufficient or exclusive humanism. Philip Rieff describes this era as void of moral authority, where nothing transcends above or beyond the material world or the self, and without religion or morality. This secularized twenty-first century is placed in contrast with Bill Bright's mid-twentieth-century context—in which the majority of America's population was white and either Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish—and demonstrates the need for a recontextualization of the gospel. The call for recontextualization is born out of the contention that Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws* is insufficient for meaningful gospel conversations in an American twenty-first-century secularized context. The purpose of this chapter is to call for recontextualization in response to the stated contextual differences between a Secular_3 twenty-first-century context and Bright's mid-twentieth-century context and to lay the groundwork for faithful recontextualization.

Part One provides a missiological snapshot of America's twenty-first-century context and includes a discussion of the following perspectives: a synopsis of 2016 research conducted by Cyrano Marketing Collective on behalf of Cru, *Understanding*

Faith and Purpose in the City;[1] demographer William Frey's *Diversity Explosion*, an analysis of the US population based on the 2010 Census data;[2] and Barna Group's 2018 report, *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs, and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation*.[3]

Part Two provides a genealogy of the emergence of contextualization from four particular vantage points. Recognizably, researching the topic of contextualization is like looking through the lens of a kaleidoscope that reflects multiple colors and variations with the twist of the tube. These particular vantage points are meant to sharpen our understanding of the emergence of contextualization. The first vantage point glances back across history and considers some ways in which contextualization has taken place since the first century. The second vantage point focuses on the 1910 WMC in Edinburgh and represents a substantive paradigm shift in missions—a watershed moment. It spurred, among other things, the rise of the ecumenical and evangelical movements and indirectly influenced the RCC and Vatican II in the 1960s. The third vantage point highlights the ways in which contextualization emerged through both the ecumenical and evangelical traditions in the 1970s. The fourth vantage point provides a view of the ongoing missiological response within these traditions into the twenty-first century.

Part Three reimagines an approach to contextualization for the twenty-first century and highlights the ways in which ecumenicals and evangelicals have diverged or pivoted from their common starting point and also makes evident a Catholic contribution to contextualization. These streams contribute to providing riverbanks that allow for

[1] Brooke Wright et al., *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City* (Atlanta: Cyrano Marketing Collective, 2016).

[2] William H. Frey, *Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics are Remaking America* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018).

[3] Barna Group, *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation*

confluence. This reimagined approach is followed by a proposal for four prominent features of faithful recontextualization in a twenty-first-century secularized context.

Part One: A Missiological Snapshot of America's Twenty-First-Century Context

Given the volume of missiological literature either written about Lesslie Newbigin or influenced by him, it seems safe to say that the missiological world is still very much influenced by his call for a "missionary encounter" with the West. Previous chapters demonstrate the differences between Taylor's description of a Secular$_3$ twenty-first-century context and Bright's mid-twentieth-century context and highlight the need for a missionary encounter in the US aided by a recontextualization of the gospel.

Cru Research

Cru is widely known for the profound impact of *Four Spiritual Laws* and for its organizational commitment to help fulfill the Great Commission. But Cru is undergoing an organizational paradigm shift like many churches and institutions in the US today. One of Cru's main priorities is to determine what constitutes effective and culturally appropriate approaches to evangelism in the twenty-first century.

Twenty-First-Century Context: Campus Crusade for Christ Changes Name to Cru

Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) began on the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles in 1951 with student leaders as its primary audience and the presentation of *Four Spiritual Laws* as its primary goal. Over the past seven decades, the ministry has grown from a small group of students on one campus to many thousands of students on

(Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2018).

thousands of campuses globally. CCC's scope grew to include ministries contextualized to different audiences beyond the university campus, including athletes and families, executives and professionals, artists and philanthropists, military personnel, and pastors in inner-city, urban, and suburban neighborhoods. *Christianity Today* reported in 2011, "The 60-year-old ministry is one of the largest evangelical parachurch organizations in the world, with about 25,000 staff members in 191 countries and $490 million in annual revenue."[4] The success of CCC and the breadth of its outreach cannot be denied.

Notably, CCC's US-based leadership has begun to recognize and seek to respond to these aforementioned paradigmatic shifts in the culture. CCC's leadership has sought to remain culturally relevant in order to effectively reach people with the gospel while seeking to maintain Bright's original vision. One of the first steps toward remaining culturally relevant took place in 2011. This involved changing the name of the organization from "Campus Crusade for Christ" to "Cru." According to Steve Sellers, CCC International Vice President and US National Director, "[Crusade] has become a flash word for a lot of people. It harkens back to other periods of time and has a negative connotation for lots of people across the world, especially in the Middle East…. In the '50s, *crusade* was [an] evangelistic term in the United States. Over time, different words take on different meanings to different groups."[5] After considerable research, collaboration, and prayer, CCC changed its name to Cru—a nickname that had been adopted on campuses at the local level in the mid-1990s.

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[4] Sarah Bailey, "Campus Crusade Changes Name to Cru," *Christianity Today*, July 19, 2011 (http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/julyweb-only/campus-crusade-name-change.html), n.p.

[5] Bailey, "Campus Crusade," n.p.

Cru launched a refocused effort in the US in major cities around the country in 2011. Cru worked to understand the current cultural and religious climate in the US for the express purpose of effectively engaging in gospel conversations in a twenty-first-century urban context. The first step involved launching a marketing project to provide a comprehensive look at the social, religious, and cultural realities in cities across America.

Cru Research: Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City

This marketing project included a thorough evaluation of Cru's history, philosophy of evangelism, and resultant tools used for sharing the gospel. It is important to note that these were developed in the mid-twentieth century and targeted a predominantly churched population. Also notable is that most of Cru's evangelistic tools were (and continue to be) developed primarily to reach students on university campuses.

Externally, the project included qualitative and quantitative analyses drawn from an audience of four hundred men and women between the ages of twenty-four and fifty-six, living in cities across the country, who represented diverse backgrounds and religious worldviews (see Figure 1).[6] Significantly, over half of the people surveyed claimed no religious affiliation and most described Christianity as offensive, inauthentic, unsafe, or simply irrelevant.

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[6] Brooke Wright et al., *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City* (Atlanta: Cyrano Marketing Collective, 2016). This is also discussed in, Cas Monaco, "Cru Research Reveals Insights for Gospel Conversations," *The Send Institute,* https://www.thesendintitute.org/insights-gospel-conversations, and is also available online, Cru, "The Road Show: Gospel Engagement in a Changing Culture," https://www.cru.org/communities/city/roadshow/.

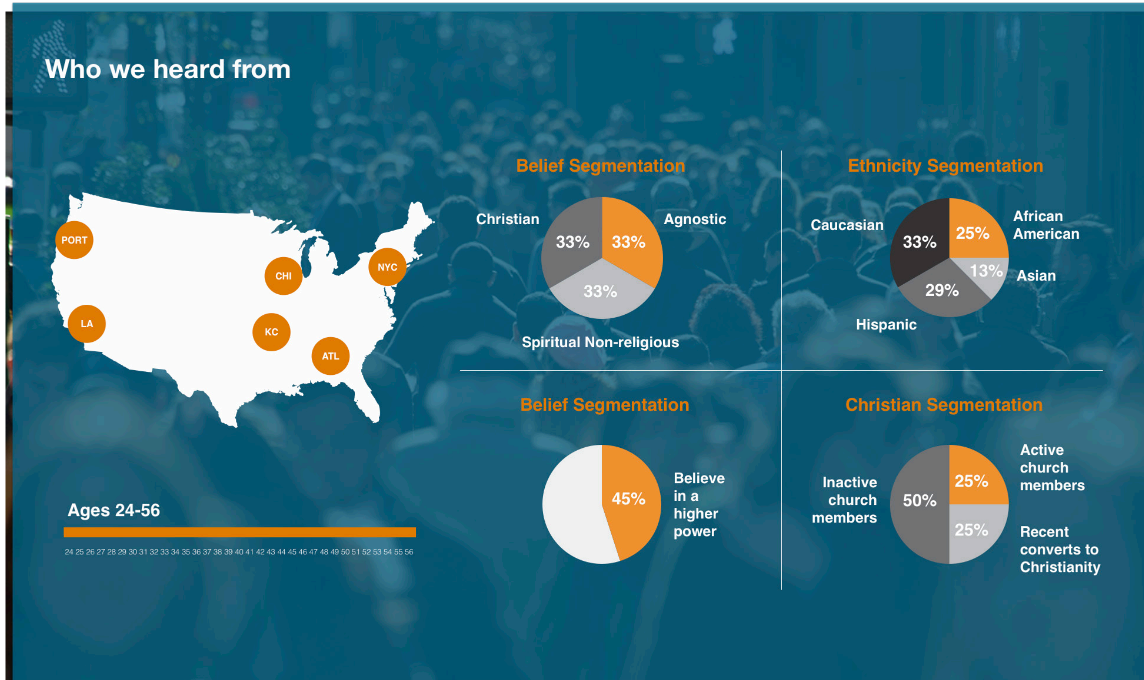

Figure 1. Infographic of Population Surveyed. Brooke Wright et al. *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City*. Atlanta: Cyrano Marketing Collective, 2016. Copyright Cru, 2018. Reprinted with permission.

Personas and The Scale of Belief

Cru's research revealed seven *personas* (see Figure 2)[7] emerged from the data that represent *six postures of belief*.[8] Markedly, the specific words used to describe five of these different personas and postures were used by the interviewees themselves (they appear in italics below). Not surprisingly, these personas fell along a spectrum of belief easily recognizable in Scripture. On the far left of the scale, one finds Jen, an *antidogmatic* who contends that religious people are so entrenched in their own beliefs that they are unable to converse with anyone who disagrees. Next is Alan, who is *unaware* and *content* and who has no interest in and feels no need for religion or the gospel. In the middle is the *anxious* yet *curious* persona, someone such as Danielle, who

[7] Wright et al., *Understanding Faith*.

senses the reality of a higher power but is confused and unsure who or what that higher power is. Or Aarón, who is aware of the abundance of religious options but finds it difficult to believe that anyone is exactly right. The middle-to-right of the scale shows Crystal who is *disillusioned* and believes that religion is a manmade construct used to raise money and to manipulate people. Moving to the right along the scale is Wes, the *inquisitive progressive* who believes in God and that God has created him for a purpose. Finally, there's Shawn, the *faithful* who has expressed an active commitment to following Jesus and to helping others follow him too.

Cru's research led to the development of The Scale of Belief (see Figure 3),[9] moving from left to right, that revealed the following points of view: the *unaware*—those who are oblivious to spirituality or the things of God; the *content* reflects those who enjoy their lives, seek to help others, and sense no need for God; the *follower, activator,* and *guide* each reflects someone who is actively following God and engaging with others. The research also revealed some good news. Eighty-four percent of the 400 people surveyed indicated that they are ready and willing to engage in spiritual conversations. Strikingly though, most do not believe Christians are ready or willing to participate in a

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[8] Wright et al., *Understanding Faith*.
[9] Wright et al., *Understanding Faith.*

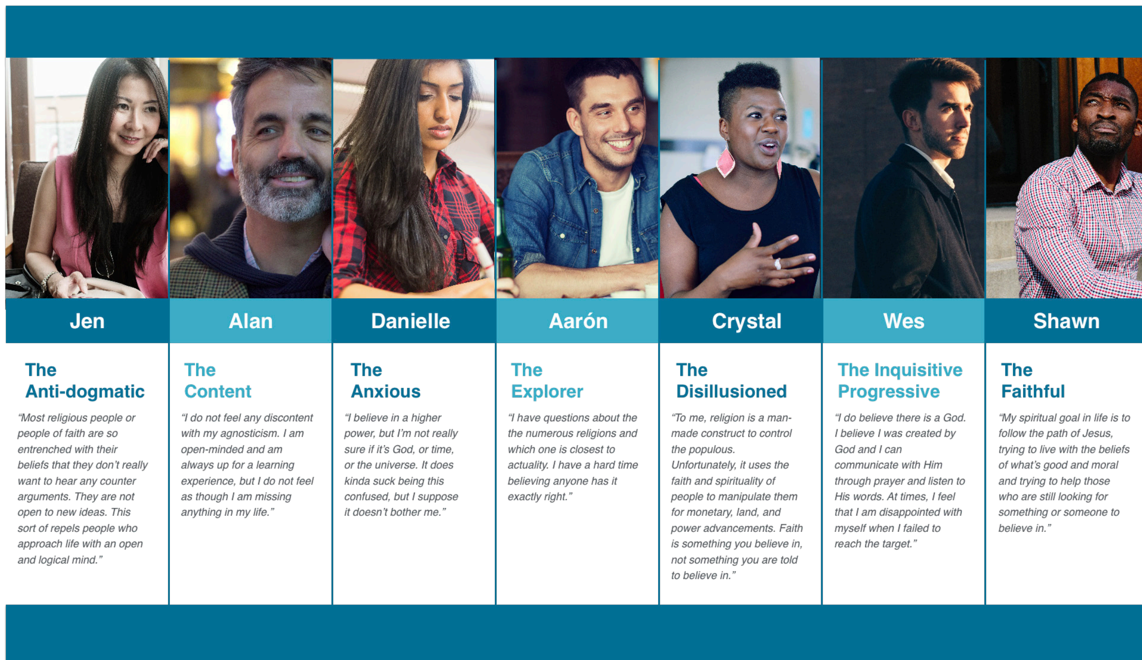

Figure 2. Infographic of Seven Personas. Brooke Wright et al. *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City*. Atlanta: Cyrano Marketing Collective, 2016. Copyright Cru, 2018. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 3. Infographic of the Scale of Belief. Brooke Wright et al. *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City*. Atlanta: Cyrano Marketing Collective, 2016. Copyright Cru, 2018. Reprinted with permission.

conversation with someone who holds an opposing view. Many described experiences when Christians talked at them rather than listening to them or engaging in meaningful dialogue. This suggests another important reason for reimagining meaningful gospel conversations for the twenty-first century.

Summary

Cru's 2016 research revealed that these personas represent people in cities across America who are hardwired with three core longings: peace—the absence of anxiety; prosperity—the longing for stability; and purpose—the deep desire for meaning. Cru's research demonstrates the need for Christians to cultivate an ongoing awareness of the people with whom they interact. Chapter 6 provides some of the practical ways Cru has used this research to inform a narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations.

Demographic Changes: A Diversity Explosion

The changing demographics in cities across America are significant for those who seek to engage in meaningful gospel conversations today.[10] Demographer William Frey describes 2011 as an important milestone in American history. He states,

> For the first time in the history of the country, more minority babies than white babies were born in a year. This milestone signals the beginning of a transformation from the mostly white baby boom culture that dominated the nation during the last half of the twentieth century to the more globalized, multiracial country that the United States is becoming.[11]

According to Frey, this sweep of diversity has begun to affect the nation. He asserts, "I am convinced that the United States is in the midst of a pivotal period ushering in

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[10] Frey, *Diversity Explosion*, 5.
[11] Frey, *Diversity Explosion*, 1.

extraordinary shifts in the nation's racial demographic makeup."[12] Furthermore, this diversity explosion will create significant changes in individual attitudes, institutional practices, and the nature of American politics. Not surprisingly, these changes are bubbling up from younger generations, creating social and cultural gaps between younger and older generations.

This explosive growth is due in large part to immigration. Jynnah Radford of the Pew Research Center reports that the US has more immigrants than any other country in the world, with as many as 40 million people living in the US who were born in another country.[13] According to Radford, this number has quadrupled since 1965 and accounted for one-fifth of the world's migrants in 2017.[14] An astonishing one million immigrants arrive in the US each year—the majority of which arrive from India. Radford anticipates that Asia will be the source of the largest immigrant group in the US by 2055, surpassing even the number of Hispanics.[15]

An important implication of this sweeping diversity is a dynamic shift in worldviews. Linda Bergquist and Michael Crane state, "We are living in a time between the times, when worldviews are in transition. Many of the tensions and disagreements in the world today can be at least partially attributed to this worldview transition … a shift from modern to emerging worldview values."[16] They urge, "Respect for and protection of diversity is one of the most significant worldviews emerging at this time. The idea of

[12] Frey, *Diversity Explosion*, 3.

[13] Jynnah Radford, "Key Findings About U.S. Immigrants," The Pew Research Center, June 17, 2019 (https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/17/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/), n.p.

[14] Radford, "Key Findings," n.p.

[15] Radford, "Key Findings," n.p.

[16] Linda Bergquist and Michael D. Crane, *City Shaped Churches: Planting Churches in the Global Era* (Skyforest, CA: Urban Loft Publishers, 2018), 103.

diversity resonates with pluralism and the realization that the planet is amazingly interconnected."[17]

In the US, Bergquist and Crane note that many Western Christians have been trained to evangelize nominal Christians or secular persons; however, they are "ill prepared to articulate their faith to hyper-spiritual Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims and other religious people in their midst."[18] In light of the diversity explosion, the church must prepare to engage in meaningful gospel conversations with people from vastly different backgrounds who hold vastly different worldviews.

Gen Z: The Next Generation

The next portion of this section focuses on Gen Z—the post-Millennial generation, which includes anyone born between 1999 and 2015, according to Barna Group's report.[19] A general summary of the report's findings is utilized here to further establish the paradigmatic shifts apparent in today's culture and the marked differences between today's culture and that of Bright's in the mid-twentieth century. Barna Group conducted a comprehensive research study in 2018 surveying teenagers, youth workers, and pastors and also engaging Christian parents on the culture, beliefs, and motivations that shape this emerging generation.[20] While their conclusions highlight a number of interesting findings, this section reveals the missiological challenges Gen Z presents regarding

[17] Bergquist and Crane, *City Shaped*, 206.

[18] Bergquist and Crane, *City Shaped*, 207.

[19] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 10.

[20] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 111. The survey established specific definitions to indicate where each participant stood regarding faith and religion: No Faith; Other Faith (other than Christianity); Unchurched Christians (have not attended church in the past six months); Churched Christians (identify as Christian and have attended church in the past six months); and Engaged Christians (identify as Christian, have attended church in the past six months, agree that "the Bible is the inspired work of God and contains truth about the world"). Engaged Christians have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ and consider that decision

implications for evangelism in relation to worldview, identity, diversity, morals, and truth.

Worldview

The worldview of Gen Z is "highly inclusive and individualistic."[21] This group of people is open-minded, sensitive to others' feelings, and hesitant to declare something as either right or wrong. Barna Group reports, "Out of 69 million children and teens in Gen Z, just four percent have a biblical worldview."[22] Many identify as atheist, and while "they are drawn to things spiritual … their starting point is vastly different from previous generations.… They were not born into a Christian culture, and it shows."[23] Barna Group describes Gen Z as a "spiritual blank slate";[24] however, this claim misses the impact of the deeply secularized cultural influences the report itself surfaces.

This research also indicates that the internet is at the core of Gen Z's development and has a powerful influence on every aspect of their lives, from their worldview to their mental health. While a majority of Gen Z identifies as Christian, just one in eleven identifies as being an active Christian. James Emery White adds, "As the cultural cost of being Christian increases, people who were once Christian only in name likely have started to identify as nones, disintegrating the 'ideological bridge' between unbelievers and believers."[25] Gen Z's apathy toward religion reflects an increasingly secular culture.

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to be still important today. They also "engage with church in more than attending services and believe that Jesus Christ was crucified and raised from the dead to conquer sin and death" (p. 112).

[21] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 13.

[22] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 13.

[23] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 26.

[24] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 10.

[25] James Emery White, *Meet Gen Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 32. White also sounds the same note of change described earlier in this chapter. He resonates with political strategist Doug Sosnik, quoted in White, *Meet Gen Z*, 18, who believes

Identity

Gen Z's "highly inclusive and individualistic"[26] worldview plays a role in their identity. Barna Group reveals, "Their collective aversion to causing offense is the natural product of a pluralistic, inclusive culture that frowns on passing judgment that might provoke negative feelings."[27] Their inclusive nature is also evident in their assorted views on gender identity. As a result, "they struggle with anxiety and indecision"[28] as they wrestle with how to accept and affirm other people. Tim Elmore affirms, "This generation of children and teens suffer more from mental health problems than any other generation of kids in American history."[29] Furthermore, Elmore points out that Gen Z is always seeking affirmation and rarely receives relief from negative interaction.

Plurality of Diversity

Barna Group reports that half of Gen Z is nonwhite and makes up "the most racially, religiously and sexually diverse generation in American history."[30] In fact, the fastest growing demographic in their age group is multiracial. This generation values social inclusiveness due to their own experience of diversity in family structures, sexuality, and gender. Gen Z is more likely than older adults to express some level of sexual fluidity or non-binary identity. These findings reveal another facet of the diversity explosion discussed earlier.

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the United States is "going through the most significant period of change since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution." Sosnik goes on to describe this as "a 'hinge' moment" (p. 18). White emphasizes the impact of an increasingly secular culture.

[26] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 13.

[27] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 27.

[28] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 27.

[29] Tim Elmore and Andrew McPeak, *Generation Z: Unfiltered* (Atlanta: Poet Gardner, 2019), Kindle edition, location 575 of 5705.

[30] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 13.

Morality, Values, and Truth

Not surprisingly, Gen Z looks at morality—the issue of right and wrong—through the lens of moral relativism. As intimated earlier, this generation holds the most liberal views when it comes to issues of sexuality, drugs, premarital sex, and abortion. Barna Group's report also reveals that they believe that morality changes over time based on changing social values. Important for this discussion is Gen Z's relative view of morality coupled with their uncertainty about God's existence. Fifty-eight percent agree that many religions can lead to eternal life and believe there is no one true religion. Most striking, however, is the fact that "irrelevance is the key for this generation when it comes to faith, truth, and church. How can something as nonsensical as faith in God, church, truth have any relevance to everyday life?"[31] Not surprising, then, their ever-changing views of morality, values, and truth that are based on the social problems without any reference to God influence their view of the problem of evil and suffering. "They struggle to find a compelling argument for the existence of evil and a good and loving God."[32] However, they are determined to make a difference regarding significant local and global issues such as gun control and climate change.[33]

Summary of Part One

This section provided a missiological snapshot of the twenty-first-century religious and sociological context in the US from three points of view: (1) an analysis of data compiled

[31] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 74.

[32] Barna Group, *Gen Z*, 58.

[33] Elmore and McPeak, *Generation Z*, location 822 of 5705, note that on March 24, 2018, 400,000 teenagers took part in March for Our Lives, a protest against gun violence in response to a school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida where seventeen students were killed on February 14, 2018.

Greta Thunberg, a Swedish-born environmental activist, at the age of fifteen, addressed the United

from a Cru research project entitled *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City*,[34] which provided the impetus for this dissertation; (2) an overview of demographer William H. Frey's study of the 2010 US Census and his highlight of shifts in racial demographics;[35] and (3) a sketch of Barna Group's 2018 report: *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs, and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation*.[36]

This missiological overview considered Cru's research and identified some of the cultural shifts that compelled Cru to conduct meaningful research into today's culture. The results of this research, although not surprising to Cru leadership, are beginning to have a decided impact on the organization's traditional approach to meaningful gospel conversations.

Part Two: The Emergence of Contemporary Contextualization

Part Two provides a genealogy of contextualization from four vantage points. This genealogy is meant to provide a summary of the church's effort to communicate the gospel in biblically sound and culturally relevant ways since the first century. The first vantage point glances back across history and considers some of the ways in which the gospel has been contextualized or "translated"[37] in different cultures since the first century. The second vantage point focuses on the 1910 WMC in Edinburgh, which represents another substantive paradigm shift in missions, especially in relation to the

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Nations in August 2018 and consequently influenced student strikes around the world.

[34] Wright et al., *Understanding Faith*.

[35] William H. Frey, *Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics are Remaking America* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018).

[36] Barna Group, *Gen Z*.

[37] Andrew F. Walls, in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 27, argues that the gospel is universal by being particular and local, demonstrated by the incarnation. The incarnation demonstrates the way God translated the Word into the embodied life of Jesus Christ and into the cultural reality of first-century Palestine.

various streams that it helped to generate. The third vantage point sheds light on the emergence of the term and concept of contextualization in both the ecumenical and evangelical traditions and the Roman Catholic tradition. This represents another significant paradigm shift in mission history. The fourth vantage point provides a view of the ongoing missiological response within these traditions into the twenty-first century.

Genealogy of Contextualization

The following section rests on the assumption that the gospel is multidimensional and designed by God to cross cultural frontiers, which is evidenced by the incarnation. God took on human flesh in a particular ethnos, at a particular place, and within a particular time in history. Van Gelder and Zscheile affirm, "God's mission is the generative, creative, and redemptive sending by which the cosmos came into being and continues to be healed and restored in the midst of its brokenness."[38] The *multidimensional* character of the gospel is demonstrated in numerous ways in the book of Acts, including that moment when Peter was confronted with the cultural implications of the gospel spreading to the gentiles (Acts 10). This is later followed by the meeting of the Jerusalem Council, which, when confronted with a cultural dilemma, made the decision to no longer require circumcision (Acts 15). Paul further demonstrates the strength and flexibility of the gospel at Mars Hill while trying to explain it to the gentiles (Acts 17).

The gospel is also *multidirectional* as demonstrated by the movement of Christianity from the first century until now. The flexibility of the gospel is inherent in

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Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 42, describes the incarnation, the fact that the gospel transcends every culture, as the "scandal of particularity."

[38] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 36.

the ways it has been translated and contextualized in history and across the globe. Justo Gonzales notes, "From its beginning, the Christian message was grafted onto human history."[39] Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder describe this history as a movement that tells the story of Christianity. This movement is not "unidirectional (Palestine to Europe to the rest of the world)" [40] but is "multi-directional (from Palestine to Asia, Palestine to Africa, Palestine to Europe)."[41] This movement also represents the constant discovery of the gospel's "'infinite translatability.'"[42] Stephen Neill draws attention to and traces the unchronicled and anonymous witness of faithful Christians from the first century forward. He notes that where there were Christians there was always a "living, burning faith, and before long an expanding Christian community."[43]

The significance of cultural awareness in relation to contextualization is evident in the theological conferences and councils that took place in the second and third centuries. The doctrines and creeds that emerged out of these controversies eventually brought further clarity of perspective to Christ followers in the face of cultural challenges. The significance of this faithful contextualization embedded in history must not be minimized and methods for contextualization must continue to be developed with care.

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[39] Justo L. Gonzales, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, vol. 1 of *The Story of Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), 1.

[40] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), Kindle edition, Introduction, location 322 of 12355.

[41] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, locations 322–335 of 12355.

[42] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, location 322 of 12355.

[43] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (New York: Penguin, 1964), 22.

Vantage Point One: Under-Contextualization and Over-Contextualization in Hindsight

For centuries, God's Spirit has been contextualizing or translating the gospel into different cultural languages in a variety of ways through the church. Missiologists warn against over-contextualizing—becoming too adaptive or complicit in compromising the gospel; and under-contextualizing—resisting change, maintaining the status quo in the name of faithfulness, obedience, and biblical fidelity.[44] An example that illustrates the enduring tension that exists in contextualization is found in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries when the Jesuits of the RCC experimented with accommodation.

Accommodation included conscious adaptation to a given culture and a willingness to incorporate cultural forms, some of which appeared to be at odds with orthodox church views—evidence of possible over-contextualization. Andrew Walls cites Italian Jesuit Roberto de Nobili as an early and well-known example of accommodation. De Nobili was a missionary sent to southern India who adopted the lifestyle of a Brahmin sannyasi to such an extent that his Christianity was unrecognizable.[45] The debate surrounding accommodation eventually led to the RCC's Rites Controversy (1630–1742). Here, accommodation was debated and eventually condemned with a decision to use only Latin for engaging in mission work[46]—an example of under-contextualization.

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[44] Van Gelder and Zscheile, in *Participating*, 48–51, discuss this in more depth especially as it relates to contextualization and the church in the twenty-first century. Importantly, they anchor their argument in a "Spirit-led mission in context." A. Scott Moreau, in *Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 114, discusses "good and bad contextualization" and provides two case studies to illustrate how evangelicals are "passionate about safeguarding biblical congruence in contextualization and that we appreciate prescriptive taxonomies that can guide us in turbulent times."

[45] Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 40.

[46] David J. Bosch, in *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012), 460, points out that in 1744 a papal bull was issued that forbade "all but the most trivial concessions to local custom." All missionaries were required to submit to this order, and "by 1773 the Society of Jesus was suppressed.… The oath introduced in 1744 was not repealed until 1938."

An example relating to the Protestant church occurred in sixteenth-century Protestant missions that were sponsored by the European state church.[47] In hindsight, this one-dimensional sponsorship resulted in the gospel being under-contextualized and mission work being biased toward Western ethnocentrism, Western superiority, and colonization. This mindset in missions began to shift in the nineteenth century under the leadership of Henry Venn (1796–1873) of the Church Missionary Society and Rufus Anderson (1796–1880) of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions. They were the first to use the term *indigenous church*[48] in the mid-nineteenth century and called for the development of the "three-self churches—self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating."[49] They also instructed new churches to be "'self-reliant' and 'purely native.'"[50]

Missionaries such as John L. Nevius (1829–1893), Roland Allen (1868–1947), and Alan Tippett (1911–1988) built on these indigenous principles in the years that followed. These principles provide evidence of under-contextualization where younger

[47] Van Gelder and Zscheile, in *Participating*, 29, explain that at the time, Christianity in the West rested on the foundation of the Nicene Creed: "that there was only one holy, catholic, and apostolic church. Both the protestors and the RCC worked from this same narrative, which raised the fundamental question: Which churches are true, and which are not?" By the end of the Protestant Reformation, Lutheranism became the official state religion throughout Germany, Scandinavia, and the Baltics.

[48] Harvey Conn, in "Indigenization," *EDWM*:481, defines indigenization as "the 'translatability' of the universal Christian faith into the forms and symbols of the particular cultures of the world.… The word validates all human languages and cultures before God as legitimate paths for understanding his divine meanings."

Bosch, in *Transforming Mission*, 459, tellingly titles a section "Mission as Inculturation" and provides the historical development behind adaptation/accommodation (in Catholicism) or indigenization (in Protestantism) and suggests that they all operated under the Western Christian assumption that their theology was supracultural and universally valid. Therefore, in order to "expedite the conversion process, some adjustments were necessary." Michael Goheen, "A History and Introduction to a Missional Reading of the Bible," in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, edited by Michael Goheen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 13, notes that Bosch's work, while groundbreaking, demonstrates a "meager treatment of the OT and its importance for the NT." Since Bosch's time, much work has been done on a missional hermeneutic that spans the canon of Scripture.

[49] John Mark Terry, "Indigenous Church," *EDWM*:483.

[50] Terry, "Indigenous," 484.

churches were first trained and educated in traditionally Euro-American ways before they could attain selfhood or maturity. Donald McGavran (1897–1990), a notable twentieth-century missiologist, also drew on these indigenous concepts to develop the Church Growth Movement (CGM),[51] People Movements, and Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP).[52] McGavran proposed that numerical church growth would occur through the verbal proclamation of the gospel. The CGM, however, was at times criticized for its emphasis on numbers and statistics, and the HUP could be considered classist or racist.[53]

From the vantage point of history, it is clear that various attempts to contextualize the gospel were employed to generate purposeful and relevant gospel conversations in new and different cultures. The examples of over- and under-contextualization underscore the need to remain attentive to culture in order to clearly present the message of the gospel in new and different contexts.

Vantage Point Two: The 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh

Vantage Point Two deals with the 1910 WMC in Edinburgh where over 1200 church leaders and ministry personnel from the West gathered to plan for the completion of the task of world evangelization. This vantage point demonstrates the ways in which the WMC remains a watermark in Western and world missions. Its stated purpose was as follows: "The first duty of a World Missionary Conference … is to consider the present world situation from the point of view of making the Gospel known to all men, and to

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[51] C. Peter Wagner, in the preface to *Understanding Church Growth*, by Donald A. McGavran and C. Peter Wagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), xi.

[52] Kenneth S. Grubb, in the foreword to *Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Missions*, by Donald A. McGavran (New York: World Dominion Press, 1955), v–vii, details McGavran's strategy for mission expansion and contrasts "People Movements—his own term—and the Mission Station approach" (p. vi).

[53] C. Rene Padilla, "The Unity of the Church and the Homogeneous Unit Principle," in *Exploring*

determine what should be done to accomplish this Christ-given purpose."[54] The watchword for the conference was "The evangelization of the world in this generation."[55] Notably, the WMC is considered by many as "The Birthplace of the Modern Ecumenical Movement"[56] with the formation of the Life and Work movement and the Faith and Order movement. Many evangelicals consider the WMC as the inspiration for the eventual International Congress on World Evangelization, held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974.[57] It is also credited for its indirect influence on the work of the RCC and the Vatican Council in the 1960s.[58] This vantage point explores these three streams of mission[59] that flowed from the WMC and considers the ways in which these different

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Church Growth, ed. Wilbert Shenk (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 301.

[54] "Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World," *World Missionary Conference Records, Edinburgh, 1910*, Missionary Research Library Archives, Section 12, 1–28 (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 2006), 4.

[55] John R. Mott, *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation* (London: Student Volunteer Movement, 1902), 2.

[56] Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference: Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 9. Allen Yeh, in *Polycentric Missiology: Twenty-first-Century Mission From Everyone to Everywhere* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 7-8, summarizes Stanley's three reasons for this nickname: it links back to William Carey and the first ecumenical conference in 1810; it hearkens to the eventual founding of the WCC in 1948; and it reflects the significance of the gathering in 1910. Yeh argues that the WMC in Edinburgh in 1910 was not ecumenical because there were only two denominations present, which he defines as Protestant and Anglo-Catholic. The exclusion of the Latin Americans also kept the conference from being ecumenical. As noted in Chapter 3, and for the sake of review, Yeh expands on the previous *World Missionary Conference Records*, *Edinburgh, 1910*, Missionary Research Library Archives, Section 12 (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 2006) and considers the 1910 WMC in Edinburgh as the seventh world missionary conference. The first two were held in New York and London consecutively in 1854, Liverpool in 1860, London in 1878 and 1888, and New York in 1900. Or it can be seen as a third in a series of ecumenical missionary conferences—the Centenary Missionary Conference of 1888, the Ecumenical Missionary Conference of New York in 1900, and the 1910 WMC in Edinburgh, which was initially titled "The Third Ecumenical Missionary Conference (p. 17–18).

[57] Yeh, *Polycentric*, 1. The International Congress on World Evangelization is also referred to as the Lausanne Conference (1974) or the Lausanne International Congress (1974).

[58] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 148, 156.

[59] The research and discussion here is limited to the ecumenical, evangelical, and RCC streams that flowed from the WMC. The influence of the conference is broader than this discussion and includes Ralph Winter and his work with hidden people groups and the expansive growth of the Pentecostal movement.

traditions generated theological timbre and innovation, unity in some cases and division in others, and began to respond to the call for contextualization.

The WMC was not the first conference of its kind, but it was one of the most significant. Historian Mark Noll describes it as one of twelve "decisive moments"[60] in church history. The purpose of this section is to point out the ways in which the WMC was a catalyst for contextualization as demonstrated by the various committees, councils, conferences, and congresses that followed in its wake. It also helped to contribute to the circumstances that led to the eventual division that arose between ecumenicals and evangelicals.

Notably, the great century of missions[61] that culminated in the WMC had been possible largely because of mission societies and parachurch organizations. These organizations functioned either independently or as interdenominational organizations that existed outside of formal church systems and structures. These freestanding mission societies, patterned after the work of William Carey's system of volunteerism, inadvertently contributed to a growing dichotomy between the church and mission. As God's Spirit advanced the gospel into foreign lands and the church began to grow, the relationship between ecclesiology and missiology became increasingly complicated, giving rise to the important discussion regarding context. This realization is evidenced through the different streams that flowed from the WMC.

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[60] Mark Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 9.

[61] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, vol. 6 (New York: Harper and Row, 1937), 443, describes the period between the late eighteenth to early twentieth century as the "Great Century." Paul E. Pierson, in "Colonialism and Missions," *EDWM*:209, adds that the missionary movement has its roots in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century revivalism with a consequent emphasis on evangelism and vigorous humanitarianism.

The Ecumenical Stream

There were three separate but related organizations that were formed following the WMC. These were the Life and Work movement that focused on shared ministry, the Faith and Order movement that focused on theology and shared beliefs, and the International Missionary Council (IMC) that focused on coordinating the efforts of the expansive mission enterprise. The Life and Work movement formed as a committee in 1919 for the purpose of representing Christendom on "religious, moral and social concerns of men."[62] The committee's primary task was to prepare for the Universal Christian Conference to be held in Stockholm in 1925. This conference convened for the purpose of addressing the great catastrophe of WWI for humanity and for Christianity. In Stockholm, leaders from Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox traditions committed to new involvement in the world in the interest of social justice, despite the disappointing spirit of vengeance and nationalism that threatened world peace. The Universal Christian Council for Life and Work was formed in 1930 to strengthen relationships between churches and to apply Christian ethics to social life. A conference in Oxford convened in 1937 in the midst of the world economic depression that was disrupting social conditions almost everywhere and underscored the need for social involvement.

The Faith and Order movement that emerged out of the WMC convened in Lausanne in 1927 and became a significant expression of ecumenism in the first half of the twentieth century. The movement focused its theological efforts on bridging the gap

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[62] Ans Joachim van der Bent, "Life and Work," in *Historical Dictionary of Ecumenical Christianity*, ed. Jon Woronoff (Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 239. This section relies on van der Bent's dictionary entries for a general understanding of the ecumenical movements and affirmations. It also draws from Bosch, *Transforming Mission*; Darrell Guder, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015); Darrell Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*; and

between divisive differences and forging a new path made visible by a common witness, calling, mission, and service. In 1948 in Amsterdam, the Life and Work movement and Faith and Order movement came together to form the World Council of Churches (WCC). The goal of the WCC was "To proclaim the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in the world and in common life in Christ, in order that the world may believe."[63]

The IMC was the third major stream to flow out of the WMC. The IMC movement was formed in 1927 to continue the focus on mission work around the world. The IMC was the first worldwide council of its kind formed by Protestants and was made up of representative members of national councils of mission. The IMC was largely evangelical in its orientation and initiated a strong global network of churches and mission organizations. Its purpose was to convene conferences, formulate policies for worldwide mission, and to support a robust theology of mission stimulated by creative thought.[64] Uniquely, the IMC did not insist on a single doctrinal statement but instead promoted Christianity in the multireligious and nonreligious world by acknowledging the inherent variety and complexity of belief.[65] The IMC's contribution is evident in the various conferences it sponsored following the WMC, often in the midst of significant worldwide disasters that included WWI, the Great Depression, and WWII. The following

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WCC/CWME digital history and documents, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/publications/books.

[63] Ans Joachim van der Bent, "Faith and Order," in *Historical Dictionary of Ecumenical Christianity*, ed. Jon Woronoff (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 157.

[64] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 147.

[65] Ans Joachim van der Bent, "International Missionary Council," in *Historical Dictionary of Ecumenical Christianity*, ed. Jon Woronoff (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 205–06.

overview of the IMC conferences provides a glimpse of the important topics that emerged.

The 1928 Jerusalem Conference[66] highlighted the ramifications of industrialization and its effect within particular contexts and issued a call for a broader understanding of missions in propagating a comprehensive approach to social justice. This need for a broader understanding of social justice also coincided with the controversy surrounding the liberal theology of the Social Gospel—a difference that for many has yet to be adequately resolved. Yet, despite these challenging scenarios in the early twentieth century, gospel proclamation and subsequent church growth continued across the globe. As new churches began to emerge in Asia, Africa, and Latin America it became increasingly clear that the indigenous churches in countries around the world were the most qualified agents of mission in their contexts. Significantly, the once clear delineation between Christian and non-Christian parts of the world began to blur as mission fields in every continent came into view.

The 1938 Tambaram Conference[67] considered church and mission from a more theological standpoint and began to recognize that church and mission are two sides of the same coin. Here the distinction between Christian and non-Christian countries was dropped and North America and Europe were added as mission fields. The work that followed Tambaram eventually contributed to the formation of the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948 and did away with the concept of "older" and "younger" churches. This paved

[66] Frank Short, "National Council of Churches," in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, Volume 2, 1948–1969 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 96.

[67] Hans Ruedi Weber, "Out of All Continents and Nations," in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, Volume 2, 1948–1969 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 68.

the way for equal partnership between all churches worldwide.[68] The focus shifted to the shared task of mission and evangelism and signaled a change from a church-centered mission to a mission-centered church. Mission theology began to take on a deeper meaning at Willingen, Germany in 1952 and contributed to the eventual (and controversial) merger of the IMC and the WCC in 1961.[69]

The Willingen Conference convened for the primary purpose of rethinking the missionary obligation of the church and developing a mission theology. Newbigin noted that the revolutionary circumstances in the world at that time were challenging the core of the missions tradition.[70] This conference was pivotal and marked a shift from viewing the church and missions as separate entities to understanding that they theologically belong together. Here, the theological fusion of church and mission was taken up in relation to the *missio Dei*, where the church is by nature to be understood as a missionary church. This challenged the traditional approach of doing missions.

In other words, God's salvific work is not summed up by the combined results of the church working alongside missions. Rather, both should be understood as being contained within the one mission of God—the *missio Dei*.[71] Lesslie Newbigin's phrase resonated, "The home base is everywhere, wherever the Church is."[72] God sends forth the

[68] W. A. Visser 't Hooft, "The General Ecumenical Development Since 1948," in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, Volume 2, 1948–1969 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 7.

[69] Lesslie Newbigin, "Mission to Six Continents," in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, Volume 2, 1948–1969 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 178.

[70] Newbigin, "Mission to Six, 178.

[71] Georg F. Vicedom is credited with introducing the term *missio Dei* at Willingen in 1952. The term represented the shift from viewing missions as an activity of the church to God being the primary agent of mission. This also led to an increasing understanding of the triune God who is involved in mission in the world; the church participates in that mission. This concept of *missio Dei* is often described as a Copernican revolution. Tennent, in *Invitation*, 8, notes that at the time the concept of *missio Dei* "did seem to effectively sideline the church," but Tennent suggests that "Vicedom also seems to envision the church being 'sent out' as a reflection of Christ being 'sent' into the world by the Father," (p. 56).

[72] Lesslie Newbigin, *One Body, One Gospel, One World* (London: International Missionary

church to carry out his work to the ends of the earth—into every social, political, and religious community of humankind.

The Ghana Conference in 1958[73] met under the assumption that the home base is everywhere, and it made visible the fact that missions can no longer be conceived as pivoting from the West to the rest of the world. The conference gave voice to the *missio Dei* evidenced in the Asian, African, and Latin American churches and provided a visible demonstration of contextualization. Newbigin points out that the Ghana conference underscored the point that the *differentia* of missions was no longer to be viewed as "over there" but that it was also local—every Christian community is a missionary situation. The question of abandoning missions in favor of humanitarian aid also remained pertinent in this season.

The third meeting of the WCC was held in New Delhi in 1961.[74] Here the IMC was melded into the WCC and became known as the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). From the beginning, the IMC was established to "help coordinate the activities of the national missionary organizations of different countries and unite the Christian forces of the world in seeking justice in international and interracial relations."[75] The integration of the IMC into the WCC reflected the belief that the church and mission are but two sides of the same coin. The Department on Studies in Evangelism (launched in 1961 after the WCC Third Assembly in New Delhi) suggested that mission is not primarily about the qualitative growth of the church but rather *shalom*

Council, 1958), 28.

[73] Short, "National Council," 102.

[74] Vasil T. Istavridis, "The Orthodox Churches in the Ecumenical Movement," in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, Volume 2, 1948–1969 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 297.

[75] Ans Joachim van der Bent, "Mission and Evangelism," in *Historical Dictionary of Ecumenical*

for the world with the goal of *missio Dei* being ultimate reconciliation in Christ. In addition, this conference highlighted the unique problems related to mission in Europe and North America. The integration of the IMC into the WCC, along with the WCC's perceived liberal theology and preoccupation with organizational structure, led many evangelicals and their organizations to withdraw from the newly formed CWME. By the 1960s, increasing numbers of evangelicals expressed grave concern over the efforts of some WCC leaders to reconceptualize Christian mission.[76]

Summary

What stands out in this snapshot of the ecumenical stream that flowed from the WMC is the ongoing attention to theology and the ardent commitment to developing a mission theology that would allow for unity in the diversity of contexts represented. In addition, those involved demonstrated a sensitivity to the cultural and societal issues on a worldwide scale, a willingness to engage in challenging discussions, and a humility that allowed for vigorous debate about traditional approaches to missions. The Willingen Conference in 1952 was unique and pivotal. It was unique because after the conference ended, many considered it a failure, in part, due to the inability to come to a consensus surrounding the controversy that J. C. Hoekendijk's attack raised. He launched an attack against the "Church-centric" view of missions and North America's attempt to relate the

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Christianity, ed. Jon Woronoff (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 273.

[76] A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, in *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 143, note that in the years that followed the WMC, the ecumenical movement's mission focus was distracted by mainline, liberal theology and the Social Gospel, enthusiasm for Christian internationalism, and humanitarianism—social action that took priority over evangelism. Arthur Glasser, "World Council of Churches Assemblies," in *EDWM*:1025, adds that the merger between the WCC and the IMC demonstrated a preoccupation with maintaining structures. Then, the 1952 gathering at Uppsala was disconcerting for many evangelicals who expressed concern for the lack of mission focus, and Donald McGavran raised the question, "Will Uppsala

missionary task as a sign of Christ's sovereignty in the secular world. The conference was also pivotal and continues to yield rich dividends concerning the *missio Dei*, a missional theology, and the missionary nature of the church.

The Evangelical Stream

The evangelical stream that flowed from the WMC began to emerge as early as 1917 with the formation of the International Foreign Missions Association (IFMA) organized by fundamentalist missions organizations. The IFMA served as an alternative to mainline church missions work, especially work by churches they saw as being influenced by modern liberalism. They focused on reaching the hidden peoples of the world. As noted earlier, there was great concern that theological liberalism and the Social Gospel were turning the focus of mission away from evangelism and toward humanitarianism. Moreau, Corwin, and McGee point out that an emphasis on premillennial urgency created "an eschatological scenario that ticked with an intense expectancy of Christ's return."[77]

By the mid-twentieth century, many denominational evangelicals in the US began to come together in the spirit of cooperation and formed the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1942 as discussed in Chapter 3. The NAE reflected a renewed faith and a distancing from the fundamentalist/modernist controversy. The EFMA was formed in 1945 by the NAE as part of this evangelical resurgence in the US.

Many mainline missionaries continued to work within the IMC/CWME during this period, but it was the neo-evangelical resurgence, and conservative evangelicals in

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Betray the Two Billion?"

[77] Moreau, Corwin, and McGee, *Introducing World Missions*, 143. Chapter 3 highlights the influence of the revivalist premillennialism present in Bright's twentieth century context, his zeal for evangelism, and his development of *Four Spiritual Laws*. Significant to the context is the rise of the fundamentalist movement, which was organized in order to stave off the advance of theological liberalism

particular, that brought energy to the methodology of world evangelization in the mid-twentieth century. The Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission met in 1966 in Wheaton, Illinois and was jointly sponsored by the EFMA and the IFMA in the spirit and heritage of the WMC. They gathered to reaffirm fundamental convictions related to mission theology in an atmosphere of evangelical ecumenicity. Arthur Glasser drafted The Wheaton Declaration that affirmed "the need for certainty, commitment, discernment, hope, and confidence in the midst of the hardening social, religious, and political climate of the times."[78] The basic theological and strategic framework for missions, however, remained unchanged and the West continued to serve as the locus for missionary sending.

Later that same year, the Billy Graham Association sponsored a World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin (1966) that hearkened back to the WMC with the call to "rekindle the dynamic zeal for world evangelization that had characterized Edinburgh."[79] They affirmed the authority of Scripture, established a theology of evangelism that was framed around the Great Commission, and reviewed ways to adapt current evangelistic methods to ongoing societal changes around the world. Bright presented a paper in Berlin, "Methods and Philosophy of Personal Evangelism,"[80] and pressed for a more vigorous personal evangelism as noted in Chapter 3.

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and Darwinism threatening biblical authority.

[78] A. Scott Moreau, "Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission," *EDWM*:222.

[79] Arthur Glasser, "World Congress on Evangelism (1966)," *EDWM*:1023.

[80] Bill Bright, "Methods and Philosophy of Personal Evangelism," paper presented at the World Congress on Evangelism, Kongresshalle, Berlin, October 26–November 4, 1966, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL.

Summary

Noticeably, the evangelical stream that flowed from the WMC established a biblical theology of mission that rested on and pivoted from the Great Commission in light of its skepticism of liberalism and the Social Gospel. It was the same commitment and skepticism that had caused fundamentalists to create an independent association as early as 1917. In addition to the commitment to the Great Commission, premillennial urgency also drove these fundamentalists to develop strategic methodologies that served the unreached people of the world. Billy Graham's revivalist influence was significant in the eventual development of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) in 1976. In addition, this same revivalist drive was evident in Bright's vision for and approach to raising up trained believers everywhere to share the gospel.

The Roman Catholic Church Stream and Second Vatican Council

The WMC also indirectly influenced the Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, convened in the early 1960s and marked a radical departure within Roman Catholic ecclesiology. For the first time in its history, it included Protestant and Orthodox ecclesial bodies with brotherly respect and affection, which signaled a universal orientation for the church. Vatican II affirmed that Christ is present in all legitimately organized local groups of the faith and it is within these groups that the unique and truly catholic church exists. This led to the rediscovery of a missionary ecclesiology for local churches and encouraged significant ecumenical advance in relating to Protestants.[81]

Significant to this dissertation are three major theological developments that emerged from Vatican II. The first identified a Trinitarian locus for mission. The

implication of this development meant that mission is to be part of the very nature of what it means to be a Christian and part of the church. The second provided an expanded understanding of the church found in *Lumen Gentium* (LG).[82] This document described the church as a pilgrim people living under the reign of God. The third major development was a new understanding of the nature of all religions that encouraged the church to learn from other religions.

Vantage Point Two demonstrated, first, that the WMC was the watermark in Western and world missions out of which the ecumenical and evangelical streams of mission flowed, and second, that the WMC also indirectly influenced the work of the RCC. The ecumenical movement began with the formation of the IMC and the Life and Work and Faith and Order movements that eventually became the WCC, with the IMC eventually becoming the CWME. The ecumenical movement began to engage in contextualization in the early twentieth century as world missions continued to expand. This vantage point chronicles this engagement by tracing the theological and missiological themes that informed these conferences, committees, and assemblies. The second stream that flowed out of the WMC was initially the evangelical movement, evidenced by the formation of the IFMA in 1917. The neo-evangelical resurgence of conservative evangelicals later brought energy to the evangelical movement as evidenced by the emergence of the NAE and the EFMA in the 1940s. The Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission in Wheaton and the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin in

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[81] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, Chapter 9, location 6800.

[82] Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*," November 21, 1964, pages 350–426 in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1964).

1966 reinforced the primacy of evangelization. This vantage point also noted the significance of the RCC's theological contributions that emerged from Vatican II.

Vantage Point Three: The Emergence of Contemporary Contextualization

The particular term *contextualization* emerged in the 1970s by way of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) within the WCC. The term was first used by Shoki Coe, a key figure in the WCC who pressed beyond the familiar models of indigenization and looked for a more dynamic concept, one that was future oriented and open to change. Coe argued that churches needed to form their own cultural expressions of ministry that were unique to each context.[83] As a result, the TEF introduced this definition for contextualization: "[Contextualization] includes all that is implied in the older terms of indigenization and inculturation, but seeks also to include the realities of contemporary secularity, technology, and the struggle for human justice."[84] Importantly, the impetus for this discussion began with the IMC at its assembly in Ghana in 1957–58.[85] There was a

[83] Shoki Coe, "Contextual Theology," in *Asian, African, and Latin American Contributions to a Radical, Theological Realignment in the Church*, Mission Trends, No. 3, edited by Gerald H. Anderson, C. S. P. [The Society of Missionary Priests of St. Paul the Apostle] (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 21, argued, "Contextuality is wrestling with God's word in such a way that the power of incarnation, which is the reality of contextualization, can enable people to follow in God's steps to contextualize."

M. P. Joseph, "Introduction: Context, Discernment, and Contextualization: Theology of Shoki Coe, the Prophet from the Fourth World," in *Wrestling with God in Context: Revisiting the Theology and Social Vision of Shoki Coe*, ed. M. P. Joseph, Po Ho Huang, and Victor Hsu (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), describes Coe's theology and social vision as being born out of the context of colonization. He notes that Coe sought to highlight the 'subjective right of the colonized to articulate their encounters with God and to speak boldly of the living reality of God in the particular context" (p. 3). Coe, in "Contextualizing Theology," 21, argued, "Contextuality is wrestling with God's word in such a way that the power of incarnation, which is the reality of contextualization, can enable people to follow in God's steps to contextualize. This process involved decontextualization and recontextualization, recalling the gospel imperative of death and resurrection." Yeow Choo Lak, "Shoki Coe: A Giant in His Time," in *Wrestling with God*, adds insight to Coe's theological perspective, noting that it grew out of his personal experience of racism while living as a Taiwanese under Japanese Occupation (p. 339–350).

[84] Theological Education Fund, *Ministry in Context: The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund (1970–1977)* (Bromley, Kent, UK: New Life Press, 1972), n.p.

[85] Joseph, "Introduction," 1–2, footnotes the fact that in 1957 the Rockefeller Foundation established a fund to promote gospel contextualization. Joseph suggests the term was possibly coined as a

growing awareness that, to a large extent, all theologies—including Western theologies—are influenced by cultural factors. At the same time, African, Asian, and Latin American leaders were finding Western theologies deficient for addressing relevant issues in their countries.

The CWME mandated the formation of the TEF for the purpose of providing academic training and support for emerging church leaders. A second mandate was issued in 1965 requiring the development of local indigenous education models for training church leaders in order to construct local theologies. A third mandate was issued in 1971 that called for reform in theological education with a particular emphasis on the central concept of contextuality, "the ability to respond meaningfully to the Gospel within the framework of one's own situation."[86] Although the concept of contextualization was criticized for its potential to lead to syncretism by relativizing Scripture and the gospel, there is no doubt that it broadened the discussion and encouraged a fresh examination of all aspects of church life. Contextualization gave voice to a variety of Third World theologies that included African Theology and Latin American Liberation Theology as well as First World theologies such as Feminist Theology and Black Theology. It also raised awareness in the area of social change in important ways.[87]

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result. Further, he also notes that the project of contextualization did not start here but reaches back to the development of African independent churches in the 1800s and the "Rethinking group" formed in 1877 as early initiatives.

[86] Theological Education Fund, n.p.

[87] Dean Gilliland, "Contextualization," *EDWM*:226–27, notes evangelical concerns that regarded Liberation Theology as an inadequate use of the Bible that relied too heavily on a Marxist orientation—especially since it emerged at the height of the Cold War and during the Vietnam War. He credits Gustavo Gutierrez and J. Miguez Bonino for opening up the conversation. At first there was little consensus among evangelicals about the role of culture and social issues, especially in theology. However, the contextualization debate made serious new thinking possible, especially with regard to culture and the way

The evangelical-led International Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974 also took up the issue of contextualization. Byang Kato, former General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar, presented a paper reflecting the concern of many evangelicals, entitled "The Gospel, Cultural Context, and Religious Syncretism."[88] Kato affirmed the relevance of contextualization, and provided this definition:

> [Contextualization] is an effort to express the never changing Word of God in ever changing modes for relevance. The Word is inspired but the mode of its expression is not. The unity in Christ is in Christ, and not in any external change. The unity in Christ produces Christians whose Christianity transcends their local and racial differences.[89]

Kato declared that the gospel is relevant everywhere and should be communicated in culturally relevant ways. He drew on the incarnation as a form of contextualization, noting, "God descended to pitch his tent to make it possible for us to be redeemed (John 1:14)."[90] Kato also expressed concerns about syncretism, particularly in his native Africa, and warned against sacrificing theological meaning on the altar of comprehension.

The Lausanne 1978 Willowbank Report[91] acknowledged the significance of culture, including culture in the biblical revelation, the gospel in context, the church, Christian ethics, and lifestyle. The report emphasized the following: First, it underscored the significance of culture and positively affirmed that human dignity and culture in various forms reflect the Creator. Second, it affirmed the need for contextualization and

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it connects with the biblical record. (p. 227).

[88] Byang Kato, "The Gospel, Cultural Context, and Religious Syncretism," Lausanne International Congress, July 24, 1974, pp. 1216–20, https://www.lausanne.org/wpcontent/uploads/2007/06/docs_lau1docs_1216.pdf.

[89] Kato, "Gospel," 1217.

[90] Kato, "Gospel," 1217.

[91] Lausanne Movement, "The Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture," Lausanne Occasional Paper 2, 1978, https://www.lausanne.org/content/lop/lop-2.

provided biblical justification for contextualization. Third, it highlighted worldview as that which provides a general standard for understanding a given culture and for providing a source of judgment, morality, and values in setting norms for behavior. The report stated, "Today's readers cannot come to the text in a personal vacuum and should not try to. Instead, they should come with an awareness of concerns stemming from cultural background, personal situation, and responsibility to others."[92] Fourth, it also encouraged a humble approach to contextualization and a willingness to acknowledge that it is possible to hear God's voice in a contemporary setting.[93] Daniel Sanchez notes that, overall, the Willowbank group expanded the discussion of contextualization to include the influence of cultural factors on Scripture and its interpretation and on the reader.[94]

Dean Gilliland observed that for evangelical theologians the contextualization conversation centered around hermeneutics. Does truth derive from human experience or from revelation? There was at first little consensus among evangelicals about the role of culture and social issues, especially in theological discussions. He states, "The decade of the 1970s also brought remarkable progress in finding ways to carry out contextualization.… Each 'model' carries certain epistemological assumptions, as well as philosophical ideas about truth."[95] Gilliland affirms that the contextualization debate

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[92] Lausanne Movement, "Willowbank," 12.

[93] Lausanne Movement, "Willowbank," 12–13.

[94] Daniel R. Sanchez, "Contextualization and the Missionary Endeavor," in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2015), Kindle edition, location 6217 of 17991.

[95] Gilliland, "Contextualization," 227. A. Scott Moreau, *Contextualization*, 23, explores in detail the way evangelicals "map" different contexts and he draws from a remarkable 249 different examples to construct a map for our contextual continent. See also Appendix F, 369–80. Moreau's generous attention to detail provides a sturdy foundation for the development of evangelical contextualization and models since the 1970s.

made serious new thinking possible with regard to culture and the way it connects with the Bible.

The emergence of contextualization in the 1970s marked a significant shift in theological and missiological thinking for ecumenicals and evangelicals. The RCC made significant contributions to this shift as a result of Vatican II and the LG. Missiologist David Bosch noted that a multifaceted and varied approach to contextualization provides a rich mosaic of mutuality and complement. He stated, “Contextual missiology attempts to chart the contours of a pluriverse of missiology in a universe of mission.”[96] Evangelicals also responded vigorously to the need for contextualization and began experimenting with different models for contextualization. Undoubtedly, contextualization remains a hotly debated topic in both theological and missiological disciplines.

Vantage Point Four: Contextualization from the Mid-Twentieth Century Forward

Vantage Point Four considers some of the ways in which the WCC/CWME, the LCWE, and the RCC continue to respond to the call for contextualization. With the benefit of hindsight, and by way of review, the various streams that flowed from or were influenced by the WMC all developed within significant moments in American and world history—two world wars, the Great Depression, industrialization, colonialism, and eventually, decolonization and the formation of new nations from the 1940s to 1970. The fact that the IMC (launched in 1927) attempted to respond to these needs is in keeping with evangelical activism at that time, but the work became increasingly more complex as the worldwide church grew.

The Life and Work movement and the Faith and Order movement also demonstrated the effort of contextualization within the challenging contexts of the US and Europe, while Africans and Latin Americans struggled to find a unique expression of the gospel and the church in their cultures and context. The rapid expansion of the church in the Global South by the mid-twentieth century underscored the necessity to rethink mission and the church in all contexts.[97] Equally, the movements that eventually became the WCC and the CWME recognized the gravity of this revelation, particularly by the 1950s and early 1960s. The revivalist drive and fervor of the post-World War II neo-evangelical movement brought energy to the evangelical stream and gave birth to the Lausanne Movement and the LCWE. Significant for this dissertation, it also fueled Bright's zeal to help fulfill the Great Commission.

Ecumenical Stream Since the Mid-Twentieth Century

The CWME continued the tradition of the IMC after being integrated into the WCC in 1961, sponsoring a conference approximately every ten years. These continuing conferences highlight the unique ways in which contemporary contextualization came to the fore. As previously noted, the first conference of the CWME, held in Mexico City in 1963, broke new ground with its theme "Mission in Six Continents"[98] and reframed world missions as missions from six to six (continents)—the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.

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[96] Bosch, *Transforming*, 8.
[97] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 24.
[98] World Council of Churches, "Mission in Six Continents," World Council of Churches: Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Mexico City, 1963, https://archived.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/consultative-bodies/world-mission-and-evangelism/history.html. Minutes of the CWME of the WCC conference can be found in Ronald K. Orchard, *Witness in Six Continents: Records of the Meeting of the Commission on World Mission and*

The WCC Fourth Assembly met in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968 and provided the groundwork for contextualization by addressing topics such as the role of the church in the modern context. This assembly maintained that no structures—ecclesial or industrial, governmental or international—lie outside the prophetic role of the church. Then, the 1972–73 CWME Conference in Bangkok, Thailand met during the ongoing Vietnam War under the banner "Salvation Today."[99] They tackled the question of Liberation Theology and affirmed the right of every Christian and every church to embrace a cultural identity. This conference was a turning point and served to increase the influence of the Two-Thirds World, which included Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania.[100] Van der Bent describes this conference as "undoubtedly one of the most contextual and interdisciplinary ecumenical missionary conferences."[101] The Bangkok meeting called for liberation and the end of Western cultural and ecclesiastical dominance and marked a transition from Western denominational and mission agency leadership to the increased role of Two-Thirds World leadership in the CWME.[102] As time progressed, so did the influence of Latin American base communities and the Roman Catholic Latin American Episcopal Council conferences. These base communities represented a grassroots movement to raise up lay people to celebrate their faith and to engage socially and politically.

Evangelism (Edinburgh: Edinburgh House Press, 1964).

[99] World Council of Churches, "Salvation Today," World Council of Churches: Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Bangkok, Thailand, 1972–73, https://archived.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/consultative-bodies/world-mission-and-evangelism/history.html.

[100] The Two-Thirds World includes Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania, which represents two-thirds of the world's land mass and more than two-thirds of the world's population.

[101] van der Bent, "Mission," 276.

[102] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, Chapter 8, location 6309.

The CWME gathering in Melbourne, Australia in 1980 met under the banner of "Your Kingdom Come"[103] and revolved around the church of Jesus Christ being commissioned to proclaim the kingdom of God realized in Jesus Christ. The conference emphasized liberation, not oppression; justice, not exploitation; fullness, not deprivation; freedom, not slavery; health, not disease; and life, not death. Evangelism included active involvement in the suffering and struggles of the poor that was inherent along the margins. However, this emphasis continued to heighten concern among evangelicals who felt that the message of salvation had been minimized in light of growing social and humanitarian issues. The document "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation"[104] was produced by the office of the CWME in Geneva, Switzerland in 1982 in response to these concerns. The document affirmed that the kingdom of God was inaugurated in Jesus the Lord, crucified and risen, and it reinforced that every person is entitled to hear and to respond to the gospel. This included a call to repentance, the announcement of the forgiveness of sin, an invitation into relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and a call for a personal decision to recognize and accept the saving lordship of Christ.

The theme for the CWME in San Antonio, Texas in 1989 was "Your Will Be Done"[105] and visibly demonstrated a sense of community among all of the races. The conference emphasized a Trinitarian theology, which viewed the triune God as being the

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[103] World Council of Churches, "Your Kingdom Come," World Council of Churches: Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Melbourne, Australia, 1980, http://archived.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/consultative-bodies/world-mission-and-evangelism/history.html.

[104] World Council of Churches, "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation," *International Mission Review* 71, no. 284 (October 1982): 427–57.

[105] "Your Will Be Done," World Council of Churches: Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, San Antonio, TX, 1989, https://archived.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/consultative-bodies/world-mission-and-evangelism/history.html.

God of mission. God's care for the world and creation flows naturally out of such a Trinitarian understanding. Then, in Geneva in 1996 the WCC met to discuss the meaning of membership and mission, declaring that mission is from everywhere to everywhere and therefore requires an unequivocal cooperation of churches in every context. The conference also reinforced a commitment to the previously mentioned 1982 document "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation."

The CWME convened in Salvador, Brazil in 1996 following a four-year study conducted in sixty countries around the topic of gospel and culture. The conference met under the theme "Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures"[106] and addressed contextualization head-on. The CWME reaffirmed that the gospel is relevant to all dimensions of life, in every culture and context, and agreed to "explore the truth of the gospel in its public relevance, particularly where religion continues to be relegated to the private sphere."[107]

Significantly, the WCC/CWME in 2012 presented a new ecumenical mission affirmation entitled "Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes."[108] This document represented a collaborative effort to update the previous 1982 statement "Missions and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation."[109] The WCC/CWME noted, "It is the aim of this new ecumenical discernment to seek vision,

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[106] "Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures," World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Salvador, Brazil, 1996, https://archived.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/consultative-bodies/world-mission-and-evangelism/history.html.

[107] Christopher Duraisingh, Ana Langerak, and World Council of Churches, *Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996), 26.

[108] World Council of Churches, "Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes," World Council of Churches: Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Busan, South Korea, 2013, https://archived.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/consultative-bodies/world-mission-and-evangelism/history.html.

concepts and directions for a renewed understanding and practice of mission and evangelism in changing landscapes."[110]

Summary

This section highlighted the ecumenical assertion that the triune God is the source of mission and affects the church's understanding of mission and evangelism. The church is the conduit through which the gospel—Christ's reign over the kingdom—is proclaimed in every inhabited area of the world and across every social, political, and religious community. In addition, the church is sent from everywhere to everywhere with a common witness—the whole church bringing the whole gospel to the whole world. The gospel in its wholeness is clearly meant to include sharing in the struggle for economic justice and dignity and struggle against political oppression through the proclamation of the kingdom of God inaugurated in Jesus Christ the Lord, crucified and risen. The ecumenical stream introduced a robust missional and Trinitarian theology in relation to the concept and centrality of *missio Dei*.

Evangelical Developments from the 1970s to the Present

During the late 1960s and early 1970s and in the midst of the ongoing Cold War, the US was experiencing a major social upheaval with the rise of the counterculture movement of people who opposed the Vietnam War, commercialism, and the overall establishment of societal norms.[111] The counterculture movement and the civil rights movement brought increasing challenges to the task of evangelization. As discussed in Chapter 3,

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[109] World Council, "Together Towards Life."
[110] World Council, "Together Towards Life."
[111] "The Counterculture Movement," *Civil Rights Digital Histories Project*, https://digilab.libs.uga.edu/exhibits/exhibits/show/civil-rights-digital-history-p/counterculture.

Bright responded with vigor to the counterculture movement in particular. Although he did not change the content of *Four Spiritual Laws*, he drew attention to the call for revolution and countered with a revolution of love found only in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

In 1972 Bright's CCC hosted a Congress on Evangelism, Explo '72, in Dallas, Texas. Explo '72 was reportedly the largest training effort ever to gather in the world at that time with over 85,000 registered delegates in attendance. Christian basics were taught in workshops around the city, such as how to share *Four Spiritual* Laws, how to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, how to experience God's love and forgiveness, and how to know God's will. On the last evening of the conference, the delegates made a commitment to "spread the love of God from person to person throughout the world"[112] and left Dallas with a plan, resources, and a desire to capture their communities for Christ. This conference was followed by Explo '74 in Seoul, South Korea—CCC's first International Congress on Evangelism. A reported 1.3 million people gathered for this congress. Hundreds of thousands heard the gospel with many indicating a personal decision for Christ.[113]

Concurrently, the 1973 Chicago Declaration of Social Concern reflected the growing divergence among some evangelicals in the US regarding the Christian faith and the topics of social justice, which included "racism, economic materialism, economic

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[112] Bill Bright, *Come Help Change the World* (Peachtree, GA: Bright Media Foundation and Campus Crusade for Christ, 1999), Kindle edition, location 1322 of 4167. Explo '72 took place during an era when The Jesus Movement was also in full swing.

[113] Bright, *Come Help*, locations 1530–39. By the 1970s, CCC had a growing presence internationally and was committed to training people how to share their faith wherever they were in the world.

inequality, militarism, and sexism."[114] The Chicago declaration affirmed commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, yielded to the full authority of God's Word, and acknowledged the need to attend to both the spiritual and physical needs of people. The document affirmed (1) the love of God and a confession of failure to demonstrate God's love toward those suffering abuse; (2) God's justice and a confession of failure to proclaim and demonstrate justice; and (3) God's mercy and forgiveness and a call to fellow evangelicals to repentance.[115] However, the question of the relationship regarding evangelism and social action persisted.

With regard to foreign or international missions, the various evangelical organizations and conferences during the 1960s and early 1970s all contributed to the formation of the LCWE held in 1974. This congress of over 2,300 people from 150 countries gathered to discuss four topics: national strategy, demonstration of evangelistic methods, specialized evangelistic strategy, and theology of evangelization. Conspicuously, Bright did not attend the Lausanne Conference in 1974 but his priorities

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[114] Evangelicals for Social Action, "Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern (1973)," https://www.evangelicalsforsocialaction.org/about-esa-2/history/chicago-declaration-evangelical-social-concern/, n.p.

[115] Bright, *Come Help*, location 3439 of 4167. Bright's commitment to personal evangelism remained his hallmark, although he was not immune to the social needs around him. He founded *Justice LINC* in 1974 for the purpose of reaching not only incarcerated individuals but also their families and their communities. Bright notes, "[LINC's] role is to effect a systemic change in the criminal sub-culture through a changed life alternative and to provide resources toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission in this needy area." The strategy was meant to emphasize that God's infinite love for each person connected with the prison system, inmates, victims, families, and law enforcement. In 1982, Bright also authorized a new expression of CCC to work in partnership with churches in the inner cities of America who were already ministering with the God-given vision for redemptive work among the poor. Here's Life Inner City was launched in New York City in 1982, in Los Angeles in 1989, and in Chicago in 1990, (https://www.cru.org/us/en/communities/innercity/about-us/history.html). Bright's approach to systemic change resembled that of revivalist D. L. Moody. Improved social conditions are the result of successful evangelism.

and commitment to training people in personal evangelism rang true to the commitments of the LCWE.[116]

The Lausanne Covenant was drafted and adopted at the Lausanne 1974 gathering and it conveys both a spirit of penitence and expectation. In particular, the covenant expresses a determination to obey Christ's commission to proclaim the gospel—God's good news for the whole world—to all mankind and to make disciples of every nation. Notably in Section 5, the covenant acknowledges and commits to sharing God's concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and God's concern for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression. The covenant states, "Because mankind is made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, color, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he should be respected and served, not exploited."[117]

Section 5 also affirms that Christian duty arises from Christian doctrine, and evangelism and sociopolitical involvement are expressions of the Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Man, the Doctrine of Salvation, and the Doctrine of the Kingdom.[118] This section expresses penitence for neglecting social responsibilities and "our naïve polarization in having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive." The document also acknowledges a large group at Lausanne who wished to express this penitence more strongly: "We must repudiate as demonic the attempt to drive

[116] Bill Bright and other US and global leaders on staff with Cru have remained involved in LCWE since its inception. Vonette Bright served on the Lausanne Continuation Committee on prayer and gave leadership to the International Prayer Assembly in 1984, and resigned her post in 1989 (Orlando, FL: Campus Crusade for Christ Archives).

[117] John R. W. Stott, "Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary by John Stott," Lausanne Occasional Paper 3, February 13, 1978, https://www.lausanne.org/lop/lop-3, n.p.

[118] Stott, "Lausanne Covenant," Section 5, n.p.

a wedge between evangelism and social action."[119] Noticeably, as will become evident in the following pages, this divide only widens. Although the Lausanne Congress had not envisioned a continuing organization, the LCWE was soon formed to address the topics of worldwide evangelicalism, evangelism, and social concerns and it quickly became a global network of evangelical mission organizations.

The Willowbank Report discussed in Vantage Point Three was followed by the LCWE meeting in Pattaya, Thailand in 1980 where they reaffirmed a commitment to evangelism and sociopolitical action but emphasized the urgency of the task of evangelization. The Thailand Statement reads in part, "If therefore we do not commit ourselves with urgency to the task of evangelization, we are guilty of an inexcusable lack of human compassion."[120] Functionally, evangelism was still being prioritized by most participating organizations.

In 1982, a LCWE-sponsored gathering of fifty evangelicals from twenty-seven countries met in Grand Rapids, Michigan to address the question of the relationship between social action and evangelism. The result was a statement entitled "Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment,"[121] which sought to bring clarity to this issue. The statement distinguished "our evangelical social heritage from the liberal social gospel"[122] and reaffirmed that "evangelism and socio-political involvement

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[119] Stott, "Lausanne Covenant," Section 5, n.p.

[120] Lausanne Movement, "The Thailand Statement," Consultation on World Evangelization, Pattaya, Thailand, 1980, https://www.lausanne.org/content/statement/thailand-statement, n.p.

[121] Lausanne Movement, "Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment," Lausanne Occasional Paper 21, https://www.lausanne.org/lop/lop-21#Conclusion, n.p.

[122] Lausanne Movement, "Evangelism and Social Responsibility," n.p.

are both part of our Christian duty."[123] Conspicuously, the unsettling question of evangelism in relation to social responsibility remained largely unresolved.

Evangelicals met again in 1989 in Manila, Philippines for the second International Congress on World Evangelization (Lausanne II) under the banner, "Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World."[124] The congress focused on topics such as reaching the poor, internationalization of cross-cultural ministries, universalism in a pluralistic society, and the nature of the gospel and social concern. In particular, the conference considered hurdles standing in the way of world evangelization and also looked to the future and the AD2000 Movement. Evangelism remained the priority in the Manila Manifesto[125] produced by this conference, which states, "Evangelism is primary because our chief concern is with the gospel, that all people may have the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior."[126]

The statement also acknowledged the comprehensive scope of the gospel and God's kingdom, and remarkably, it resembles the CWME Mexico City 1963 concept of mission cited earlier. The manifesto notes that Jesus Christ proclaimed and also demonstrated the kingdom of God with power and states, "Our manifesto at Manila is that the whole church is to take the whole gospel to the whole world, proclaiming Christ until he comes, with all necessary urgency, unity and sacrifice."[127]

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[123] Lausanne Movement, "Evangelism and Social Responsibility," n.p.

[124] Lausanne Movement, "Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World," Lausanne II: International Congress on World Evangelization, Manila, Philippines, 1989, https://www.lausanne.org/gatherings/congress/manila-1989, n.p.

[125] Lausanne Movement, "The Manila Manifesto," Lausanne II: International Congress on World Evangelization 1989, https://www.lausanne.org/content/manifesto/the-manila-manifesto, n.p.

[126] Lausanne Movement, "Manila Manifesto," n.p.

[127] Lausanne Movement, "Manila Manifesto," n.p.

Lausanne III: The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization met in Cape Town, South Africa in 2010 and was co-sponsored by The World Evangelical Alliance. This gathering has been described as one of the most representative in the 2000-year history of the church.[128] Some 4,200 participants from 198 nations and hundreds of Protestant denominations, along with 350 observers from Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and other traditions were in attendance. Allen Yeh notes that in Cape Town, the LCWE held fast to the evangelical hallmarks of the primacy of the Bible and Christocentrism. This was demonstrated in part by the six chapters of Ephesians that provided the pillars of the congress. The congress also considered contemporary missiological issues such as China and the Suffering Church and Religious Freedom; the Broken World, including the environment and human trafficking; Megacities and Diaspora; Children, Young People, and the Next Generation; and Responding to God in Worship and Prayer.[129]

The congress ended with the Cape Town Commitment (CTC).[130] Uniquely, this statement was partially written before and then completed after the congress convened. Part one of the CTC, "For the Lord We Love,"[131] provides a confession of faith and was started five years prior to Cape Town 2010. Part two, "For the World We Serve,"[132] issued a call to action and was the result of a process begun three years prior to Cape Town.

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[128] John W. Kennedy, "The Most Diverse Gathering Ever," *Christianity Today*, September 29, 2010, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/september/34.66.html, n.p.

[129] Yeh, in *Polycentric Missiology*, 131–38, provides an overview of the Cape Town 2010 Conference Proceedings.

[130] Lausanne Movement. "The Cape Town Commitment," Lausanne III: The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, Cape Town, South Africa, 2010, https://www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment, n.p.

[131] Lausanne Movement, "Cape Town," n.p.

[132] Lausanne Movement, "Cape Town," n.p.

Summary

The evangelical stream, particularly since the mid-1960s, has maintained a steady commitment to the Great Commission, and like the ecumenical stream, it is committed to representing and obeying God with integrity, maintaining the priority of evangelism and evangelization, and guarding and protecting the authority of Scripture. Notably, the issue of social concern remained a sticking point for evangelicals. The 1973 Chicago Declaration confessed the failure to demonstrate God's love to those who are suffering and affirmed God's justice, mercy, and forgiveness and yet, the tension between the task of evangelism and social concerns still remained. As Vantage Point Three demonstrated, the emergence of the concept of contextualization is significant in relation to mission work nationally and internationally.

In hindsight, evangelicals have been constrained by a lack of a robust theological framework, especially with reference to the dichotomy of the task between evangelism and that of social justice or humanitarian aid. The emphasis on premillennial urgency continues to play a role in this wrestling and contributes to the continued emphasis on the preeminence of the task of evangelism.

Roman Catholic Developments Since the 1970s

Vantage Point One noted that the RCC was indirectly influenced by the WMC, and RCC representatives have been a visible presence at the WCC/CWME gatherings from the latter twentieth century onward. As previously noted, the Second Vatican Council, which convened in 1962 and ran through 1965, revealed three major theological developments: (1) a Trinitarian locus for mission; (2) an expanded understanding of the missionary nature of the church living as a pilgrim people under the reign of God; and (3) a new

understanding of the nature of other religions and a willingness to learn about and from them.

Notably, the CELAM met in Medellin, Colombia in 1968 to seriously consider the increasingly oppressive situation of poverty in Latin America. This conference was a turning point for the Latin American church and for the church at large, and as Bevans and Schroeder observe, "reached beyond development and revolution to the transformation of unjust structures."[133] This gathering also served to lay the foundation for Liberation Theology, which was being energized by the publication of Gustavo Gutierrez's *Theology of Liberation*. The ripple effect of Liberation Theology's attention to gospel, culture, and the church in poor and oppressed communities spread across the globe.

These developments remain visible in various apostolic declarations, including Paul VI's 1975 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* ("Sharing the Gospel").[134] This theology of mission is anchored in the concrete life and work of Jesus—proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, calling the people of God to live under the reign of God and to proclaim the gospel to those who have never heard. Here Pope Paul VI also highlighted the growing theological consensus that connected evangelization with humanitarian concerns and social justice. The *Evangelii Nuntiandi* was followed by Pope John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* ("Mission of the Redeemer")[135] in 1991 that posed the question, "Why mission?" The answer he gave: It is Christ's mission through the church to

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[133] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, Chapter 8, location 6054.

[134] Catholic Church, *Apostolic Exhortation*: *Evangelii Nuntiandi of His Holiness Pope Paul VI to the Clergy and to All the Faithful of the Entire World on The Evangelization of the Modern World* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1976), n.p.

[135] Catholic Church, *Apostolic Exhortation: Redemptoris Missio of His Holiness Pope John Paul*

proclaim the good news of the reign of God and newness of life found in Jesus Christ. In 2013, Pope Francis issued the *Evangelii Gaudium* ("The Joy of the Gospel"),[136] which defined evangelism in the modern world as the church's primary mission.

Summary of the Four Vantage Points

Part Two provided a genealogy of contextualization from four vantage points. The first vantage point glanced back across history and considered some of the ways in which the gospel has been translated in different cultures since the first century. The second vantage point focused on the 1910 WMC in Edinburgh, which represented another substantive paradigm shift in missions, especially in relation to the various streams that it helped to generate. The third vantage point examined the emergence of contextualization in the ecumenical, evangelical, and RCC traditions, another significant paradigm shift in mission history. The fourth vantage point provided a view of the ongoing missiological response within these streams into the twenty-first century.

Part Three: Introducing Four Prominent Features of Twenty-First-Century Recontextualization

Chapter 4 has demonstrated that the ecumenical and evangelical streams did indeed flow from a common starting point of the WMC and from there extended in a variety of directions. The chapter also highlighted the WMC's indirect influence on the RCC, and subsequently, the RCC's significant influence on contextualization in ecumenical and evangelical streams of thought. The purpose of Part Three is twofold. First, it provides a

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II to the Clergy and to All the Faithful of the Entire World on The Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1991), n.p.

[136] Catholic Church, *Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Clergy and to All the Faithful of the Entire World on The Joy of the Gospel* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2013), n.p.

brief overview of the points where *divergence* has occurred among ecumenicals, evangelicals, and those in the RCC with regard to contextualization. This is evidenced, in part, by considering the respective standpoints of David Bosch, A. Scott Moreau, and Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder. Second, Part Three purposes to enliven the conversation on contextualization by calling for a *confluence* of perspectives and proposes four prominent features of twenty-first-century recontextualization.

Divergence

This chapter has demonstrated a common starting point for the church worldwide. In addition, this chapter has investigated the various ways in which contextualization has allowed for the church to extend in multiple different directions—to *diverge* from its common starting point. To *diverge* means "to move or extend in different directions from a common starting point."[137] At the same time, there are common themes that emerge that provide multifaceted evidence of a common starting point. The following section highlights the ways that ecumenicals and evangelicals have pivoted, or diverged, from a common starting point and yet have both contributed in various ways to the task of contextualization and demonstrates the ways in which the RCC has also contributed to the task of contextualization.

David Bosch: An Ecumenical Pluriverse

The paradigm shift that took place with the emergence of contextualization in the early 1970s gave way to the subsequent rise of Third World theologies and demonstrated the ways in which various perspectives can change the conversation. At the same time, this

[137] "Diverge," *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (Martinsburg, WV: Quad Graphics, 2016), 209.

development raised concern among evangelicals, in particular, regarding the possibility of relativism, reductionism, and syncretism. David Bosch sought to balance these concerns by noting the tendency to overreact—to "make a clean break with the past and deny continuity with one's theological and ecclesial ancestry."[138] He recognized this shift as an opportunity to both step back and recognize that the church is missionary by its very nature and to look ahead full of faith. He contends, "In the field of religion, a paradigm shift always means both continuity and change, both faithfulness to the past and boldness to engage the future, both constancy and contingency, both tradition and transformation."[139] The following paragraphs summarize some of Bosch's assertions regarding mission as contextualization.

First, Bosch states that "mission as contextualization is an affirmation that God has turned toward the world."[140] This is made evident in the historical narrative of Scripture and in the life of God incarnate. Jesus involved himself with the poor and the marginalized along with the rich and the religious in the first century. God continues to be involved in the lives of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation in the twenty-first century as the church bears witness of the gospel in every place. Second, Bosch contends that mission as contextualization involves a variety of theologies and suggests that all theology is experimental and contingent—taking place in conversation between text and context. However, in order to avoid relativism, there must be an affirmation of the universal dimensions of theology that transcend context. This means understanding that God makes the TSWW known to us by God's redeeming acts. Contextualization is in

[138] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 436.
[139] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 436.
[140] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 436.

danger of relativism only when theology is either tailor-made or absolutized for a specific context.

Third, Bosch considers that mission as contextualization requires “reading the signs of the times.”[141] Participation with God in mission necessitates an awareness of God’s presence and actions in history and God’s signs and footprints in the world right now. The enterprise of contextualization, though fraught with danger, must be engaged. Fourth, he asserts that mission as contextualization is distorted when interpreted primarily as a problem between praxis and theory. He maintains that it can only succeed when faith, hope, and love are held in creative tension. This attends to the fact that neither proclamation nor social action is to be placed in prominence one over the other.

Bosch’s depth of theological scholarship and insight, coupled with his enthusiasm, invites followers of Jesus into the dynamic nature of the *missio Dei*. Bosch opens wide the door into a “pluriverse of missiology in a universe of mission,”[142] but the dizzying number of theologies he puts forth leaves one lost in the forest for the trees. Perhaps the most significant contribution Bosch makes to this dissertation is the invitation to develop a robust theological framework that falls under the banner and authority of the *missio Dei*.

A. Scott Moreau: Evangelicals and Models

As noted in Vantage Point Three, evangelicals also began to address the topic of contextualization in the early 1970s as was evident at Lausanne in 1974 and in the subsequent Willowbank Report. Since then, there have been numerous definitions offered

[141] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 439.
[142] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 8.

for evangelical contextualization and a plethora of methodologies and models developed and utilized worldwide. This section provides a brief sketch of these developments through the lens of evangelical missiologist A. Scott Moreau, whose meticulous research lends insight to the progress of contextualization. Moreau notes in a 2005 publication, "Simply stated, contextualization means that the message (or the resulting church) is defined by Scripture but shaped by culture."[143] An examination of Moreau's evolving definition provides an excellent example of the dynamic nature of contextualization from an evangelical point of view.

In a 2007 publication, Moreau, Corwin, and McGee define contextualization as "the core idea … of taking the gospel to a new context and finding appropriate ways to communicate it so that it is understandable to the people in that context. Contextualization refers to more than just theology; it also includes developing church life and ministry that are biblical faithful and culturally appropriate."[144] Later, Moreau expands, "Contextualization can be described as the process whereby Christians adapt the forms, context, and praxis of the Christian faith so as to communicate it to the minds and hearts of people with other cultural backgrounds. The goal is to make the Christian faith *as a whole*—not only the message but also the means of living out of our faith in the local setting—understandable."[145]

Then again, Moreau avers, "Contextualization happens everywhere the church exists. And by church, I am referring to the people of God rather than to buildings.

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[143] A. Scott Moreau, "Contextualization: From an Adapted Message to an Adapted Life," in *The Changing Face of World Missions*, eds. Michael Peacock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 350.

[144] A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 12.

Contextualization refers to how those people live out their faith in light of the values of their societies"[146] and also leads people to examine why they live out their faith in a particular way. Finally, in his most recent definition, he states that contextualization happens everywhere the church exists and is expressed differently by people in their particular societies. Here Moreau seems to offer a more nuanced approach to contextualization, gives the church a much more prominent place in the process, and demonstrates the dynamic nature of contextualization and mission today.

In addition to these evolving definitions, there are scores of evangelical models for contextualization that have been developed since the early 1970s. Drawing from Moreau's meticulous research, we get a glimpse into the evangelical response to contextualization found in his book *Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models*.[147] The purpose of the book is to provide a travel guide for the evangelical missionary to point out areas of contextualization that are familiar and comfortable as well as areas that pose danger. He approaches this analysis from a descriptive rather than prescriptive point of view and "only occasionally"[148] draws on theologians and biblical scholars. In contrast, he seeks to develop his map from a missiological perspective. Moreau's expertise and attention to detail has proved to be helpful. He is careful throughout to qualify his findings as evangelical, so for that reason, his work serves to inform the twenty-first-century currents in the evangelical stream.

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[145] Moreau, *Contextualization*, 35.

[146] A. Scott Moreau, *Contextualizing the Faith: A Holistic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 2.

[147] Moreau, *Contextualization*.

[148] Moreau, *Contextualization*, 21.

"Table D: Evangelical Alternatives and Modifiers for 'Contextualization,'"[149] for example, provides a rundown of the numerous ways in which contextualization has been described or reconsidered between 1973 and 2005, highlighting the scholarship and innovation that has taken place since the concept first emerged. In "Figure E: Visual Semantic Domain of Evangelical Alternatives for 'Contextualization,'" Moreau summarizes his findings by organizing these various terms into a "visual map of the evangelical semantic domain for contextualization."[150] Next, in order to clarify the scope and meaning of these terms, he categorizes them into a complex set of clusters and groups within the larger frame of contextualization.

Finally, this section is followed by the 249 examples used in Moreau's database of evangelical models. His detailed and informative research is presented with humility and purpose and represents an impressive array of innovative ways to approach contextualization. At the same time, what stands out is the complexity of the task of evangelical contextualization and the absence of an adequate biblical and theological frame. Similar to Bosch's pluriverse of missional theology, Moreau's map is so detailed and finely tuned that the adventure of contextualization gets lost in a different forest. What is lacking in evangelical contextualization is the very thing that could give it life—a robust theological framework anchored by the TSWW.

Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder: Constants in Context

Part Two of this chapter introduced the WMC as the primary influencer of the ecumenical and evangelical streams of mission and as a secondary influencer for the

[149] Moreau, *Contextualization*, 364.
[150] Moreau, *Contextualization*, 365.

RCC stream. This section considers Catholic scholars Bevans's and Schroeder's *Constants in Context* and the six themes they describe as "constants" in the task of contextualization. These six themes or reference points can be traced back from the early church all the way into the twenty-first century. Bevans and Schroeder make historical connections and point out the essential and inherent continuity of the missionary vision. These themes presume that the church is missionary by its very nature, is called to live under God's reign, and is compelled by God to be God's witnesses.

The first constant is Christology and always begins with the person of Jesus Christ. "Jesus always remains the Christ, although his Christness—the way he is understood as of ultimate significance—is expressed differently and understood more deeply in the church's various historical and cultural embodiments."[151] The second constant, ecclesiology, sets the table for the church as community. Ecclesiology provides a pathway for the church's engagement in using the Bible, observing the sacraments, recognizing Israel, and determining the role of the church in mission. Importantly, "The content of these constants is never the same, but Christianity is never without faith in and theology of Jesus Christ and never without a commitment to and understanding of the community it names church."[152] The third constant, eschatology, is concerned with the missionary church and the future—the full inauguration of God's reign and the role of the church.

The fourth constant is soteriology and is shaped by eschatology. It seeks to answer important questions regarding the nature of salvation—determining whether the gospel is about turning from the world to a wholly spiritual existence, or rather that it is

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[151] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, Chapter 2, location 1079.

about wholeness, structural change, and transformation. The fifth constant, anthropology, deals with determining the Christian's identity. Bevans and Schroeder emphasize the importance of determining whether humankind is " … fallen and wholly corrupt or severely yet not fatally wounded, able or unable to establish 'points of context' with revelation, on its way to greater and great possibilities and ready to be enlightened or doomed to destruction without revelation."[153] The final, sixth constant is the church's view of culture, which determines whether or not human culture can be a means for communicating the gospel or whether it is an obstacle, a hindrance, or an opportunity.

Bevans and Schroeder demonstrate the ways in which these six themes have been manifested across mission history. Their humble and generous approach attends thoughtfully to the three streams of ecumenism, evangelicalism, and Catholicism and allows for a more robust understanding of the *missio Dei*, especially when viewed alongside their proposed three types of theology of mission mentioned in Vantage Point One. These six themes also provide a perspective that allows for some give and take as well as some flexibility and creativity. What stands out at the end of this section is the faithfulness of God in relation to the *missio Dei* and the enduring strength of God's gospel.

Confluence: Four Prominent Features of Twenty-First-Century Recontextualization

The conclusions for this chapter flow from the research of this dissertation and propose a *confluence* by way of the following four features and are meant to provide *riverbanks* for the task of recontextualization. Confluence is defined as " … the flowing together of two

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[152] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, Chapter 2, location 1079.

or more streams, rivers; their place of junction; a body of water that is formed by the flowing together of these streams; the coming together of people."[154] The term *feature* is used here, as opposed to guidepost or pillar, because of the multifaceted nature of recontextualization and the ever-changing context. Each feature, although distinct, is meant to interact and interrelate with all of the others. Additionally, these features are described here as *prominent* to imply their significance and to infer there are other features of recontextualization beyond the purview of this dissertation. These features also provide *riverbanks*—dynamic boundaries, but boundaries, nonetheless. The four features are introduced here with a brief explanation and then developed in detail in Chapter 5.

Feature One: Faithful Recontextualization Affirms the Bible as the TSWW and the Gospel as Good News for All

Feature One affirms that the gospel of God's kingdom is universal truth and is embedded in the sixty-six-book canon of Scripture—the TSWW. This true story provides meaning for all of history and for each individual person. In addition, Feature One acknowledges the multidimensional aspect of the gospel of God's kingdom and affirms it is good news for all people. Ecumenical, evangelical, and RCC scholars have been emphasizing the metanarrative of Scripture for quite some time, as the research for this study has shown.

Feature Two: Faithful Recontextualization Yields to the Full Weight of the Triune God's Authority in Mission

Feature Two yields to the full weight of the triune God's authority as demonstrated in the TSWW. God's authority is evident in and over creation and in response to the fall. God's

[153] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, Chapter 2, location 1091.

redemptive authority is powerful and inviting as evidenced in the person and work of Christ, made manifest by the sending of the Spirit, and in the missionary nature of the church. God's authority is on full display in the revelation and the re-creation of heaven and earth. This feature speaks to Taylor's secularization and exclusive humanism and begins to address his four anthropocentric shifts discussed in Chapter 2. He argued that in order for exclusive humanism to emerge, a new moral source, one that understands the way human society functions, is recognizable in the immanent frame. This moral source must readily believe that humankind is motivated to act for the good of others. This humanistic ideology, which, according to Taylor, draws on forms of the Christian faith, is a highly sophisticated caricature of the gospel of God. Feature Two purposes to remind the church that there is one supreme Creator and Sustainer of all things—the triune God. If, as Rieff argued, society has been emptied of sacred authority, then the church must acknowledge the full weight of God's authority in an increasingly hostile, humanistic, and intolerant culture.

Feature Three: Faithful Recontextualization, by Design, Reflects the Multicultural Reality of the Twenty-First Century

Feature Three, by design, reflects the multicultural reality of the twenty-first century and, more foundationally, the incarnation demonstrates God's ability to utilize the particularity of a culture to embody truth. This counts on the open, generative, creative, redemptive, and sustaining work within the communal life of the Trinity. The research in this chapter underscores the worldwide, multinational, multicultural, multiethnic nature

[154] "Confluence," *Dictionary.com*, https://www.dictionary.com/browse/confluence.

of the church. The church in America, in particular, must represent the multidimensional nature of the gospel.

Feature Four: Faithful Recontextualization Necessitates a Dynamic and Dialogical Encounter with Culture

Feature Four is marked by at least the following four characteristics: (1) an affirmation that the Spirit-created church is the body of Christ in the world; (2) a dynamic and prophetic faith; (3) a cruciform way of discipleship; and (4) a heightened awareness of exclusive humanism and hyper- and nonreligious faiths coupled with agility to engage in meaningful gospel conversations. This feature necessitates a humble posture and requires collaboration from all sides. This feature also suggests an overhaul of our approach to discipleship.

Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter began with a call for recontextualization born out of this dissertation's thesis that Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws* is insufficient for meaningful gospel conversations in an American, Secular$_3$, twenty-first-century context. This call for recontextualization responds to the stated contextual differences between a Secular$_3$ twenty-first-century context and Bright's mid-twentieth-century context in three parts. Part One provided a missiological overview of America's twenty-first-century context and included summaries of Cru's research project *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City*;[155] demographer William Frey's *Diversity Explosion*, an analysis of the 2010 US Census;[156]

[155] See note 5 earlier in this chapter.
[156] See note 6 earlier in this chapter.

and Barna Group's report *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs, and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation*.[157]

The research for Part Two provided surprising details that formed the hinge for the conclusions introduced here. This part also provided a genealogy of contextualization from four vantage points: (1) a glance back across history at under- and over-contextualization; (2) the 1910 WMC in Edinburgh and the streams it helped to influence; (3) the emergence of the term "contextualization"; and (4) a summary of the ongoing missiological response within these traditions into the twenty-first century.

Part Three proposed four prominent features for faithful evangelical recontextualization in the twenty-first century that emerged from the *divergent* approaches of ecumenicals, evangelicals, and Roman Catholics. The four features provide a place for *confluence* and a place to discover the opportunities and riverbanks for recontextualization. Chapter 5 integrates these four features into a reimagined approach to meaningful gospel conversations and further explores the key themes related to these four features.

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[157] See note 7 earlier in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

A NARRATIVE APPROACH TO MEANINGFUL GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS

Review of the Overall Argument

Chapter 1 of this dissertation began by acknowledging an awareness of the paradigmatic shifts evident in this era of twenty-first-century missiology. These shifts are described as "disruptions"[1] and evidence of "the great unraveling of many assumptions and cultural expressions of late modernity."[2] Philosopher Charles Taylor describes these disruptions as "titanic."[3] Sociologist Philip Rieff laments the absence of authority in a world without moral footing. Chapter 1 also included Timothy Tennent's expressed concern for the church in the West and her lack of preparedness to minister cross-culturally on her own soil. This chapter, written during the pandemic caused by the 2019 COVID-19, serves to underscore these shifts and highlights the dimensions of this great unraveling.

The aforementioned shifts provided impetus for the research driving the argument in this dissertation: Bill Bright's evangelism tool, *Four Spiritual Laws*, shaped within his twentieth-century context, is insufficient for our current era and context. This necessitates a reimagined, narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations for an American twenty-first-century secularized context. The central research focus of this dissertation is to answer the following question: How can Cru carry on Bill Bright's vision and maintain his commitment to evangelism by training others to present the gospel in an American, twenty-first-century secularized context? Based on the research presented in the previous

[1] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 1.

[2] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 1.

[3] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press,

chapters, this chapter contends for a reimagined approach to meaningful gospel conversations grounded in the biblical narrative—the True Story of the Whole World.

Chapter 2, in conversation with Taylor and Rieff, characterized the twenty-first-century context as secularized, exclusively humanist, and void of sacred authority. Taylor describes this secularization as $Secular_3$: an age of contested beliefs with a plurality of options. He posits that this current reality is not void of belief but is, in fact, brimming with spirituality that resembles a "super nova—galloping pluralism on a spiritual plane."[4] Taylor argues that the *modern social imaginary* further complicates this age of pluralism.

In some cases, for example, societal and religious differences are boiled down to different, but distinct, worldviews.[5] Taylor's notion of a modern social imaginary, however, suggests that such worldviews are now mingled together. The collective imaginations of today's diverse society blur these worldview distinctions. This is particularly evident in the missiological snapshot provided in Chapter 4. For example, Barna Group's 2018 report on Gen Z indicates, "Out of 69 million children and teens in Gen Z, just four percent have a biblical worldview."[6] Further, Gen Z's worldview, sense of identity, and view of morality are formed, in large part, by whatever is accessed and culled together online. While Gen Z is drawn to spiritual things, most do not believe God exists, which corroborates Taylor's notion of galloping pluralism.

2007), 12.

[4] Taylor, *Secular Age*, 300.

[5] James Sire, in *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), discusses the following distinct worldviews: Christian Theism (p. 20), Deism (p. 40), Naturalism (p. 52), Nihilism (p. 74), Existentialism (p. 94), Eastern Pantheistic Monism (p. 118), The New Age (p. 136), and Postmodernism (p. 172). Steve Wilkens and Mark L. Sanford, in *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories that Shape Our Lives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), include many of the same worldviews as does Sire but they add Individualism (p. 27), Consumerism (p. 44), Nationalism (p. 61), Moral Relativism (p. 79), and Salvation by Therapy (p. 160).

[6] Barna Group, *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation*

Rieff added a prophetic edge to the conversation as noted in Chapter 2. He maintains that the first task of every culture is to ground what is normative on a sacred order of transcendence. In other words, life must center around a theory of authority. Rieff argues that Freud's antimetaphysical and antisacral view of modernity has enabled the individual to abandon all exalted sacred ideals and to take up self-expression. Furthermore, Rieff declares this third world or culture as anticulture, void of truth and independent of sacred authority. He asserts that this unparalleled dismissal of sacred authority has left a vacuous sacred center and has, in turn, opened the way for "endlessly contestable and infinitely changeable rules."[7] The implications of Taylor's exclusive humanism and Rieff's vacuous sacred center are significant and must be taken into consideration when engaging in meaningful gospel conversations.

The third chapter, set in contrast to Chapter 2, examined Bill Bright's twentieth-century context and the theological, historical, and missiological factors that influenced his development of *Four Spiritual Laws*. The initial section provided an overview of Bright's mid-twentieth-century religious and secular context, noting important factors that helped to shape Bright's context and that played a role in his development of *Four Spiritual Laws*. The most significant factor was a student survey conducted in the early 1950s by Bright and CCC staff. The research indicated that most students who claimed the Protestant faith did not know that God loved them or that God had a plan for their lives.[8] Bright, deeply moved by this fact, designed *Four Spiritual Laws* as a simple way

(Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2018).

[7] Philip Rieff, *My Life Among the Deathworks: Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 13.

[8] Bill Bright, "Methods and Philosophy of Personal Evangelism," paper presented at the World Congress on Evangelism, Kongresshalle, Berlin, October 26–November 4, 1966, Campus Crusade for

to present the gospel to a majority Protestant population that was "hungry for God."[9] This underscores a significant difference between Bright's twentieth-century context and today's twenty-first-century context. Cru's 2016 report, *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City*,[10] reported that over half of the 400 people surveyed claimed no religious affiliation and most described Christianity as either offensive, inauthentic, unsafe, or simply irrelevant.

A second key factor for Bright was the Cold War and the evolving threat of communism. Bright often lamented the communist threat of atheism and called for an aggressive movement for God and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. A third historical factor that influenced Bright's evangelism methodology was his drive to help fulfill the Great Commission. He was influenced by the passion, resolve, and colonial mindset of William Carey and John Mott and the stated goal of the World Missionary Conference (WMC) of 1910: "The evangelization of the world in this generation."[11] The WMC watchword would continue to have far-reaching effects as is evident in Bright's eventual vision for CCC.

A fourth factor emerged after tracing Bright's revivalist tendencies back to the First, Second, and Third Great Awakenings. The content of Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws* resembled the basic gospel presentation of earlier revivalists that placed an emphasis on securing eternal life in heaven. Cru's 2016 research and Barna Group's 2018 report on Gen Z revealed the difference between Bright's twentieth-century context and today's

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Christ Archives, Orlando, FL, 1.

[9] Bill Bright, "A Strategy for Fulfilling the Great Commission," *Dallas Lay Institute for Evangelism*, February 13–20, 1966, Campus Crusade for Christ Archives, Orlando, FL, 4.

[10] Brooke Wright et al., *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City* (Atlanta: Cyrano Marketing Collective, 2016).

twenty-first-century context. The research showed that many of the 400 people surveyed are either unaware of or have no interest in religion or the gospel, or they are content with their lives. Most are more concerned about everyday issues such as gun control and climate change than about an otherworldly afterlife.

A fifth factor in Bright's development of *Four Spiritual Laws* was Henrietta Mears's influence—both explicit and implicit. Bright modeled Mears's commitment to simplicity, transferability, and training in all of his curriculum, particularly in *Four Spiritual Laws*. His simple and practical method, however, isolates the gospel and the message of salvation from its rightful place within the TSWW.

A sixth factor that contributed to Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws* was Enlightenment rationalism—the quest for certainty. Chapter 3 highlights the fact that Bright sought to bring reason to bear in the twentieth century by addressing issues such as the following: the uniqueness of Jesus, the facts behind his resurrection, and various evidences for the reliability of the Bible. Yet, as demonstrated in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, Americans are no longer asking the same questions today that they were in the mid-twentieth century.

Chapter 4 issued a call for recontextualization in response to the contrasts between a twenty-first-century $Secular_3$ context and Bright's twentieth-century context. The first part of the chapter provided a missiological snapshot of America's twenty-first-century context. The second part provided a summary of the emergence of contextualization by way of four vantage points: (1) the first vantage point glanced back across history and considered the ways in which the gospel has been translated or contextualized in different cultures since the first century; (2) the second vantage point

[11] John R. Mott, *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation* (London: Student Volunteer

focused on the 1910 WMC in Edinburgh and its direct influence on the development of ecumenical and evangelical streams of theology, and its indirect influence on the RCC and the Vatican Council in the 1960s; (3) the third vantage point shed light on the emergence of the term and concept of contextualization in both the ecumenical and evangelical traditions; and, (4) the fourth vantage point considered how contextualization informs the topic of mission and evangelism in these three streams and the continuing controversy that swirls around these topics today. The third part concluded with a call for a *confluence* of perspectives and proposed four prominent features of twenty-first-century recontextualization.

Introduction to this Chapter

Part One of this chapter provides a genealogy of biblical and narrative theology and bolsters the significance of a narrative theology in a twenty-first-century context. The first section of this discussion looks back to the impetus of biblical and narrative theology, while the second section argues for a narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations framed by the TSWW and nurtured by narrative inquiry. Part Two of this chapter introduces in more detail the four features of faithful recontextualization identified at the end of the previous chapter. Feature One (Faithful Recontextualization Affirms the Bible as the TSWW and the Gospel as Good News for All) highlights the four overarching themes inherent within God's narrative: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration or re-creation. These themes offer a transcendent framework within which a

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Movement, 1902), 2.

person—believer or unbeliever—can understand the all-encompassing implications of the gospel for the whole of one's life.[12]

Feature Two (Faithful Recontextualization Yields to the Full Weight of the Triune God's Authority) is revealed in six ways: (1) in Scripture; (2) through creation; (3) the mission of redemption is set into motion by the fall, first, through the nation of Israel; then (4) by the Spirit-empowered incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; (5) through Jesus's ascension and the sending of the Spirit in the book of Acts and the Epistles; and (6) in the restoration or re-creation of all things. In addition, this feature depends on a Trinitarian, Christocentric, eschatological hermeneutic of the TSWW and provides a key interpretive element.

Feature Three (Faithful Recontextualization, by Design, Reflects the Multicultural Reality of the Twenty-First Century) involves, first, developing an increased awareness of cultural variations in America and a willingness to learn through cross-cultural collaboration.[13] Second, recontextualization must reflect this multicultural reality and lean on the framework of the TSWW. Third, recontextualization must be rooted in the missional nature of the triune God.

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[12] Chapter 2 discussed Taylor's secularization and resultant cross-pressures and fragilization. James K. A. Smith, in *How Not to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 140, summarily describes cross-pressures as "the simultaneous pressure of various spiritual options; or the feeling of being caught between the echo of transcendence and the drive toward *immanentization*," which seems to indicate that meaningful gospel conversations involve a deeper level of understanding of the *nova effect* in order to tell a different story that perhaps relieves the pressure. In addition, it is equally important that believers understand the implications of the TSWW for their lives.

[13] Timothy Tennent, in *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010, 49, speaks to the reality of twenty-first-century challenges with regard to contextualization and calls for a deeper ecumenism. For Tennent ecumenism is not necessarily cross-cultural in the sense of *ethnos*, but an ecumenism that begins with the church, which he describes as "the deeper, older ecumenism that finds its roots in historic Christian confessions." He asserts, "We can no longer afford the kind of entrenched sectarianism that has often characterized fundamentalism and evangelicalism. This does not mean that we relinquish our distinctive theological convictions, but instead, that we engage in conversation with the global church in order to enrich our own theological perspectives,

Feature Four (Faithful Recontextualization Necessitates a Dynamic and Dialogical Encounter with Culture) includes the following: (1) an affirmation that the Spirit-created church lives as the very body of Christ in the world; (2) a dynamic and prophetic faith; (3) a cruciform way of discipleship; and (4) a heightened awareness of exclusive humanism and hyper- and non-religious faiths coupled with agility to engage in meaningful gospel conversations.

Part One: A Genealogy of Biblical and Narrative Theology

The TSWW is comprehensive in scope and anchors the whole canon of Scripture in the *missio Dei*—the mission of the triune God. Christopher Wright describes *missio Dei* as "a missional phenomenon as it witnesses the self-giving movement of God toward his creation and us."[14] The Bible is the story of God and God's activity in creating, sustaining, and redeeming the world to fulfill God's purposes through the nation of Israel. God carries this out through the Son's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, and through the Spirit who unifies the church in community and empowers the church to witness.[15]

Ultimately, the Bible presents itself as the story of universal history that interprets the past and points to the goal of history—God's restoration or re-creation of all things. Stephen Holmes explains, "The fundamental difference between asserting that God has a mission and asserting that God is missionary is that in the former case the mission may be

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which will lead to a deeper understanding of the *depositum fidei* [deposit of faith]" (p. 49).

[14] Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 48.

[15] Lesslie Newbigin, in *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 54, provides this distinction for the church: "The church represents the presence of the reign of God in the life of the world, not in the triumphalistic sense (as the 'successful' cause) and not in the moralistic sense (as the 'righteous' cause), but in the sense that it is the place where the mystery

incidental, disconnected from who God is; in the latter case, mission is one of the perfections of God, as adequate a description of who he is as love, omnipotence or eternity."[16] Before taking a deeper look into the four predominant themes in the TSWW, the following section provides a summary genealogy of biblical theology and narrative theology and serves to lay a foundation for a narrative theology grounded in the TSWW.

Biblical Theology

Johann Philipp Gabler (1753–1826) is credited with situating biblical theology as a distinct theological discipline and setting it apart from systematic theology.[17] While Craig Bartholomew credits Gabler with distinguishing biblical theology as its own entity, he criticizes Gabler's rationalist understanding of biblical theology as skewed. Nonetheless, Bartholomew asserts, Biblical theology is concerned to describe the inner unity of the Bible on its own terms. It is therefore descriptive and historical in a way that theological interpretation and systematic theology are not."[18] Notably, the search for an inner unity within the OT and NT goes back to the earliest days of the Christian church and continues to today.

Henri de Lubac in the 1950s argued that biblical theology originated with Christ and in the Bible, describing the inner unity of Scripture as a result of the fact of the incarnation. He asserts, "Right from the beginning the essential was there, the synthesis was made, in the dazzling and confused light of revelation."[19] In the second century, as Irenaeus grappled with Marcion and the Gnostics over the unity of the Bible, Irenaeus

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of the kingdom present in the dying and rising of Jesus is made present here."

[16] Stephen Holmes, "Trinitarian Missiology: Towards a Theology of God as Missionary," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8, no.1 (2006): 89.

[17] Craig Bartholomew, "Biblical Theology," *DTIB*:85

[18] Bartholomew, "Biblical Theology," *DTIB*:86.

affirmed the inherent unity of the OT and NT and in the story of the Scripture from creation to re-creation. Later, John Calvin contributed to a redemptive-historical approach to theology that eventually influenced Geerhardus Vos and Herman Ridderbos and the development of the little known “redemptive-historical school.”[20] This school of thought was developed in the Netherlands in the late nineteenth century and reached its peak of influence between World War I and World War II. The focus of this effort was an emphasis on “the one history of God’s constantly advancing revelation.”[21]

A move toward biblical theology began in the 1920s in response to Christianity’s accommodation to culture with an aim to develop the theological dimension of the Bible. G. F. Hasel notes, “Neo-orthodoxy and the biblical theology movement shared the common concern to understand the Bible as a fully human book to be investigated with the fully immanent historical-critical method and yet to see the Bible as a vehicle or witness of the divine Word.”[22] This scholarly and strongly Protestant effort included work by European neoorthodox theologians Hans Frei, Karl Barth,[23] and Emil Brunner, and American theologians H. Richard Niebuhr and Reinhold Niebuhr, among others.

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[19] Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958), 88.

[20] Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, “Story and Biblical Theology,” in *Out of Egypt*: *Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), footnote 41, page 153.

[21] Bartholomew and Goheen, “Story and Biblical Theology,” 153. Bartholomew and Goheen also note that publications written by James Barr and Langdon Gilkey reputedly “sunk the BTM” (p. 86). James Barr thinks it “anachronistic” to find biblical theology in Christian thinkers prior to Gabler and argues that the search for inner unity of the Bible has been clearly present from the early church fathers onward. Barr also critiques the BTM related to two areas—the concept of revelation and history and its “misuse of word studies and so-called Greek/Hebrew contrasts in views in the world” (p. 88).

[22] G. F. Hasel, “Biblical Theology Movement,” *EDT*:163.

[23] This brief overview inadequately describes the impact of the scholars listed and falls short of listing everyone involved. However, this footnote provides a small space to state the overwhelming impact of Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth (1886–1998) on theology and missiology since this time. Although he is criticized for his neo-orthodoxy (although he disparaged this term) and his historical criticism, John Webster, in “Barth, Karl,” *DTIB*:83, states, “Karl Barth is by common consent the weightiest Protestant dogmatician since Schleiermacher.” Webster also notes that Barth’s contributions to

The Biblical Theology Movement (BTM) was most influential between 1945 and 1971 in the United States in particular and emphasized the recovery of the Bible as a *theological* book. According to Brevard Childs, the BTM also emphasized the unity of the Bible as a whole, the centrality of God's revelation of himself in history, and the distinctive nature of the biblical perspective.[24] In the long run, the BTM lost traction due to an inability to resolve issues around the Bible's authority,[25] the unity between the OT and NT, and the distinctiveness of the Bible's message. Additionally, the scarcity of educational resources and biblical theology's apparent lack of relevancy at the time contributed to the BTM's dissolution.

Biblical theology and scholarship within the evangelical tradition has continued to thrive despite the demise of the BTM. Scholars such as the aforementioned Ridderbos,

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the theory and practice of biblical interpretation and the importance of biblical exegesis are … commonly underestimated" (p. 82). Despite his views on the interpretation of Scripture, Webster lauds him as a "commanding modern example of constructive theology" (p. 84). David Bosch, in *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012), 399, notes that Barth was among the first theologians to break radically with the Enlightenment approach to theology and to place mission within the context of the Trinity. "Mission was understood as being derived from the very nature of God" rather than ecclesiology or soteriology, and the activity of mission "as participating in the sending of God" (p. 399).

[24] Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1970). This synopsis of the BTM leans heavily on Child's work as referenced in Bartholomew, "Biblical Theology," 86. Craig Bartholomew, in "Introduction," pp. 1–19 in *Out of Egypt*: *Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), emphasizes the importance of Childs's contribution to biblical theology by way of reminder for theologians today. First, Childs understands the importance of biblical theology and emphasizes the importance of the canon of Scripture. Second, he emphasizes the difference between biblical and systematic theology; third, he maintains the centrality of the relationship between OT and NT for biblical theology; fourth, he encourages a close connection between biblical theology and theological interpretation; and fifth, he urges an ecumenical approach to biblical theology.

Notably, James Dunn, in "The Problem of Biblical Theology," pp. 172–86 in *Out of Egypt*: *Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004) drills deeper on the problems in Biblical Theology, including the myriad of questions that arise regarding the various definitions for and descriptions of Bible and Scripture.

[25] Bartholomew, "Biblical," *DTIB*:86–87 notes that while the BTM was connected with Barth and the rise of neo-orthodoxy, it was suspicious of his supposed rejection of historical criticism. The BTM was concerned with the Bible and authority and rejected fundamentalism but also rejected Barth's use of the Bible, which didn't take historical criticism seriously enough. Webster, "Barth, Karl," 83, notes, "Barth considered historical criticism necessary but insufficient."

along with O. Palmer Robertson, George Eldon Ladd, Meredith Kline, Graeme Goldsworthy, Bill Dumbrell, and others, have made considerable contributions to evangelical biblical theology.

Narrative Theology

Narrative theology developed in earnest in the 1970s around three approaches that became identified as the Yale school, the Chicago school, and the California school. Dan Stiver states that the Yale school was influenced by the work of George Lindbeck and Hans Frei. According to Stiver, the Yale school focused on "*the* story found in the canonical scriptures"[26] and held that the familiar stories of the Bible should represent the world of real people. The Chicago school, influenced primarily by Paul Ricoeur, David Tracy, and Langdon Gilkey, represented the broadest consideration of the biblical narrative. The Chicago school attended to "*our* story"[27] and the philosophical and cultural relevance of the narrative in which identity is formed. The California school, represented mainly by James McClendon,[28] placed emphasis on the theological and personal narrative. Stiver notes that the California school's focus on "*my* and *your* story"[29] emphasized the relationship between theology and personal narrative, biography, and autobiography.

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[26] Dan R. Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language: Sign, Symbol, and Story* (Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), 135. Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen have influenced much of the theology of this dissertation. In Bartholomew and Goheen, "Story and Biblical Theology," 163, they place themselves somewhere between the Yale school and the Chicago school—they endorse the Yale school's attention to the grand narrative and the particularity of the Christian story, and they "share with the Chicago school an interest in the relationship between the Christian story and the nature of the world and its ontology" (p. 163).

[27] Stiver, *Philosophy*, 135.

[28] Bartholomew and Goheen, "Story and Biblical Theology," 146.

[29] Stiver, *Philosophy*, 135.

J. P. Callahan provides four varieties of narrative theology:[30] (1) Postliberal theology, which formed in reaction to Christianity's cultural accommodation, contends that the interpretive center of the Bible is the narration of Jesus's identity. This serves as the basis for early theological characterizations of the deity and humanity of Jesus. T. R. Phillips notes that Hans Frei and George Lindbeck, the originators of the "distinctive 'postliberal agenda,'"[31] were influenced by Karl Barth, Clifford Geertz, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. (2) The philosophical and ethical approach to narrative theology looks for a sociohistorical understanding of human identity. Ricoeur views narrative theology as foundational for understanding the world and how humans live in it.[32] McIntyre attends to the way narrative shapes decisions and life stories. He avers, "I can only answer the question, 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question, 'Of what story do I find myself a part?'"[33] (3) Then, there is the view that narrative in theology parallels the

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[30] J. P. Callahan, in "Narrative Theology," *EDT*:812, notes that the postliberal view of narrative theology included Karl Barth, who considered Scripture to be a loosely constructed, nonfiction novel. Hans Frei and Ronald Thiemann, according to Callahan, contributed to the postliberal view. H. Richard Niebuhr, Paul Ricoeur, Alasdair McIntyre, and Stanley Hauerwas contribute to the philosophical and ethical interest in narrative theology.

[31] T. R. Phillips, "Postliberal Theology," *EDT*:937. Phillips identifies four themes that run through postliberal thought: "(1) a socio-communitarian view of human life; (2) a non-foundationalism which allows the particularity of the Christian revelation to form the context for understanding and practice; (3) an intratextual approach to Scripture that emphasizes the primacy of narratives; (4) and absorbing the universe into the biblical world" (p. 937). Phillips argues that postliberalism's wedding of the social sciences and theology lacks clarity and produces tension particularly related to the topic of the authority of Scripture. This concern is highlighted by the "cultural linguistic model," raising questions around truth and truthfulness of Christian belief but not providing sufficient answers. This seems like a slippery slope, which has led to the criticism that postliberalism is relativistic because "it admits no universally acknowledged criteria for adjudicating between religions" (p. 939). Another criticism relates to the postliberal apparent lack of interest in the historical reference of the Scripture. Phillips points out that postliberalism's focus on Christian self-description and the integrity of the biblical narrative leaves little to offer the broader public and lacks offerings for those who suffer injustice in the world, which circles back to the question of the authority of Scripture and the question of truth.

[32] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Volume 1, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); and *Time and Narrative*, Volume 2, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

[33] Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 216.

interest in narrative as it pertains to literary and narrative criticism. Here, according to Callahan, "The narrative is not the same as the story, exhaustive of the story, or meant to replace the story; yet the story is not given apart from its telling in narrative."[34] (4) Finally, Callahan notes, there is an evangelical narrative theology approach as developed by Clark Pinnock, Alasdair MacIntyre, Stanley Grenz, and Gabriel Fackre. It embraces the narrative in relation to questions related to the truth and history of Scripture and the identity of God's people.[35]

The TSWW: A Narrative Approach

This dissertation's emphasis on the TSWW draws from Bartholomew's and Goheen's approach to a "narrative biblical theology,"[36] which, by their description, tends toward the aforementioned Yale school with its emphasis on the metanarrative of Scripture. Notably, they affirm the positive implications for all three schools of thought and validate Joel B. Green's description of narrative theology as "a constellation of approaches to the theological task."[37] There is a place in narrative theology for *the* story and *our* story as well as *my* and *your* story, especially when ensconced in the TSWW. This is evidenced in part by the four prominent features of twenty-first-century recontextualization.

The backbone of this dissertation's narrative approach is evidenced in Feature One and Feature Two as introduced in Chapter 4 and leans on the following:

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[34] Callahan, "Narrative Theology," 813.

[35] Callahan, "Narrative Theology," 813. Callahan provides the following sources in his bibliography (p. 814): Gabriel Fackre, *Christian Story: Ecumenical Faith in Evangelical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); Stanley Grenz, "*Revisioning Evangelical Theology: Theology for the Community of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993); Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007); Clark Pinnock and Barry L. Callen, *Scripture Principle: Tackling the Maze* (Dardenne Prairie, MO: Emeth Press, 2009).

[36] Bartholomew and Goheen, "Story and Biblical Theology," 168.

[37] Joel B. Green, "Narrative Theology," *DTIB*:531.

Bartholomew and Goheen's *True Story of the Whole World* in six acts[38] and Newbigin's emphasis on the importance of historical reference. Feature Two adds valence to the narrative approach presented here and affirms that Scripture mediates God's authority. The triune God is the Creator and sustainer of the universe and is both protagonist and hero of the story.

Feature Three adds texture to the narrative approach and affirms God's intentional work in the formation of a multicultural people for God's own possession in ordinary ways—through marriages and families, births and deaths, friends and enemies, journeys and sojourns, war and peace, and monotony and calamity. Newbigin affirms, "The biblical story is not a separate story: it is part of the unbroken fabric of world history. The Christian faith is that this is the place in the whole fabric where its pattern has been disclosed, even though the weaving is not yet finished."[39] The narrative theology presented in Chapter 4 and expounded here recognizes that the Bible contains narrative and non-narrative forms of literature, but it affirms that all sixty-six books of the canon come together to form the metanarrative—the TSWW. At the heart of this story, the key to the whole story is the incarnation of the Word—the life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.[40]

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[38] Goheen and Bartholomew, *True Story*, tell the TSWW by way of six acts—like the acts of a play or a drama: Act 1: God establishes the kingdom (Creation); Act 2: Rebellion in the Kingdom (Fall); Act 3: The King Chooses Israel (Redemption Initiated); Act 4: The Coming of the King (Redemption Accomplished); Act 5: Spreading the News of the King; Act 6: Return of the King. Similarly, N. T. Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God: How To Read the Bible Today* (New York: HarperOne Publishing, 2013), 115–140, depicts the drama of Scripture in five acts: Act 1: Creation; Act 2: Fall; Act 3: Israel; Act 4: Jesus; Act 5 uniquely, is incomplete because the story continues to be told through the church following the first century until the King returns to restore the kingdom. Additional resources include Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004) and Michael Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

[39] Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 88.

[40] Newbigin, in *Open Secret*, 16, asserts that when we confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ it "…

Part Two: Four Prominent Features of Twenty-First-Century Faithful Recontextualization

Chapter 4 ended by issuing a call for recontextualization by way of four prominent features. The term *feature* is used because of the dynamic nature of recontextualization in an ever-changing context. Each feature, although distinct, is meant to interact and interrelate with the others. As previously stated, these features are described as *prominent* to imply their significance and to indicate that there are other features of recontextualization beyond the purview of this dissertation.

Feature One: Faithful Recontextualization Affirms the Bible as the TSWW and the Gospel as Good News for All

The TSWW tells the story of God's mission in the world and provides an interpretation of universal history in the sixty-six-book canon of Scripture. According to Christopher Wright, this true story is a "*missional phenomenon*."[41] He states, "The writings that now comprise our Bible are themselves the product of and witness to the ultimate mission of God. The Bible renders to us the story of God's mission through God's people in their engagement with God's world for the sake of the whole of God's creation."[42] Bartholomew and Goheen affirm, "The Bible is a unified and progressively unfolding drama of God's action in history for the salvation of the whole world."[43] The TSWW is

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implies a claim regarding the entire public life of mankind and the whole created world. It is a claim that by following the clue that is given in the story that constitutes the gospel, the believing community will be led to a true understanding of all that is, and to a right practical relation to it."

[41] Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 22, author's italics.

[42] Wright, *Mission*, 22.

[43] Goheen and Bartholomew, *True Story*, 14. N. T. Wright, in *Scripture and the Authority of God: How To Read the Bible Today* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013), 121, develops what he describes as a "Multilayered View: A Five Act Model, which includes Creation, Fall, Israel, Jesus, and the Church." Wu, *One Gospel*, location 2008, highlights three "framework themes": Creation, Covenant, and Kingdom.

comprehensive—provides meaning for all of history, and in particular, provides meaning for each person's life.

God's mission to redeem and restore all of creation is central to the TSWW and is summed up in Christ Jesus. He is the clue to human history, evidenced by the historical events of his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. At the center of God's mission is the incarnation—the Word made flesh in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is crucial to understand that "Jesus is the human face of God, the hermeneutical key to understanding God's life and love for the world."[44] More particularly, God communicates with humankind in the incarnation of Christ. They add, "God embraces the particular in the incarnation, and by doing so, God enters and critically engages local culture."[45] Therefore, in Christ, the gospel of God's kingdom is good news for all people in every culture.

Since God is the source and goal of the cosmos, then it stands to reason that the gospel is "embodied in culturally-conditioned forms."[46] Here Newbigin argues, "[If the gospel is] the announcement that in the series of events that have their center in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ [then] something has happened that alters the total human situation and must call into question every human culture."[47] Furthermore, Newbigin suggests that to assume the ability to distill the gospel into one

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[44] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 38. In addition, Michael Goheen, "History," in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, ed. Michael Goheen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 8, affirms that the triune God is the source of mission. He states, "Mission has as its source the love of the Father who sent his Son to reconcile all things to himself. The Son sent the Spirit to gather his church together and empower it to participate in his mission. The church is sent by Jesus to continue his mission, and this sending defines its very nature" (p. 8).

[45] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 38.

[46] Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel in Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 4.

[47] Newbigin, *Foolishness*, 3–4.

pure form, untainted by cultural influence, is merely an illusion. Therefore, faithful recontextualization embraces the multidimensional nature of the gospel, which is fully evidenced in the incarnation and the gospel accounts.[48]

The book of Acts displays the power of the Spirit unleashed to create a polyvocal gospel witness—the good news proclaimed in new languages from Jerusalem, to Judea, to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 2). The acts of the Spirit demonstrate the ways in which God contextualizes the gospel through the church in a host of new cultures—from a religiously fastidious, Jewish culture to a pagan, idol-worshiping Greek culture (Acts 10–11, 15, 19). The book of Acts exhibits the ways in which God's gospel, empowered by the Spirit, is strong yet flexible, consistent as well as multifaceted, evidenced by the rapid spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to the nations and across the centuries. Affirming the multidimensional nature of the gospel requires the church to pay close attention to the surrounding culture.

Four Running Themes of the TSWW: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration or Re-creation

The four overarching themes inherent in the TSWW provide a theological framework within which a person can discover the overarching implications of the gospel for all of life. The TSWW assumes that the story of the Bible is not simply one among many religious stories in the world but is, in fact, the TSWW. Goheen and Bartholomew affirm:

> The gospel is public truth, universally valid, true for all people and all of human life. It is not merely for the private sphere of religious experience. It is not about some otherworldly salvation postponed to an indefinite future. It is God's message about how he is at work to restore his world and all of human life. It tells

[48] The multidimensional character of the gospel is introduced in Chapter 4 in the section titled "Genealogy of Contextualization" and references Acts 10, 15, and 17 as examples of different ways the gospel is communicated depending on the context.

> us about the goal of all history and thus claims to be the true story of the whole world.[49]

Importantly, as George Robinson rightly points out, the grand narrative of the gospel is unlike lesser stories in history because it demands a response.[50]

The four overarching themes running through the TSWW are grounded in the key events of the metanarrative. The first key theme is creation, which is found in Genesis in the first two chapters of the Bible. However, God's creative action remains active and dynamic across the canon of Scripture. God's rule and reign over all of creation remains constant. The creation is followed by the second key theme, the fall recorded in Genesis 3. The fall set in motion a world at odds with the Creator.

The third key theme is redemption, initiated by God through the nation of Israel and brought to fulfillment by Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection, and is carried out by the Spirit who indwells and empowers the church (Genesis 12; Exodus 1–12; 1 Samuel–2 Samuel; Matt 26–28; Mark 14–16; Luke 22–24; John 19:30). God, who reigns in the person of Jesus, powerfully entered human history and reestablished life on the basis of redemptive power. The fullness of God's redemptive reign is yet to be fully realized. But

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[49] Michael W. Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew, *Living At The Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 4.

Other authors providing insight on missional theology include Bruce Riley Ashford, ed., *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011); David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*; Michael W. Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Darrell Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Newbigin, *Open Secret*; Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); and Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

[50] George Robinson, "The Gospel and Evangelism," in *Theology and Practice of Mission*, ed. Bruce Riley Ashford (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 89. Robinson contributed to the development of *The Story: An Innovative Tool to Share the Gospel Story*, Spread Truth (https://spreadtruth.com/) and demonstrates an approach to meaningful gospel conversations framed by the grand narrative and outlined by the four overarching themes of the metanarrative. Daniel L. Akin, Benjamin L. Merkle, and George G. Robinson, *40 Questions about the Great Commission* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020), include chapters that

at the same time, God's redemptive power is dynamic and present now, works in opposition against forces of evil and wickedness, and seeks to restore life to its fullness. This fullness of life looks back to God's intended design for creation and forward to God's promises associated with the new heavens and new earth.

The fourth key theme is restoration or re-creation. God's complete redemption is evidenced by the restoration or re-creation of God's city in God's kingdom (Rev 21:3–4). Significant to the TSWW is the fact that these very themes also pulsate across the sixty-six books of the canon. The following section provides an overview of each theme as it arises in Scripture and purposefully notes how each theme depends on the others as the metanarrative unfolds.

Creation

The Bible begins with the book of Genesis and the story of creation. Bruce Ashford and Heath Thomas point out, "The Genesis creation account is presented in a narratival manner, providing the point of departure for an extended story that develops throughout the canon of Christian Scripture."[51] The triune God, ex nihilo, speaks into existence the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon, and vegetation and forms out of the ground every beast of the field and bird of the heavens (Gen 1:1–25). He also creates a garden in Eden in which he gives life to "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:8–9).

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locate the Great Commission within the grand narrative and the created order.

[51] Bruce Ashford and Heath Thomas, *The Gospel of Our King: Bible, Worldview, and the Mission of Every Christian* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 13.

God's creative work crescendos as he creates man and woman in God's image or likeness—*imago Dei*. God creates humankind to know and relate with God and to know and relate with oneself, with one another, and within the world. God sets humankind apart to function as "imagers"[52] commissioned to fill and subdue the earth and to exercise dominion over every living thing (Gen 1:26–31; 2:21–24). Ashford and Thomas posit, "The image of God should be understood as structural, functional, and relational."[53] In other words, "The whole person is the image of God. For this reason, we prefer to call human beings 'imagers' rather than 'image bearers.'"[54] *Imago Dei* relates to humankind's very makeup, constitution, and purpose.

Notably, the triune God reigns as the sovereign king over all of creation. Just as God's creative work is repeatedly highlighted and praised across the canon, God is worshipped and adored for his involvement in, awareness of, and care for the kingdom he created. The whole earth continuously responds in worship: the heavens and the earth rejoice, the floods roar and the waters thunder as they proclaim his glory, the trees of the forest sing for joy, and the whole creation waits for the revelation of the sons of God (Job 38–41; Ps 92; 96; 103; Rom 8:18–20); humankind honors, worships, and praises God's

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[52] Ashford and Thomas, *Gospel of Our King*, 19. Ashford and Thomas provide a brief analysis of the various interpretations of *imago Dei* beginning with the Patristics. They highlight the significance of God's creation of Adam and Eve—whereas the animals were created "according to their kind," humankind was created in the very image of God. The meaning of *imago Dei* is mysterious and debated. According to Ashford and Thomas, most patristic and medieval theologians, influenced by Plato, interpreted *imago Dei* as the "seat of human intellect" (p. 18). The Reformer Martin Luther linked "the image with humanity's original righteousness" (p. 18) and John Calvin linked it "with the whole human being, including humanity's relational and physical dimensions" (p.18). Karl Barth held that *imago Dei* is relational and points to our ability to be addressed by God, to respond to him, and to relate together as male and female, while "many contemporary theologians define *imago Dei* functionally by what humankind is able to do" (p. 19).

[53] Ashford and Thomas, *Gospel of our King*, 19.

[54] Ashford and Thomas, *Gospel of Our King*, 19.

name by recognizing God's love and mercy, provision and protection, guidance and wisdom—even in the face of great odds.

Albert Wolters provides this clarification, "We must give as the very definition of *creation*, 'the correlation of the sovereign activity of the Creator and the created order.'"[55] Importantly, while the act of creation took place at a given point in time, God's involvement in his creation—his "sovereign activity in originating, upholding, guiding, and ruling his world"[56]— continues across the canon. God's concern for and reign over creation is comprehensive.

Summary

The triune God is the supreme ruler over all things. God existed before the foundation of the world and created the universe ex nihilo. God also fashioned humankind for relationship with God, with each other, and with creation. God's imagers, humankind, were given dominion over the entirety of God's kingdom. God's active involvement in creation is evident not only in the creation story but all across the canon of Scripture.

Fall

The creation story soon goes sideways when Adam and Eve choose autonomy from God and rebel against God's one command and set in motion a remarkable chain of events (Gen 3:1–13). It is important to understand that this disobedience began with the archangel Satan and those of the heavenly host who joined him in the rebellion against

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[55] Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 14.

[56] Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 14.

God. The metanarrative of Scripture is rife with the effects of humankind's rebellion against the authority of God. Wolters affirms,

> The Bible teaches plainly that Adam and Eve's fall into sin was not just an isolated act of disobedience but an event of catastrophic significance for creation as a whole. Not only the whole human race but the whole nonhuman world too was caught up in the train of Adam's failure to heed God's explicit commandment and warning. No created thing is in principle untouched by the corrosive effects of the fall.[57]

God places Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden and instructs them to be fruitful and multiply and to work and maintain the garden. He forbids only one thing: "The tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen 2:15–16). But the serpent tempts them to question God's goodness and to doubt God's authority. Adam and Eve were created to love God, but their choice fractures this relationship. They were created to love one another, but their choice taints their relationship and eventually their family; they were created to cultivate and create, to be fruitful and multiply, but their choice plunges them into conflict.

The cosmic effect of sin reverberates along the storyline of Scripture and makes it clear that sin is not isolated to a few individuals, or even to the majority of people, but permeates everyone and everything. The psalmist laments, "The Lord looks down from heaven on all the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one" (Ps 14:2–3; see also Ps 53:1–13), and confirms, "No one living is righteous" (Ps 143:2). The prophet Isaiah confirms,

> Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made

[57] Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 44.

> their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace. Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom. For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us (Isa 59:7–9, 12).

Jeremiah declares, "The heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all else" (Jer 17:3). Eventually, the apostle Paul concludes, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). Moreover, the universality of Adam's sin extends to the entire created order that is now subjected to futility and in bondage to decay (Rom 8:20–21).[58] Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. adds, "Shalom is God's design for creation and redemption; sin is blamable human vandalism of these great realities and therefore an affront to their architect and builder."[59] The fact that sin is a refusal to acknowledge God's authority and a picture of humankind's desire for autonomy certainly helps to explain Rieff's third world culture and explains Freud's effort to banish authority.

Summary

Understanding and acknowledging the extent of sin and its far-reaching effects is one of the keys to unlocking the meaning of the TSWW—particularly in an age of secularization and exclusive humanism. The Bible teaches that sin—all evil and perversity the world over—is ultimately the result of humanity's refusal to live under the rule and reign of God. If, as Taylor suggests, belief in God today is veritably implausible, then it is likely that affirming God's authority and man's sinfulness are equally so, particularly when an

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[58] R. R. Reno, "The Doctrine of Sin," *DTIB*:749.

[59] Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed To Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 16. Ashford and Thomas, in *Gospel of Our King*, 37, add, "Sin didn't change everything comprehensively … because sin doesn't have the power to destroy creation's order, make the natural world evil in itself, or obliterate our humanity. One way to put the situation is to say that God's good world remained good structurally but was corrupted directionally. Although fundamental order of the world remains according to God's good intentions, sinful humanity takes the good world [God] made and directs

exclusive humanism view suggests that humankind is capable of finding its own way to a better life.

Redemption

Despite Adam and Eve's rebellion, God's love remains strong. Even though God expels Adam and Eve from the garden, God does not abandon them. Ashford notes,

> Even as God the judge pronounced sentence on rebellious man, evidence of his grace shone through. He would not give up on his creation. In Genesis 3:15, the *protoevangelion* or 'first gospel,' God revealed the initial hint of redemption. Here it is immediately clear that humanity, as the seed of the woman, will participate in God's plan. It is through her seed that the head of the serpent will be dealt a fatal blow. In other words, humanity becomes both *object* and *agent* of mission.[60]

From this point on and always at God's initiative, redemption pulsates across salvation history and the TSWW keeps hope alive as God uses the poor and the powerless to accomplish his purposes. God calls Noah to serve by building an ark, which preserves his family from a catastrophic flood. After the waters subside, God makes a covenant with Noah and promises to never again curse the ground because of man, commissioning him to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen 8:20–9:5).

Next, God the King initiates redemption through the nation of Israel. God makes a covenant with Abraham, promising to make him a father of many nations and to make his name great (Gen 12:1–3). Abraham and Sarah, advanced in years and "as good as dead" (Rom 4:19), eventually receive the fulfillment of this promise in their son Isaac. Then, as Abraham prepares to offer his son in sacrifice to God, God provides a substitute and

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it toward sinful ends, causing life to be frustrating and painful."

[60] Ashford, *Theology and Practice*, 41.

redeems his life. Abraham's faith justifies him before God and foreshadows faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 4:1–4; Gal 3:6–9).

Likewise, God preserves the life of Moses and calls him to lead the nation of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and into the promised land (Exod 1–12). Moses foreshadows God's provision of a prophet (Deut 18:18), and through Moses God provides the Law and the Levitical priesthood to administer atoning sacrifices. Ultimately, God sends Jesus as the perfect and final prophet and priest and as the final, atoning sacrifice (Heb 4:16–18; 9–11; in particular, Heb 9:11–15).[61]

God abides Israel's demand for an earthly king, first commissioning Saul to rule over Israel and eventually crowning David (1 Sam 8:5; 10:1; 16:12–13). David's coronation pales in comparison to the coronation of Jesus Christ the King of kings and Lord of lords. Echoes of the gospel are evident, from God's choice of Solomon (David's son by Bathsheba), God's promise of peace, and the provision of the temple, to the great divide of the kingdom and consequential Babylonian captivity, all the way to the rebuilding of the second temple. God, through the prophet Isaiah, points to a suffering servant who will take away the sins of the world (Isa 42:1–9; 49; 50; 52:13–53:12).

The New Testament opens with the birth of the King—God the Son takes on human flesh through the incarnation, and redemption is accomplished (Luke 1:26–55). The Son of Man announces the good news of the inbreaking of the kingdom of God. He comes "not to be served, but to serve" and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt 20:28) and to bring back to right relationship everything lost in the fall. Jesus Christ, the righteous Son of God, defeated the principalities and powers of wickedness by

[61] Goheen, *Light to the Nations*, 104–9; Ashford and Thomas, *Gospel of Our King*, 86–87.

undergoing ridicule, persecution, injustice, and suffering. He shed his blood in atonement for sin and arose from the dead having conquered sin and death (John 10:7–18; 12:23–24, 31–33; Rom 1:18–3:20; Heb 9–10).[62] The dynamic presence of God's Spirit now provides power for an abundant life present in the past, present, and future (John 10:10). This abundant life is anchored in God's original design in Genesis, anticipates God's promised new heavens and new earth in Revelation, and is available now in and through the vibrant and generative work of God the Spirit.

Summary

Finally, and for all time, Christ's perfect sacrifice provided a way for humankind as sinful but redeemed persons to be reconciled to God and to flourish and experience an abundant life within God's kingdom. God the Father and God the Son sent God the Spirit to enliven, lead, and guide the mission of the church. The church, led and empowered by God the Spirit, bears witness to and enacts within the world the good news as it carries the gospel to the nations. The community of God's family, the church, is chosen by God to be born again to a living hope, with new purpose. Human flourishing and abundant life are now possible through the redeeming work of the triune God (John 15:16; 20:21; Acts 1:8; Eph 4–6; Phil 1:27–2:5; 12–13; 1 Pet 1:15–2:10). Finally, the magnificence of the

[62] Paige Patterson, in "The Work of Christ," in *Theology for the Church*, ed. Danny L. Akin (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014), provides a detailed explanation of the atonement as it appears in the OT, particularly in Genesis and Leviticus, and also in the NT. Patterson asserts, "If Romans 1–8 represents a theology of the atonement, then almost the entire book of Hebrews constitutes a book of the atonement. In fact, the work of Christ, as represented in the book of Hebrews, corresponds more closely to the book of Leviticus than any other book in the Bible" (p. 453). Bruce Demarest, in Bruce Demarest and John S. Feinberg, eds., *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1997), 133, discusses numerous theories of atonement and considers "the widely debated question of whether Christ died for sinners universally or only for particular individuals known as the elect." A full treatment of the doctrine of atonement is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but importantly, it rests on the doctrine of penal substitution. Demarest states, "Penal substitution indicates that the Messiah took the sinner's place and took upon himself the sinner's just punishment. The idea of vicarious, penal substitution is imbedded in

gospel promises radical, transformational change now—God has given us everything we need pertaining to life and godliness; we are partakers of God's divine nature (2 Pet 1:3–4). The good news also looks forward to the new heavens and a new earth as the "dwelling place of God" (Rom 8:18–25; Eph 1–3; Col 1:15–20; 1 Pet 1–2; Rev 21:1–4).

Restoration or Re-creation

The story of creation that began in the book of Genesis now culminates in re-creation in John's Revelation. The gospel message, from the beginning, has always contained hope and promise for humankind in not only the present age but also the age to come. The Bible is full of images and tangible examples of re-creation and restoration now and at the end of the age (Isa 65:17–25; Heb 12:26–27; 2 Pet 3:4–13; Rev 21–22). Jesus Christ renews and restores or re-creates humankind from the ravages of sin in the here and now. The fruit of this new creation is triumphantly declared in Christ: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.… He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent" (Rom 5:12–20; 1 Cor 15:3–5; 12–23; Col 1:15–18).

Significantly, this salvation and restoration is comprehensive in scope for the flourishing of all of life and looks ahead to the complete healing of the profound brokenness brought on by sin: God's re-creation in the new heavens and a new earth. Bartholomew and Goheen assert, "In this restored world, the redeemed of God will live in resurrected bodies within a renewed creation, from which sin and its effects have been expunged."[63]

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the warp and woof of Scripture" (p. 156).

[63] Bartholomew and Goheen, *Drama of Scripture*, 232.

The running theme of creation and re-creation abounds as evidenced in the NT (Rom 6:4–11; 8:9–11; 1 Cor 15:42–49; 2 Cor 5:16–17; 6:16–18; Gal 6:15; Eph 2:4–10; 1 Pet 1:1–5). Evidence of this transformation from death to life, old to new, creation and new creation is substantiated by transformational living as we yield to Christ Jesus the King. Followers of Jesus are now free to exhibit and practice selfless love and sacrificial forgiveness, radical generosity and care for the poor, longsuffering in the face of injustice, and courage in the face of radical opposition. The NT writers hold in tension the importance of faithful living now and the sure and steadfast hope of the restoration of all things (Eph 4:17–32; Phil 2:1–12; Col 3–4; Heb 6:12–20; 1 Pet 2:9–24; 3:8–15; 4:1–5:11).

Summary

This eschatological hope sounds across the canon of Scripture and provides hope in the here and now and in the life to come. The believer clings to the promise of God's kingdom—the promised new heavens and new earth—and faces life's challenges with faith and courage by the power of God's Spirit who provides everything necessary for life and godliness (Rom 8:1–11; 2 Pet 1:3–11).

Feature Two: Faithful Recontextualization Yields to the Full Weight of God's Authority

As Chapter 3 demonstrated, it was assumed that most people in America in Bright's day had a basic Christian understanding of God and viewed God as having moral or ethical authority. Presentations of the gospel usually were made passively without fear of rejection or reprisal and the quest for truth was often satisfied by presenting convincing proofs and evidences. That time is largely past. Faithful recontextualization in a twenty-

first-century Secular3 context requires the church to yield to the full weight of God's authority in order to engage with today's culture that is void of authority. Feature Two includes two sections. The first deals with God's authority in mission and is demonstrated, declared, and revealed in at least six ways. The second section contends that a Trinitarian, Christocentric, eschatological hermeneutic is a vital interpretive element of the TSWW.[64]

God's Authority in Mission

God's authority in mission is declared, demonstrated, and revealed in at least six ways: (1) in Scripture; (2) through creation; (3) in the mission of redemption set into motion first by the fall, and then through the nation of Israel; (4) by the Spirit-empowered incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; (5) through Jesus's ascension and sending of the Spirit in the book of Acts and the Epistles; and finally (6) in the Revelation—the re-creation of all things.

First, the full weight of God's authority is declared and demonstrated in Scripture. Wright points out that Scripture mediates God's authority:

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[64] Keith Whitfield, "The Triune God of Mission," in *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations*, ed. Bruce Riley Ashford (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 20, discusses an "eschatological, Christocentric, Trinitarian hermeneutic," which he describes as a conceptual model by which to conceive of the *missio Dei*" (p. 20). Whitfield notes that the person and work of Christ is at the center—in his coming, in his death, and in his resurrection. Whitfield also affirms that meaningful action in history is possible only when there is a future goal. I affirm Whitfield's hermeneutic, but I purposefully change the order to Trinitarian, Christocentric, eschatological. I would argue that the triune God sets the story in motion before the foundation of the world, Christ provides the "clue" to human history, and the eschatological goal brings meaning to the actions in history that point to the restoration or re-creation of all things. Lesslie Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1988), 33, affirms that everything needed to understand the perplexities of the current context is found within the Christian understanding of the Trinity. He states that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit "invites the missionary movement to bind itself afresh to the strong Name of the Trinity." Furthermore, a Trinitarian doctrine of God emphasizes the uniqueness and finality of Christ and the relation between what God is doing in the mission of the church and in the secular events of history (p. 33).

> The authority of the Bible is that it brings us into contact with reality—primarily the reality of God himself whose authority stands behind that of creation. In fact, the Bible renders to us several connected realities, each of which has its own intrinsic, predicated authority. Reading and knowing the Scriptures causes us to *engage with reality*. That in turn functions to authorize and set our boundaries around our freedom to act in the world.[65]

Second, it was by God's authority that the universe and the cosmos were created, ex nihilo, at the command of the Triune God (Gen 1:1–3). Ashford and Thomas affirm, "'In the beginning God' … forces us to recognize that the God of creation is neither one whom we make for ourselves nor one who fits into our world. Rather, the God on display in Genesis is the uncreated Creator of the universe into whose world we fit. He is the king of it."[66] Furthermore, God the Creator and King rules and reigns over all things. God is the source and goal of the cosmos as recorded in Scripture, and he will make his name known (Genesis 1–3; Num 14:21; Deut 4:36–39; Psalm 90; 103:19; 45:5–7; Jer 31:35–37; Hab 2:14; 2 Cor 4:6).

Third, the TSWW is replete with implicit and explicit examples of the Triune God's authority displayed in the promise of redemption as depicted in the OT through the nation of Israel and is evidenced in a number of ways. First, God's authority is evidenced by the blessing of Abraham and Israel's eventual deliverance through the Spirit-empowered leadership of Moses (Exodus 3–14). Second, God's authority is demonstrated by God's assurance of a king through the line of David and the consequences of sin that led to Israel's exile (2 Samuel 7; 1 Chr 17:1–27). Third, God's authority is demonstrated by the power of the Spirit that is bestowed on judges and prophets (Judges 3; 4; 13–16),

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[65] Wright, *Mission*, 52–53.

[66] Ashford and Thomas, *Gospel of Our King*, 14. Abraham Kuyper, "Sphere Sovereignty," in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 488, states, "Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a

prophetesses (Exod 15:20; Judges 4; 2 Kgs 22:14; Neh 6:14; Luke 2:36), and pagan kings (2 Chr 36:22–23; Jer 27:6; 43:10; Isa 44:28; 45:1). God remains faithful to the promise of redemption evidenced by God's steadfast love, mercy, and grace.

Fourth, God's authority is demonstrated in the NT by the Spirit-empowered incarnation and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Each gospel records Jesus's words and actions that describe his kingdom (Matt 3:2; Mark 1:14–15; Luke 4:18–19). The events in the gospels demonstrate Jesus's authority over creation, disease, evil, and death, his authority to condemn and to forgive without prejudice or bias, and the depth of his love and sacrificial generosity. God in all his authority embraces the proceedings that lead to the cross. Jesus, from his anointing in Bethany to his triumphal entry in Jerusalem; from his presence at the Last Supper and Judas's betrayal to his arrest and crucifixion; and from his victorious resurrection to his glorious ascension, never once veered from the plan of God (Matthew 26–28; Mark 14–16; Luke 22–24; John 11–20).

In addition, each gospel gives account to the risen Christ, who acknowledges the authority given to him in heaven and on earth. Christ sends the disciples as witnesses, under the full weight of his authority. He calls them to follow his example, to proclaim repentance for the forgiveness of sins to all nations, to cast out demons, to lay hands on the sick, to make disciples, and to baptize (Matt 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–18; Luke 4:24–49; John 20:21). N. T. Wright notes, "Jesus says in Matthew 28, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples.' Often the Western church takes notice of the latter half of that—the command to make disciples—and

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square inch in the whole domain of our human existence of which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

simply forgets the former half—that we do this because Jesus is already in charge."[67] Furthermore, Jesus, who possesses all authority, sends the Spirit who empowers the church to be God's witnesses in the "strangely redefined cross-shaped power of the gospel."[68]

Fifth, God's authority is in full view in the book of Acts and the Epistles. The Spirit's power is on full display in provoking a new kind of authority evidenced by the bold confidence of the apostles, the vibrancy of the fledgling church, and the rapid spread of the good news in the face of persecution and suffering (Acts 1:6–8; 2:22–26; 7:48–53; Ephesians 2–3; Phil 2:5–11; Col 1:15–22).[69] Sixth, God's authority is on full display in the revelation: "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev 1:8). The revelation is a display of God's ultimate rule and reign over all things when Satan is defeated, and God's kingdom is re-created.

Summary

Understanding the issue of God's authority is significant for twenty-first-century meaningful gospel conversations, particularly in an era dominated by exclusive humanism and an absence of moral authority. Newbigin asserts, "Today the affirmation of the final authority of Jesus must be made amid the clash of rival claims to religious truth and in a society which has become saturated with the idea that all truths are relative

[67] N. T. Wright, "Reading the NT Missionally," pages 175–93 in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, ed. Michael Goheen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 180. Akin, Merkle, and Robinson, *40 Questions*, 13, note that Jesus affirmed his status as the all-powerful Son of God through the resurrection bestowed on him by the Father. They note, "The impetus for the disciples' mission and their commitment to see it through is not based on their own efforts but on the unmovable foundation of Jesus's authority" (p. 132).

[68] Wright, "Reading," 181.

[69] These selected passages are a few that represent the breadth of God's authority referenced in the

and partial."[70] This requires the church to first affirm that the Bible is, in fact, the TSWW as described in the previous section, and then to yield to the full weight of God's authority in an exclusively humanistic, Secular$_3$ society—a society that is perceived as being ignorant of and blind to human realities.[71] God calls every believer in this context to be a witness to the truth.

A Trinitarian, Christocentric, Eschatological Hermeneutic

In addition to the six ways God's authority is declared and demonstrated across the canon of Scripture, this section proposes a Trinitarian, Christocentric, eschatological hermeneutic as a vital interpretive element for understanding and embracing God's missional authority evidenced in the TSWW.

Trinitarian

A Trinitarian understanding of the *missio Dei* describes God as Father, Son, and Spirit who, together, take initiative to create, redeem, and restore every dimension of life. Tennent provides this summary: "The Father is the Sender, the 'Lord of the harvest'; the incarnate Son is the model, embodiment of mission in the world; and the Holy Spirit is the divine, empowering presence for all of mission."[72] Karl Barth describes the doctrine of the Trinity as

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[70] Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 20.

[71] Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 17.

[72] Tennent, *Invitation*, 75. Whitfield, "Triune God," 23, asserts, "The dynamic life within the triune God is a model for the mission of God." He also notes, "It seems appropriate that the immanent Trinity (the life of God within the triune God) and economic Trinity (acts of God outside the Triune God) are both used to construct a robust view of God's missionary character (p. 23). Notably, more and more theologians and missiologists are emphasizing Trinitarian doctrine and theology. Goheen, in *Light to the Nations*, affirms that God's missional and Trinitarian nature is revealed in the biblical mission of the church. Dwight J. Zscheile, "The Trinity Leadership, and Power," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2007): 43, states, "A rediscovery of the doctrine of the Trinity has been one of the major themes of

> [that which] … consists in the fact that the being and speech action and therefore the self-revealing of God are described there in the moments of His self-veiling or self-unveiling or self-impartation to men, that His characteristic attributes are holiness, mercy, and love, that His characteristic demonstrations are denoted in the New Testament by Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost, and that His name is correspondingly the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.[73]

The Trinity acts together as one, yet each of the three persons of the Trinity acts with complete distinction. For example, God's revelation provides an example of the way in which the triune God works in this polarity of unity and distinction. Newbigin states, "God's fatherly rule of all things is at the very heart of his teaching. God sustains all, cares for all, rules over all."[74] When God speaks, we understand God the Father to be the spokesperson (John 5:36; 8:28; 10:18, 25; 12:49). Whitfield affirms, "What [Jesus] taught to his disciples was not his own message, but it came from the Father who sent him (John 17:6). Jesus even stated it stronger at one point. He said that the Father 'commanded him what to say' (see John 12:49)."[75] God the Son, Jesus, loves and obeys the Father and is the word spoken (John 1:1–4; 5:19; 12:20; 14:10). He is sent to make the Father known. God the Spirit is the one who makes the Son known, and by making the Son known, the Spirit makes the Father known. The Spirit illumines God's word, gives understanding,

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western theology in recent decades."

[73] Karl Barth, quoted in Keith L. Johnson, *The Essential Karl Barth: A Reader and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 132. Notably, Zscheile, "Trinity," 48, points out that within the past fifty years there has been a resurgence of Trinitarian theology in Western thought, and that Karl Barth, although criticized for modalist tendencies, "paved the way for trinitarian resurgence." This reference provides a sampling of the research conducted for this dissertation and gleans from Barth but does not embrace all of Barth's theology.

[74] Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 39. Van Gelder, *Essence*, 97, adds, "The entire Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit—are dynamically involved in the mission of God within creation, re-creation, and the final consummation." Furthermore, the purposes of the Father are most fully expressed in the plan and design of creation, re-creation, and consummation.

[75] Whitfield, "Triune God," 27.

and leads and guides the church to participate more fully in God's mission (John 14:24–25; 16:12–13; Eph 1:15–21).[76]

The work of redemption being Trinitarian does not minimize Christ's death on the cross but instead enriches the message of the gospel by bringing the community of the Trinity to the fore in a more powerful way. God the Father sent the Son to redeem the world and God's chosen in the world (John 6:37–40; 14:6–8; 15:15–16; Eph 1:3–11; 1 Pet 1:2–5). God the Son accomplished redemption through inaugurating the kingdom of God, defeating the foes of sin and death, creating a church that is empowered by the Spirit of God, and finally ascending to sit triumphant at the right hand of the Father. All things have been put in subjection under his feet, and he is head over all and makes all things new (Rom 3:21–26; 5:6–11; Gal 2:20–21; Eph 1:21–23; 2:4–7; 1 Pet 1:17–21; Rev 21:5).

God the Spirit compels the *missio Dei* by indwelling and empowering every believer as the source of help and comfort, wisdom and discernment. The Spirit provides reassurance in the face of doubt, empowers the weak, and emboldens every witness (Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 2:6–16; 3:16–23; 12–16; 2 Corinthians 3–4; Romans 6–8; Gal 3:1–14; Eph 1:11–22; 4–6). Thomas contends, "To speak of Christocentric hermeneutics is *necessarily* to speak in the language of Trinitarian hermeneutics: it is God the Father who has impelled us by the Spirit and whom believers recognize by that selfsame Spirit."[77] A

[76] Bartholomew and Thomas, *Manifesto*, 22, affirm, "The Holy Spirit, through whom the created human spirit obtains an understanding of God's Word, is present in the world through the church, provides the believer with the continual presence of the risen Christ, and leads all human beings through their individual and common journeys through history."

[77] Heath Thomas, "Telos, (Goal) of Theological Interpretation," in *A Manifesto for Theological Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew and Heath Thomas (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 213.

Trinitarian understanding enlivens the work of the Spirit and brings to light the acts of the Spirit across the canon.

The Trinity is also described by the transforming concept of *perichoresis*. Van Gelder and Zscheile assert, “God is not a solidary monad or impersonal force but constituted in God’s very self by relationality. This relationality is predicated on difference: The Father, Son, and Spirit are not the same, and yet also not divided. Their identities rely on their relationships with each other.”[78] They describe this as a “mutual indwelling and dynamic reciprocity”[79] that demonstrates the rich relational and unified aspect of the Trinity and also the decided differences. In fact, this reconciled diversity is normative for a Trinitarian understanding of human community.

Christocentric

A Christocentric hermeneutic emphasizes the incarnation and takes into account the fullness of God’s inbreaking. If Christ is indeed “the clue to human history,” then, as Newbigin affirms, “The consequence of the incarnation draws all men out of a non-historical form of existence into a single, global history dominated by issues raised by the biblical revelation.”[80] The incarnation, “Immanuel, God with us,” makes it possible to know God (Matt 1:23; John 1:14, 18). The incarnation, “Christ our Savior is born,” provides the way for the atonement (Rom 3:21–26; Col 1:20–22; Heb 2:14–17; 1 Pet 1:18–21). The incarnation, “He is not here, for he has risen” (Matt 28:6), makes it possible for Jesus Christ, “the image of the invisible God,” to be the firstborn from the

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[78] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 268.

[79] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 268. See also Jürgen Moltmann, “Perichoresis: An Old Magic Word for a New Trinitarian Theology,” in *Trinity, Community and Power: Mapping Trajectories in Wesleyan Theology*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2000).

[80] Lesslie Newbigin, quoted in Paul Weston, ed., *Missionary Theologian, Lesslie Newbigin: A*

dead (Matt 28:6; Col 1:15). The incarnation makes possible the ascension and the Spirit's sending power for witness and re-creation from "Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (John 14:12–14; 16:7–8; Acts 1:8).

The incarnation is the ultimate picture of contextualization—God the Son, taking on human flesh. The writer of Hebrews affirms, "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things … he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God" (Heb 2:14–17). James K. A. Smith affirms, "The Incarnation is precisely an immanent sign of the transcendence—God appearing in the flesh."[81] God, though present in the flesh (sphere of immanence), did not cease to be God (sphere of transcendence).

The crucifixion secures God's victory over sin and death, opening the way for persons to experience a flourishing life with God's judgment toward sin satisfied through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Rom 3:21–26). In Christ, redemption is accomplished and sinners are justified by his blood, empowered by God's Spirit, forgiven and reconciled, according to the riches of God's grace (Rom 3:21–26; 5:6–11; Gal 2:20–21; Eph 1:7–10; Phil 2:5–11; Col 1:19–23; 1 Pet 1:18–19). N. T. Wright emphasizes the significance of Christ's death on the cross, noting, "His fulfillment of the Scriptures was not a matter of an arbitrary acting out of a few randomly chosen prophecies, but a total obedience to the total divine plan of which these prophecies were merely symptoms."[82]

Reader (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 56.

[81] James K. A. Smith, *Speech and Theology: Language and the Logic of Incarnation* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 123.

[82] N. T. Wright, *The Crown and the Fire: Meditations on the Cross and the Life of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 122.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is of equal importance and significance. First and foremost, the Scripture says, "He must rise from the dead" (John 20:9). Scripture also states that he did indeed rise from the dead (1 Cor 15:3–5). God is known throughout Scripture for giving life to the dead and calling into existence the things that do not exist! Paul writes to the Romans, "As the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4). Van Gelder notes,

> Jesus makes his death and resurrection central to inaugurating the redemptive reign of God. The cross event is the watershed of human history. In this decisive moment the forces of evil are defeated and the full power of the redemptive reign of God through the Spirit invades human space. In this invasion Jesus anticipates the creation of a new type of community, a community created by the Spirit.[83]

The church is made alive and united in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. He is the first born of all creation, the firstborn from the dead, "that in everything he might be preeminent" (Col 1:15–18). The ascension of Jesus Christ reinforces his preeminence and reminds us that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him. Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the throne of God; his is the name above every other name. One day every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord, in heaven and on earth and under the earth to the glory of God the Father (Matt 28:18; Eph 1:15–23; Phil 2:9–11; Rev 4–5; 21:22–26).

Eschatological

An eschatological hope that is Trinitarian, Christocentric, and grounded in the TSWW is comprehensive in scope. It exists in the foundation of the world, is evidenced in creation, and is fully realized in the restoration or re-creation of all things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth (Gen 1:1–26; John 17:24; Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:20; Rev 13:8). Trevor Hart

states, "Eschatology concerns the fact that, just as God spoke the primordial word which called the world into being, so too he will have the final say about its future, a word that he has already uttered under the form of a promise."[84] However, eschatology is not only about the very first and very last few pages of the story, but it is about the whole story—past, present, and future—in which all of the individual stories are meant to be read in light of the TSWW.[85]

The eschatological hope of God's kingdom rests on Jesus's announcement, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2; 4:17). The long-awaited Messiah is made manifest in the person of Jesus by this proclamation, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at

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[83] Van Gelder, *Essence*, 76.

[84] Trevor Hart, "Eschatology," *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology*, ed. Gerald R. McDermott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 262. F. F. Bruce and J. J. Scott, "Eschatology," *EDT*: 386, describe traditional definitions of eschatology as "… the doctrine of 'last things' in relation either to human individuals (comprising death, resurrection, judgment, and the afterlife) or to the world," often restricted to the absolute end of the world. Important for this discussion is that often nonevangelical theology deemphasizes or denies the intervention of supernatural forces and claims of the end of the material world. This includes assumptions about the final stage of moral, social, intellectual, physical, and spiritual development … and assumes "utopia on earth" brought about by naturalistic forces. The OT contains only shadows of the afterlife, more for the nation of Israel than for individuals, and the "Day of the Lord" is described as a day of darkness and judgment, a day when the tension between reality and the ideal is resolved, when God's kingship is universally acknowledged and 'the knowledge of the Lord' is known throughout the earth. OT eschatology is "forward looking, its dominant notes being hope and promise" and the dominant note in the NT is "fulfillment" (p. 387). Here the authors define "realized eschatology" as the "indeterminate interval between Christ's resurrection and Parousia, and during this interval the age to come overlaps the present age. Christians live spiritually in 'that age' while they live temporarily in 'this age.'" In the NT, the "'last thing' is more properly the 'last one,' *the eschatos* (cf. Rev 1:7; 2:8; 22:13). Jesus is himself the people's hope, the Amen to all God's promises" (p. 388).

[85] Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 22, wisely states, "There cannot be sustained conviction in the prosecution of the missionary task if there is not some illumination—by faith, not by sight—of the way in which the missionary task is related to God's whole purpose for the world." Whitfield, "Triune God," 20, describes God's mission as eschatological and as that which aims to affect the outcome of all of history, it is cosmocentric. Whitfield states, "By this we are referring to a view of God's purpose of the world that focuses upon redeeming and reconstructing the world itself within its social, political, and economic dimensions, and God uses secular history to accomplish this mission. Redemption is defined by a return to *shalom* in the world. The work of mission, therefore, is the development of society. This approach is Trinitarian because each person of the Trinity is involved in God's mission" (p. 20).

liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.… 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing'" (Isa 61:1; see also Luke 4:16–18, 21).

Isaiah's songs describe the suffering servant who is sent on mission from Yahweh to suffer, to experience rejection, injustice, and death in order to bear the iniquities of many. In an astonishing way, this suffering servant will be exalted and vindicated. In Jesus, Isaiah's prophecies have been fulfilled (Isa 42:1–9; 49:1–6; 50:2–9; 52:13–53:12).[86] The vision of Daniel lends insight into the rule and reign of the Son of Man who was given dominion, glory, and an everlasting, indestructible kingdom that "all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him" (Dan 7:13–14).[87] Jeremiah's prophecy looks to the day when "they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever" (Jer 32:38–40). The writer of Hebrews rejoices to see the promise fulfilled in Christ (Heb 8:8–12; see also Jer 32:38–40). Jesus now reigns over all things with redemptive power.

This all-encompassing eschatological hope grounded in the TSWW is counter to the Secular$_3$ narrative. The difference between humanism's eschatological vision of a utopian world and the Christian's gospel of the redemptive reign of God is a key issue for missiology and meaningful gospel conversations. Taylor describes the tension inherent in a secular age, "The individual pursuit of happiness as defined by consumer culture still absorbs much of our time and energy, or else the threat of being shut out of this pursuit through poverty, unemployment, incapacity galvanizes it."[88] Newbigin describes this

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[86] Tennent in *Invitation*, 116–21, provides a more detailed commentary on Isaiah's servant songs and served to inform this section.

[87] Akin, Merkle, and Robinson, in *40 Questions*, 131, note that it is quite likely that this passage in Daniel is echoed in Matt 28:18–20.

[88] Taylor, *Secular Age*, 727.

pursuit as the "revolution of rising expectations"[89] where people everywhere demand the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. He says, "Everywhere people grow impatient and rebellious when the promise is not fulfilled."[90] Yet, here in the face of increased anxiety and instability, unmet expectations, and fear of danger and even death, the inborn longing for meaning and eternity taps on the veneer of unbelief.

Summary

A Trinitarian, Christocentric, eschatological hermeneutic draws out the all-encompassing significance of the TSWW. A Trinitarian, Christocentric, eschatological hermeneutic also situates God at the center of the TSWW and provides the ability to trace the *missio Dei* from Genesis to Revelation, through God's ever-present promise: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Hab 2:14; Ps 72:19; Isa 6:3; 11:9; 45:6; see also 2 Cor 4:6).

Feature Three: Faithful Recontextualization, by Design, Reflects the Multicultural Reality of the Twenty-First Century

Chapter 4's missiological snapshot illustrated the paradigmatic shifts now taking place in America and called for the robust engagement of this context by American evangelical missiologists. George R. Hunsberger argues that there are "glaring gaps"[91] in America's approach to contextualization. He asserts, "We have failed to give clear-cut attention to the development of a domestic, contextual missiology for our own North American setting. In its place has grown an implicit, functional missiology suffering from a lack of

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[89] Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 6.
[90] Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 7.
[91] George R. Hunsberger, *The Story that Chooses Us: A Tapestry of Missional Vision* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 9.

scrutiny."[92] So, a faithful recontextualization that reflects the multicultural reality of twenty-first-century America includes, at a minimum, the following three elements. First, this multicultural reality necessarily draws from and overlaps with Feature One and Feature Two. Second, faithful recontextualization that reflects today's multicultural reality includes an increased awareness of the cultural variation in America and a willingness to engage in and learn through cross-cultural collaboration. Third, this multicultural reality rests in the missional nature of the triune God and affirms the incarnation, the communal mutuality within the Trinity, and the partnership of the Spirit that empowers the church to engage in mission.

First, as stated in Chapter 4, each feature of recontextualization is interrelated with the others. Therefore, this third feature is interrelated with Feature One and Feature Two. If the TSWW is truly a comprehensive story of God's reign over all things, and if the good news is in fact good news for all people and yields to the full weight of God's authority, then recontextualization must reflect today's multicultural reality. Newbigin affirms, since God is the source and goal of the cosmos, then it stands to reason that the gospel is "embodied in culturally conditioned forms."[93]

Second, in order for faithful recontextualization to reflect America's multicultural reality, missiologists must recognize the reality of multicultural contexts. Moreau acknowledges that contextualization takes place "in a world of societies that are widely diverse in their religious identities."[94] Theologian David K. Clark, *To Know and Love God: Method for Theology*, urges the adoption of cultural relativism and a globalized

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[92] Hunsberger, *Story that Chooses*, 9.
[93] Newbigin, *Foolishness*, 4.
[94] Moreau, *Contextualization*, 35.

theology that "guards against ethnocentrism—it refuses to give priority to any one cultural viewpoint."[95] Wu contends that faithful scriptural interpretation and contextualization seek to be meaningful in a given culture,[96] and Bantu implores the church give way to the rich theologies inherent in the non-Western and nonwhite expressions of Christianity.[97]

Third, recontextualization that reflects this multicultural reality rests in the missional nature of the triune God. Missiologists must, therefore, affirm the incarnation, the communal mutuality within the Trinity, and the partnership of the Spirit that empowers the church to engage in mission. The incarnation is central to *missio Dei*. God took on human flesh in a local and particular context and provided the clue to human history and the climax of the TSWW.[98] The apostle John declares, "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known" (John 1:14, 18). With this statement in mind, Andrew Walls describes the incarnation as *translation*. He states, "When God in Christ became man, divinity was translated into humanity, as though humanity were a receptor language."[99] Other missiologists emphasize the significance of the incarnation in context; for example, Van Gelder and Zscheile observe, "By embracing the particularity of one culture (e.g., first-century Palestinian Judaism),

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[95] David K. Clark, *To Know and Love God: Method for Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 102.

[96] See note 38 and note 56 earlier in this chapter.

[97] See note 57 and note 58 earlier in this chapter.

[98] M. Barrett Fisher, in "Incarnation and Missiology: A Biblical Theological Assessment of Selected Incarnational Models of Cross-Cultural Ministry" (PhD diss., *Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary*, May 2015), ix, examines the incarnation in light of the grand narrative of Scripture and discusses the "massive implications for the mission of the Church." He notes several themes that emerge from a biblical theology and incarnation, including a primary dependence on the Holy Spirit, a strong and healthy ecclesiology, a posture of humility, a willingness to suffer, attention to the poor and marginalized, and a willingness to live counter to the culture.

[99] Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005), 27.

God proclaims all cultures capable of receiving (and distorting) God's life and truth while rendering moot any attempt to elevate one culture above any others."[100] The incarnation is the first divine act of translation into humanity and gives rise to a constant succession of new and diverse translations.[101]

Moreover, Walls points out the implications of the incarnation in Paul's writings. For example, Christ is the second Adam, one man bringing the free gift of righteousness to all, which stands in contrast to the first Adam who brought death to all (Rom 5:12–18). Christ, in his flesh and by his blood, broke down the barrier of the dividing wall and created, in himself, one new man in place of the two (Eph 2:11–22). Paul's letter to the Galatian church provides an example of the gospel being retranslated from a Palestinian Jewish language into the languages and cultures of the nations and demonstrates the challenges that ensued.

Missiologists must seek to understand the communal life of the Trinity and its open, imaginative, redemptive, and sustaining work makes recontextualization possible within an increasingly diverse America. The apostle John records the words of Jesus spoken from the intimate setting of a meal. Here, Jesus expresses the triune God's authority—the authority to whom he and the Spirit submit. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6; see also John 16:13). He also forecasts the coming and purpose of God's Spirit. "Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do because I go to the Father;

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[100] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *Participating*, 270.

[101] Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 27. It is important to note here that Walls emphasizes the fact that just as the Christian faith is about translation, it is also about conversion. Conversion is the proper human response to divine translation. Furthermore, Walls reminds us that each act of translation and corresponding act of conversion "… takes the original into new territory and potentially expands it, the

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:12; 16–17a).

Also, missiologists must understand that God's Spirit takes the lead in gospel transmission, translation, and conversion. Just prior to his ascension, Jesus sent the disciples as his witnesses, in the power of the Spirit, into cultures well beyond Jerusalem. The Spirit soon unleashed a multicultural and polyvocal witness in Acts 2, quickly upending traditional and cultural values. Peter's vision and subsequent call to take the gospel to the gentiles underscored the disruption that came with Pentecost (Acts 10–11). Soon the Jerusalem Council faced an important milestone and was forced to address the disruptive nature of the gospel (Acts 15:1–21). The Council, recognizing that God gives the Holy Spirit and cleanses hearts without distinction (Acts 15:8–9), spoke to the gentiles regarding idol worship, sexual immorality, and dietary customs but did not require adherence to the Jewish practice of circumcision. This highlights some of the ways in which the emerging expression of the gospel was immediately recontextualized in the first century (Acts 15:10–11, 19–21).

Additionally, God's Spirit provides an unprecedented advantage evidenced throughout the NT. The Spirit convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment; speaks according to God's authority; and declares what is to come (John 16:1–10). The Spirit brings faith and the fruit of righteousness and faith, fills the church with love and power, imparts wisdom and discernment, and continues to guide and direct today. Newbigin, reflecting on these passages in John's Gospel, states, "These promises are part of the preparation of the Church for its missionary encounter with all the varied

absence of a family resemblance among the products would give rise to suspicion" (p. 29).

communities and cultures of the world. These are real encounters by which both the world and the Church are changed."[102] The Spirit invites the church, from every tribe, tongue, and nation, to participate in God's mission.

Summary

Feature Three proposes a faithful recontextualization that reflects the multicultural reality of twenty-first-century America. At a minimum, faithful recontextualization must include the following three elements: first, a theological framework that is based on the TSWW and yields to the full weight of God's authority as outlined in Feature One and Feature Two; second, faithful reconciliation necessitates an increased awareness of the cultural variation in America along with a willingness to engage in and learn through cross-cultural collaboration; [103] and, third, faithful recontextualization that reflects this multicultural reality rests in the missional nature of the triune God and affirms the incarnation, the communal mutuality within the Trinity, and the partnership of the Spirit that empowers the church to engage in mission.

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[102] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Light Has Come: An Exposition of the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), ix.

[103] Although full treatment of Feature Three will continue to develop, notably, Adam Edgerly has added depth to the research done here. Edgerly is an interculturalist and CEO of Culture Consultants, Intercultural Specialist with Awaken Group, and Lead Pastor for Newsong LA Church. In his work he encourages the church to establish a biblical frame of reference based on the metanarrative of Scripture in such a way that supports the premise of Feature Three. Adam Edgerly, "When I See You I Don't See Color: From Color Blind to Culture Conscious," *Student Congress On Racial Reconciliation* , March 11, 2014, Biola University, (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H38xHDGBQHs), demonstrates the multicultural nature of the biblical narrative in four ways: (1) God has given a multicultural directive through Jesus (Gen 12:1–3, 17:4–8; Matt 28:19); (2) God has infused the church with multiethnic DNA (examples include Joseph in Gen 37–50; Esther; Ruth; Acts 2:1–13); (3) God has given the church a multiethnic destiny (Rev 7:9–10); and (4) God has given the church the capacity to represent a third culture that is infused with redemptive power.

Feature Four: Faithful Recontextualization Necessitates a Dynamic and Dialogical Encounter with Culture

A dynamic and dialogical missionary encounter in the midst of the multifaceted and ever-changing shape of twenty-first-century culture necessitates a robust missional ecclesiology. This assertion is based on research initiated by Darrell Guder and the Gospel in Our Culture Network who argued for the need to develop a missional ecclesiology and produced a book to illustrate such, *A Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*.[104] Van Gelder served on the six-person writing team for that volume, contributing two chapters. Van Gelder later builds on the work of the network and proposed a missiological ecclesiology that is framed by the TSWW and reflects a multicultural reality discussed in Feature Three and here in Feature Four.[105]

An interrelated and complementary missiology and ecclesiology provide a more holistic way of thinking about contextualization and mission. A dynamic and dialogical missionary encounter with culture includes the following four marks: (1) an affirmation that the Spirit-created church lives as the very body of Christ in the world; (2) a dynamic and prophetic faith; (3) a cruciform way of discipleship; and (4) a heightened awareness of exclusive humanism and hyper- and non-religious faiths coupled with agility to engage in meaningful gospel conversations.

The first mark of a dynamic and dialogical encounter with culture affirms that the Spirit-created church lives as the body of Christ in the world. Its existence declares that the full power of God's redemptive work is already active in the world through the Spirit. It lives as a demonstration that heaven has already begun for God's people. This Spirit-

[104] Guder, ed. *Missional Church*. The first chapter describes the impetus behind the research, the approach used and the argument behind the research.

led community possesses all the power of God's presence, even while it awaits the final judgment of evil.[106] This view understands the church as being missionary by nature—the conduit through which the Spirit works to redeem and transform. The church, then, by design, relies on the ever-present Spirit for guidance and power in the face of unrelenting change. The ever-changing nature of culture and contexts requires the church to participate with the Holy Spirit—her key partner in mission. Cultivating a growing understanding of the Spirit's mission requires a deepened Trinitarian understanding, which was discussed earlier in this chapter. A missiological ecclesiology presumes that "the church is catholic, and universal, in the world"[107] and emphasizes the fact that ecclesiologies are developed, and have always been developed, within diverse contexts. Indeed, since the church is by its very nature missionary, it possesses an inherent ability to translate the truths of God into relevant cultural forms.

A second mark of a dynamic and dialogical encounter with culture requires a bold yet humble prophetic faith that sounds forth from the margins. This position requires the church to adopt a way of life that pursues an interactive approach to meaningful gospel conversations. This overlaps with Feature One because a prophetic faith requires a deeper and thicker understanding of the TSWW in order to share the gospel with transparency and authenticity. Additionally, this overlaps with Feature Two in that Chapter 3 demonstrated that Bright's mid-twentieth-century America was a religious and predominantly Protestant nation. *Four Spiritual Laws*, written with this audience in mind, assumed an understanding of God, Jesus, the Bible, sin, and salvation. This assumption is

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[105] Van Gelder, *Essence*.
[106] Van Gelder, *Essence*, 32.
[107] Van Gelder, *Essence*, 41.

no longer valid in today's American context. Guder affirms, "It is gradually becoming clear that the Christian church in the West can no longer assume that it has a cordial Christian context within which it can go about its duties."[108] This is also true for organizations such as Cru. The call for recontextualization requires a growing ability to engage in meaningful, dialogical, gospel conversations rather than in one-way, prescribed presentations.

Moreover, the current research noted in Chapter 4 shows an attitude of increasing antagonism toward the church and Christianity. Christians, in many cases, can no longer freely share the gospel without fear of misunderstanding, ridicule, or reprisal. Like those who have gone before, Christians today must join the ranks of those who did not shrink back but boldly lived out and proclaimed the good news by faith in the face of adversity (Acts 2:20, 27; Heb 10:38–39; 1 John 2:28).

The third mark of a dynamic and dialogical faith encourages a cruciform way of discipleship. Lesslie Newbigin noted that the days of far-reaching Western power and privilege in missions are over. He maintained, "Missions will no longer work along the stream of expanding Western power."[109] This shift in power and privilege requires the courage to go against the stream, not from a position of strength, but from one of weakness; not from a position of Western superiority, but from one of global awareness and humility—a posture Newbigin assumed in his theology of cultural plurality. Here the interrelatedness of the four features stands out. God's truth is meant to permeate and

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[108] Darrell L. Guder, *Called To Witness: Doing Missional Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 73.

[109] Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 5.

transform cultures, where it is demonstrated in the TSWW, undergirded by God's authority, and bound together by the cross of Jesus Christ.

Paul introduces this way of discipleship by acknowledging the power and wisdom of God, revealed and then imparted by the Spirit (Rom 8:1–11; 1 Corinthians 2). He emphasizes that light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ and is embodied in "jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Cor 4:6–7). This power, described by Paul, becomes more and more evident as they experience affliction, perplexity, persecution, near defeat, "carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (2 Cor 4:10). This theme of death and life through suffering is central to NT discipleship and is woven into fabric of the epistles (Phil 1:15–30; 2:5–11; 3:7–11; Jas 5:7–11; 1 Pet 1:3–11; 2:11–25). Thus, a cruciform way of discipleship is not found in projects, programs, or ideologies but is found in Christ through whom God created and will sum up all things.

The fourth mark of dynamic and dialogical encounter with culture involves a critical awareness of the surrounding society while maintaining a posture of humility. A willingness to learn from and to engage with different points of view helps to avoid either under- or over-contextualization. Cru's research, discussed in Chapter 4, celebrates the fact that over eighty percent of the people surveyed are willing to engage in conversation with Christians and laments the fact that most of them do not believe Christians are willing to hear a different point of view. Clark and Lamin Sanneh,[110] from somewhat

[110] Clark, *To Know*, 107, attributes the spread of Christian growth to globalization and acknowledges the relativizing ethos of this interconnected reality. Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is It Anyway: The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 10, who was an African, Catholic

different perspectives, both underscore the relativizing ethos of the global church or world Christianity. They celebrate the uniqueness of, and give voice to, the many interconnecting cultures in the world. Guder adds the following insight:

> With the growing emphasis upon the cultural distinctiveness of the contextualized church, there is good theological reason to pay careful attention to the catholicity of the multicultural church. The task that particularly must occupy the missional theologian examines how we learn to articulate and celebrate the oneness of the gospel in the great diversity of its witness.[111]

Peter's vision in Acts 10 includes God's call to "kill and eat" food that was strictly forbidden. In addition, God summons him to the house of Cornelius the gentile, an action that heretofore was unheard of for a Jew (Acts 10:9–16, 28–29). Here, Peter demonstrates an awareness of his own culture along with a willingness to respond in obedience. No less remarkable is Cornelius's invitation to Peter. God showed no partiality and "the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word" (Acts 10:34, 44). Peter and Cornelius exemplify cultural awareness and agility, and as a result, each person's decision to act outside the lines of tradition transformed them both! In Peter's first epistle he writes to the church scattered—the diaspora. Peter encourages the church to respond with gracious humility in the face of sometimes discouraging and hostile circumstances. A posture of humility and a willingness to learn is necessary in order to navigate this worldwide interconnectedness.

This will also require an awareness of exclusive humanism along with a growing understanding of different religious faiths in America. Chapter 2 highlighted the fact that exclusive humanism is a counterfeit to true Christianity. Humanism strives for human

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theologian, attributes the spread of Christianity to an "*indigenous discovery* of Christianity over against missionary transmission and direction."

[111] Guder, *Called*, 17.

flourishing in every sector of society, boasts of benevolence, celebrates sacrifice, fights for human and civil rights, and yet openly defies the one true God. Chapter 4 introduced Barna Group's report on Gen Z revealing that this generation's posture toward culture is highly inclusive and individualistic. Gen Z's worldview, shaped in large part by the internet, reveals an undercurrent of humanism and pluralism. How will the church engage with and respond to this generation that has not been informed by the legacy of Christendom? Furthermore, cultivating a heightened awareness of exclusive humanism of necessity bids Christians to actively, regularly, and humbly evaluate culture's influence on their own life and practice and to allow the gospel to transform them along the way. In order to engage in meaningful gospel conversations, the church needs to better understand hyper-religious faiths and non-religious ideologies. As noted earlier, Bergquist and Crane describe Western Christians as unprepared to articulate their faith to hyper-spiritual Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims, and other religious people.

Summary

The fourth feature for faithful recontextualization necessitates a dynamic and dialogical encounter with culture and included the following four marks: (1) an affirmation that the Spirit-created church lives as the very body of Christ in the world; (2) a dynamic and prophetic faith; (3) a cruciform way of discipleship; and (4) a heightened awareness of exclusive humanism and hyper- and non-religious faiths coupled with agility to engage in meaningful gospel conversations.

Summary of Chapter 5

This chapter argued that a reimagined narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations provides pathways for interacting and interrelating with the four prominent

features of recontextualization. Part One, in keeping with the pattern of this dissertation, provided a genealogy of biblical and narrative theology that bolsters the significance of narrative theology in a twenty-first-century context. The four prominent features for faithful recontextualization were also influenced by the possibilities within narrative theology and offered the "constellation of approaches to the theological task"[112]—the backbone of which is the TSWW.

The purpose of Part Two was to introduce the four features of faithful recontextualization. Feature One highlighted the TSWW and the four overarching themes inherent within God's narrative: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration or re-creation. Feature Two provided six ways in which God's authority is revealed across the canon and argued for a Trinitarian, Christocentric, eschatological hermeneutic of the TSWW—a key interpretive element.

Feature Three proposed a faithful recontextualization that reflects the multicultural reality of twenty-first-century America. Feature Four provided the following four marks of a dynamic and dialogical missionary engagement with culture: (1) an affirmation that the Spirit-created church lives as the very body of Christ in the world; (2) a dynamic and prophetic faith; (3) a cruciform way of discipleship; and (4) a heightened awareness of exclusive humanism and hyper- and non-religious faiths coupled with agility to engage in meaningful gospel conversations.

Chapter 6 attempts to answer the research question being posed in this dissertation: How can Cru honor Bill Bright's vision and maintain his commitment to evangelism by training others to present the gospel in an American twenty-first-century

[112] Green, "Narrative Theology," 531.

secularized context? It provides various examples of several narrative approaches being developed and practiced by Cru to date.

CHAPTER 6

REIMAGINING MEANINGFUL GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS: A WAY FORWARD

Brief Summary of the Argument

This dissertation argues that Bill Bright's evangelism tool *Four Spiritual Laws*,[1] shaped within his twentieth-century context, is insufficient for our current era and context. This has been argued by juxtaposing the twenty-first-century Secular$_3$[2] context discussed in Chapter 2 with Bill Bright's twentieth-century context presented in Chapter 3. The chapter demonstrated that Bright did not develop *Four Spiritual Laws* in a vacuum but rather developed it within an evangelical revivalist stream of influence.

Chapter 4 laid the groundwork for a reimagined approach to contextualization in a secular age in three parts. Part One provided a missiological snapshot of America's Secular$_3$, twenty-first-century context. Part Two provided a genealogy of the emergence of contextualization from four vantage points. Part Three concluded with a call for a *confluence* of perspectives and proposed four prominent features of twenty-first-century recontextualization.

Chapter 5 argued for a reimagined narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations as a pathway for interacting and interrelating with the four prominent features of recontextualization. Part One provided a genealogy of biblical and narrative theology. Part Two discussed in greater detail each of the four features, developing their necessary components.

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[1] Bill Bright, *Four Spiritual Laws* (Los Angeles: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1964).

[2] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 38.

A Dynamic Approach for Reimagining Meaningful Gospel Conversations: Research Conclusions and Praxis

The research conclusions and praxis detailed in this chapter provide examples of a dynamic approach to recontextualization that was initially informed by Cru's research project *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City* and is now also being guided by the four prominent features. The first part discusses the early insights that emerged from Cru's research and that now serve as an excellent precursor to understanding better the four features. The second part provides an overview of the action learning that is going on in tandem with the research for this dissertation under the rubric of the four prominent features of faithful recontextualization. The development of each of the four features starts with an introduction to the feature, which is followed by two sections—one that focuses on current praxis and another that summarizes discoveries learned and areas for further research.

Significantly, inherent in the four features is the need for an ongoing recognition that God's Spirit is the leader and the guide who makes a way for moments and conversations of witness to take place. As detailed in Chapter 5, the *missio Dei* is about the Father, Son, and Spirit taking initiative to create, redeem, and restore every dimension of life. God's redemptive work is active in the world through the Spirit who is the divine and empowering presence for all of life. God's Spirit is always present in the Spirit-created church—the body of Christ. The Spirit-led community of the church relies on the Spirit's power, wisdom, instruction, and discernment to provide guidance for a dynamic and dialogical encounter with culture. This requires a change of posture for the Spirit-filled life is not primarily about being transactional but rather about leaning into a dynamic and engaging journey.

Part One: Early Findings

Cru's *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City*[3] research project served to validate the difficult experiences many believers were having in sharing the gospel with people in cities across the US. The research revealed that eighty-four percent of the people interviewed are ready and willing to engage in conversations, but many did not believe Christians were ready or willing to participate in a conversation with someone from a different point of view. This study helped to uncover three simple ways to better prepare people for meaningful gospel conversations today.

Five Necessary Behaviors

The research revealed that the first way to better prepare for meaningful gospel conversations is to make five simple behavioral changes:[4] (1) be present and listen—follow the conversation; (2) find common ground—build a relational bridge; (3) walk in their shoes—understand their story; (4) talk like a real person—use words meant for people, not for the pews; and (5) create a better story than the one they have heard—connect their story to the TSWW. These behaviors reflect the need to shift from making presentations to having conversations. Although it will take time and intentionality to develop these five behaviors, there is already rich reward—new, mutual relationships are being built, reciprocal learning, and personal growth is taking place.

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[3] Brooke Wright et al., *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City* (Atlanta: Cyrano Marketing Collective, 2016).

[4] Cas Monaco and Gary Runn, "Scattering Seeds: Moments and Conversations," The Send Institute, July 16, 2018, https://www.sendinstitute.org/scattering-gospel-seeds/, n.p.

Three Core Longings

The second way to better prepare for meaningful gospel conversations is to recognize that humankind is created in God's image (*imago Dei*) and is hard-wired for a relationship with God who often uses the challenges and difficulties of life to provide opportunities for meaningful conversations. These core longings emerged from the research and are evident in Scripture: peace—the absence of anxiety; prosperity—the longing for stability; and purpose—the deep desire for meaning.

Three Ways to Make the Most of Moments and Conversations

Cru's findings also included three ways to make the most of moments and conversations in a twenty-first-century context. First, cultivate the natural relational networks and get to know the people with whom you interact on a regular basis. Second, initiate the power of *sometime* by telling a friend or an acquaintance, "Sometime I would like to hear your story." Experience has shown that people want to talk about their lives and eagerly await to tell their story. Third, demonstrate and declare that God is relevant in the daily needs and challenges of life; this will require vulnerability on the part of believers.

These initial findings—the five behavior changes, the recognition of the three core longings, and the discovery of three ways to make the most of moments and conversations—have provided Cru City with a baseline for behavioral change. Now, however, Cru must resist the temptation to stop short of fully incorporating the four prominent features of faithful recontextualization as riverbanks for deep and lasting change.

Part Two: Four Prominent Features: Riverbanks for Dynamic Change

As previously stated in Chapter 4, the conclusions for this dissertation flow from the research and present a *confluence* by way of the four prominent features of faithful recontextualization. The term *feature* is used to imply the multifaceted nature of recontextualization in an ever-changing context. These four features are meant to provide *riverbanks* for the task of recontextualization—riverbanks provide dynamic but distinct boundaries. Likewise, each feature is distinct and is also interactive and interrelated with all the others.

Feature One: Faithful Recontextualization Affirms the Bible as the TSWW and the Gospel as Good News for All

The research project *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City*, launched by Cru in 2016 and discussed in Chapter 4, was undertaken in conjunction with the earliest research for this dissertation and provided an excellent opportunity for action learning. Cru City's leadership began to learn afresh how to engage in meaningful gospel conversations with each other, with our staff, and with people from diverse backgrounds in cities around the country.

Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City raised awareness and revealed some gaps in Cru's approach to evangelism. The research for this dissertation further revealed the need to reorient our approach to meaningful gospel conversations around a theological framework grounded in the TSWW. The following section includes various steps Cru is taking to better understand and implement this framework. The executive leaders and staff within the Cru City division were exposed through brief presentations

beginning in 2014[5] to the theological framework of the metanarrative of Scripture—the TSWW—and the four overarching themes that are distinct and yet continuously present in the Bible: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration or re-creation.

Evangelism Think Tank

The Evangelism Think Tank (ETT) was launched in 2018 and is providing a fruitful approach to action learning. The purpose of the ETT was to provide a place for Cru evangelists and evangelism practitioners to gather and learn around the topic of meaningful gospel conversations in the context of cities in the US. A distinguishing feature of this particular group is that each person is personally engaged in gospel proclamation and attentive to the current culture. Additionally, several people in this group have been trying new ways to engage in meaningful gospel conversations on their own. Many feel alone in their efforts and all of them wonder if changing Cru's traditional approach to evangelism is even possible. Some have worked together, particularly those focused on City's Embark Audience (the focus of Embark is recent college graduates); others are passionate about gospel proclamation in particular areas of the organization, including Cru High School (HS), Cru Campus, and Cru Athletes in Action (AIA).

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[5] I was first exposed to the TSWW in Heath Thomas's "Introduction to Hermeneutics" in 2011, and again in Bruce Ashford's "Theological Foundations, PhD Seminar" in 2015. During that time, I began giving short presentations of the TSWW to Cru City executive leaders in the fall of 2014. I also gave a short presentation for Cru City staff at Cru's biannual US Conference in Fort Collins, Colorado in July 2015 and July 2017. I presented a paper at Cru's US Staff Conference, Cru19, July 23, 2019, "Reimagining Gospel Conversations," https://www.cru.org/cru19/speakers/cas-monaco/. I led a Super Seminar, "Gospel Conversations Reimagined," https://www.cru.org/cru19/archive/super-seminars/07-24-gospel-conversations-reimagined/.

I presented the TSWW at Cru's 2019 Winter Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Similarly, I gave the same talk, "Reimagining," for The Ignite Movement in Raleigh, North Carolina, January 18, 2020. https://www.ignitemvmt.com/. I gave a talk on "The TSWW and Our Identity (1 Pet 1:3–9)" for Cru's Boston Metro Campus Ministry Virtual Summer Project, July 13, 2020. I have also taught Bible Study Methods for SEBTS BWI (2018–2020) and relied on the TSWW as the framework for the class's study of Eph 2:1–10.

The first meeting of the ETT took place at the Sagamore Institute, Indianapolis, Indiana, October 10–12, 2018 with missiologist Bill Hogg. The stated purpose of the meeting was as follows: "To begin compiling and crafting new and innovative approaches that equip others to engage in meaningful gospel conversations. This will include an element of deconstruction. It will require theological riverbanks; gospel fluency, which will require spiritual formation; a holistic approach; an awareness of our audiences; a respect for our history; and a willingness to engage in strategic learning."[6]

The second meeting of the ETT took place in Portland, Oregon on December 3–5, 2018. Here we continued the conversation with our guest and missiologist, Craig Van Gelder, who led the group in a discussion on "Missional Theology: The Role of God's Spirit, and the Expansive Nature of Mission." The third meeting took place in San Diego, California, March 4–6, 2019. "Secularization and Cru's Mid-Twentieth-Century Context" were the topics of discussion.[7] This gathering provided the foundation for ETT's involvement in Cru19, Cru's biannual US Conference. The ETT meetings have provided safe places for staff to consider the theological and the practical implications of twenty-first-century gospel proclamation. The following two examples highlight some of the collaborative learning that has taken place.

Praxis

Cru staff director, Emma Tautolo, serves with AIA. She is working on her master's degree and has studied under Michael Goheen. Tautolo introduces the gospel as the

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[6] Cas Monaco, "Evangelism Think Tank Purpose Statement," Evangelism Think Tank Gathering, Sagamore Institute, Indianapolis, Indiana, October 2018.

[7] The discussion on "Missional Theology: The Role of God's Spirit, and the Expansive Nature of Mission" was led by Craig Van Gelder, Portland, Oregon, December 3–5, 2018; the discussion on

TSWW on a regular basis to student athletes on campuses in the US and internationally. She introduces her talk by stating, "The Bible is not a bunch of individual stories to be plucked out or extrapolated for moral bits or merely devotional pieces, but from cover to cover it is one unified metanarrative, one grand drama, and we are living in this story."[8] She also asserts with simplicity and clarity, "If you don't know the WHOLE story, you can make the story whatever you want it to be. Unless we can see the whole story, certain facts or details of the biblical narrative can be plucked out of the Bible to make it say whatever we want it to support."[9]

In addition, Tautolo has condensed the TSWW in such a way that she can present its breadth in easy-to-understand terms in a thirty- or forty-minute talk. She invites people into the whole story of the gospel—from creation to restoration—and masterfully delineates between an "armless gospel that includes only the Fall and Redemption"[10] and a "heartless gospel that leaves out the cross and the resurrection."[11] She says the gospel is both good news for the individual who is saved by faith as well as good news for all of creation. All of creation is reconciled and restored under the rule and reign of King Jesus. Tautolo now prefaces all of her AIA evangelism training for students with the TSWW. She explains that she can no longer train students to use Cru's traditional approach to evangelism "without juxtaposing it with the TSWW."[12]

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secularization, "Secularization and Cru's Mid-Twentieth-Century Context," was facilitated by local pastor Scott Wildey, Flood Church, San Diego, CA, https://diveintoflood.com/, March 4–6, 2019.

[8] Emma Tautolo, "Rooted in the Story," Athletes in Action, talk notes used with permission, no date.

[9] Tautolo, "Rooted."

[10] Emma Tautolo, "Gospel Conversations Reimagined," interview by Andy Garber, July 23, 2019, Cru19 Super Seminar, https://www.cru.org/cru19/archive/super-seminars/07-24-gospel-conversations-reimagined/.

[11] Tautolo, "Gospel Conversations."

[12] Tautolo, "Gospel Conversations."

Another example of collaborative learning comes from Cru HS staff member, C. J. Neal, who gives leadership to Cru HS staff in Indianapolis, Indiana. Neal's ministry activity centers in the context of urban Indianapolis where he grew up, and he engages in meaningful gospel conversations in the high school he once attended. According to Neal, most of the students he and his staff talk to are African American, as he is. They grew up with very little contact with the gospel or exposure to the church. Neal describes a small group gathering that took place at Christmastime. He asked them to explain to him the meaning of Christmas and to his surprise, they had only a vague idea why the holiday is celebrated. He took the opportunity to explain to these students that the Christmas story is about Jesus. Neal laments the fact that in Indianapolis today, high school students are unfamiliar with even the most basic Bible stories, and he is shocked by how little they know about God, Jesus, or the Bible.

Neal and his team are free to serve and to interact with students and discuss the gospel throughout any given school day. When he starts a conversation with a student, he inquires, "If you could ask God one question, what would it be?"[13] He notes that often they rattle off several questions, but most have to do with identity. So, he often starts gospel conversations in Genesis 1–3 with God's creation. According to Neal, the creation story is often the first alternative to Darwinism and evolutionary theory these students have ever heard. He argues that to set them up with only a New Testament gospel is a disservice. Neal believes that we must go back to the beginning and introduce them to the

[13] C. J. Neal, "Gospel Conversations Reimagined," interview by Andy Garber, July 23, 2019, Cru19 Super Seminar, Fort Collins, Colorado, https://www.cru.org/cru19/archive/super-seminars/07-24-gospel-conversations-reimagined/. I have had numerous conversations with C. J. Neal, and while the notes here are transcribed from the noted seminar, they also reflect hours of time and conversation with Neal and the Evangelism Think Tank.

Creator—their Creator—and he starts in Genesis and builds credibility for the Bible and for the gospel. He exclaims, "This is all the gospel! God created us and this world. So, if, all of a sudden, they understand that they are created by God and their lives matter, maybe then they will begin to understand that the lives of other people matter too."[14] Neal hopes that even a basic understanding of God's creation might change their thinking: "'Maybe then I won't take your life, and we can flourish together.' This reorients evangelism and gives us a different place to start."[15]

A third example highlights ETT member Julie Naanes, a former Team Leader with Cru City in New York. Naanes also served as Associate Pastor for three years at Communitas, a church for people in New York who are homeless. Julie witnessed heart-wrenching circumstances. Some of the people in the church had been homeless for decades and others had more recently lost their families, livelihood, and homes due to unforeseen circumstances—often drug addiction. Julie added a dose of reality to ETT discussions about the TSWW and often commented on the ways in which the men and women in her church enhanced her understanding of God and the TSWW. Her humble posture and willingness to learn from the least of these enables her to serve among this population with a greater sense of her own brokenness and to witness the power of the Spirit and the gospel that transforms lives.[16]

The ETT has fostered a posture of learning and listening in several ways. One way learning has been fostered is through a group that was started on Cru's internal app

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[14] Neal, "Gospel Conversations."

[15] Neal, "Gospel Conversations."

[16] Julie Naanes, "Julie Naanes with Sharon in NYC," The True Story Project, Cru Workplace, May 23, 2019, https://staffweb.workplace.com/notes/city/the-true-story-project-julie-naanes-with-sharon-in-nyc/2363113147343580/. Naanes also served at Communitas Church, https://www.communitasnyc.org

Workplace, City Think Tank, where a series of blog posts was published in spring 2019 under the title "The True Story Project." This provided a platform for a multigenerational, multicultural, multiethnic group of staff to publish short posts on the TSWW leading up to Cru's US National Staff Conference in July 2019. The ETT has also provided a place for staff across the organization to engage and to ask questions. Overall, the ETT and the City Think Tank group have provided a safe place to ask questions, to not always have the answers, and to explore the meaning of the gospel.

Every Word: A Reader's 90–Day Guide to the Bible

Another form of education includes a tool developed by one of our staff members entitled *Every Word: A Reader's 90–Day Guide to the Bible*, which is available on Amazon and through the popular BibleProject.[17] Cru leadership communities have begun to use this tool as a guide for reading through and discussing the true story of the Bible in ninety days. The authors have followed a pattern similar to the TSWW in their brief explanations.

Gospel in Culture PopUps

Since this research began, this researcher has made every effort to resist the urge to quickly reproduce *Four Spiritual Laws* in a more contemporary way, the focus has been to provide ways for believers to understand both the TSWW and the history of Cru and evangelicalism and to introduce insights regarding society and culture. The practical

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until spring 2020. She has left Cru staff to pursue a law degree in order to better serve the underserved in cities like NYC.

[17] Susan Goodwin, Jennifer Peterson, Molly Sawyer, *Every Word: A Reader's 90–day Guide to the Bible* (Atlanta: CreateSpace, 2019). This resource has also been repurposed as an online devotional and is available through the BibleProject, https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/17142-every-word-a-readers-90-day-guide-to-the-bible.

application of this research is to provide theologically rich learning environments along with basic steps that can lead to meaningful gospel conversations. With this audience and these goals in mind, Gospel in Culture PopUps were started. A PopUp is an approach that was developed for the purpose of briefly entering into a space to provide a place for contemplation and an environment for learning by way of conversation around the TSWW, God's authority, the multicultural reality in America, and today's secular culture.

The first Gospel in Culture PopUp was held in Atlanta in November 2019. It was an eight-hour roundtable discussion (two days and four hours each day) with ten women of various ages and from various backgrounds who had all participated in the 90-day read-through outlined in *Every Word*. In preparation, they all had read *The Gospel of Our King: Bible, Worldview, and the Mission of Every Christian*.[18]

This group took a closer look at the Bible story within the framework of the TSWW in relation to the context of a twenty-first-century Secular$_3$ context. Two women from the ETT attended the PopUp along with a representative from the ministry of Search.[19] The goal of the PopUp was to stimulate learning by engaging in meaningful gospel conversations and to provide a sampling of accessible information to help them understand exclusive humanism in a Secular$_3$ culture. The second PopUp took place in Orlando, Florida and introduced MyFriends Lifestyle (discussed later in this chapter). A third PopUp was planned for April 2020 in San Diego on Trinitarian theology, but it was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A virtual PopUp was held on July 27, 2020

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[18] Bruce Ashford and Heath Thomas, *The Gospel of Our King: Bible, Worldview, and the Mission of Every Christian* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019).

[19] Search, https://searchnational.org/.

with Alan Hirsch and Cru City's Global Network team and is discussed later in this chapter.

Discoveries and Further Research

The reality of secularization has come into full view over the past five years through gospel conversations with people from many different backgrounds. These include a Wiccan, a self-proclaimed Socialist Revolutionary, a Muslim proselytizer, a Turkish atheist, a college freshman who had never heard of Jesus or the Bible, an LGBTQ person, and many people who draw from various spiritual beliefs to form their own philosophy of life. Gospel witness today requires a different approach. As this dissertation demonstrates, meaningful gospel conversations in a twenty-first-century $Secular_3$ context require a different set of behaviors and skills along with a much deeper understanding of God and the gospel. Framing a gospel conversation around the TSWW allows for a greater breadth of conversation. C. J. Neal's ability to share the gospel from Genesis is an excellent example of this greater breadth and depth. A wide-angle view of the Bible provides a variety of segues into meaningful conversations.[20]

Discovering the comprehensive scope of the TSWW has enlarged and enlivened the story of God's mission in the world and in the lives of those previously mentioned. The TSWW provides a theological framework that lends perspective on the history of the world and also gives meaning to people's specific stories. Indeed, the TSWW situates the Great Commission and *Four Spiritual Laws* within the context of the metanarrative of

[20] I attended my niece's wedding in Bozeman, Montana in May 2019. The outdoor ceremony was suddenly threatened by an approaching thunderstorm. I was sitting with another niece, Emily, and her fiancé Jay—both of whom are spiritual but heavily influenced by humanism and the theory of evolution. As the wedding party gathered early to beat the storm, I told them the story of Elijah's prayer and Elijah's God

Scripture and reorients the focus of meaningful gospel conversations from a presentation to a conversation about the triune God. Furthermore, the *missio Dei* is at the center of the TSWW, which will one day culminate in the restoration and re-creation of all things. As previously noted, Cru's research project helped to uncover the following: (1) the five necessary behaviors as starting points for gospel conversations; (2) the three core longings inherent in *imago Dei*; and (3) the three ways to make the most of moments and conversations.[21]

Discovering the multidimensional nature of the gospel demonstrates that the gospel is meant to be translated into every culture as evidenced and discussed in Chapter 4. This underscores the fact that the gospel and the TSWW are robust and resilient. Tracing the genealogy of contextualization further highlighted the ways in which the *missio Dei* and the spread of the gospel continues. Feature Two, Feature Three, and Feature Four illustrate on a grand scale that the gospel is public truth and it is good news for everyone.

Further research will need to include listening, learning, and collaboration in the areas of racial reconciliation and sexual identity with regard to the gospel today. How can a narrative approach and the practice of narrative inquiry positively impact meaningful dialogue and gospel witness in every part of society?

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in order to demonstrate to them that the God of creation is able to stop or start the rain and that all we have to do is ask. God indeed stopped the rain that day long enough for the bride and groom to take their vows.

[21] Monaco and Runn, "Scattering Gospel Seeds," n.p.

Feature Two: Faithful Recontextualization Yields to the Full Weight of the Triune God's Authority

Chapter 3 demonstrated that it is no longer possible to assume that people in America have a basic Christian understanding of God and, therefore, they do not view God or the Bible as having any moral or ethical authority. Presentations of the gospel in a twentieth-century American context generally occurred without fear of rejection or reprisal. The quest for truth was often satisfied by presenting convincing proofs and evidences. That time is largely past.

Faithful recontextualization in a twenty-first-century $Secular_3$ context requires the church to yield to the full weight of God's authority in order to engage today's culture that is largely void of authority. Feature Two, as developed in Chapter 5, included two sections that purposefully discuss ways in which followers of Jesus Christ need to develop a renewed understanding of the full weight of God's authority in concert with all four features. The first section of Feature Two deals with God's authority in mission that is revealed, declared, and demonstrated in at least six ways: (1) in Scripture; (2) through creation; (3) in the mission of redemption set into motion first by the fall, and then through the nation of Israel; (4) by the Spirit-empowered incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; (5) through Jesus's ascension and sending of the Spirit in the book of Acts and the Epistles; and finally (6) the new heavens and new earth revealed in Revelation—the re-creation of all things.

The second section contends that a Trinitarian, Christocentric, eschatological hermeneutic is a vital interpretive element of the TSWW. A Trinitarian understanding more deeply informs the fact that the triune God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. God is both protagonist and hero of the story. In addition, a Trinitarian,

Christocentric, eschatological hermeneutic serves to underscore God's authority, which is significant in an era dominated by exclusive humanism and the absence of moral authority. The affirmation of God's final authority expressed in Jesus Christ's resurrection and ascension lends God's witnesses confidence and boldness amid the clash of rival claims of relativism and partial truths. God's witnesses today must yield to the full weight of God's authority and experience the Spirit's indwelling power, leadership, and reassurance in witnessing experiences.

Praxis

An example of the cultural challenges faced in the twenty-first century comes from Cru's digital outreach tool, *Every Student: A Safe Place to Explore Questions about God*.[22] Notably, the title invites students to interact about God, but the digital traffic on this site is multigenerational, multinational, and multicultural. People submit questions automatically sent to a randomly selected Cru staff member who answers the specific question. The following letter that serves as an example of a twenty-first-century view of authority was sent by Teresa on April 16, 2020. The unedited text of her letter is presented here:

> At the end of an artlice from this site, in regards to accepting both god and jesus into your life, it says "I give my life to you." Recent events have caused me to reevaluate my passive, agnostic ways. however this quote somewhat pushes me away. I am willing to invite faith into my life. but it is just that, MY life. This quote makes it seem as if I must relinquish any control I had prior to my developing faith. Like I will have a ruler. Like all aspects of my life will be changed and in the hands of someone else. I'm a firm believer that you have control of your own life/path.

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[22] Cru, "Every Student: A Safe Place to Explore Questions About God," https://www.everystudent.com/.

> Although some things my happen without your choice, many situations allow for decisions. I believe it is those decisions that go on to shape a future. I am uncomfortable with "giving my life" away. I am who I am, a good, honest, loving, helpful person, regardless of my faith. Yes, We all sin, However I do not believe that it is up to someone else to measure my sin compared to belief. Any sin of mine, to my belief, is not connected to weather or not I am deemed worthy of gods love, or if I'm a good person. I suppose this is less of a question, so much as a topic for conversation maybe. Or if you can clarify/break down any of my expressed feelings toward that quote. Thank you, A willing to believe skeptic.[23]

This researcher responded to Teresa with an invitation to enter into a conversation about God and Jesus, a conversation that, according to Scripture, God has initiated with her.

Not long ago, a Cru staff member was checking out at the grocery store. This staff person was wearing a T-shirt created as an advertisement for one of Cru's recently developed approaches to meaningful gospel conversations called Perspective Cards.[24] On the front was the question, "What's Your Perspective?" The enthusiastic young bagger inquired, "Hey, what's your perspective? I'm a nihilist." The staff person was taken aback and unsure how to respond in that moment and offered, "Well, I come from a Christian perspective," which, to the bagger, was a conversation stopper—aside from the fact that he had to stay focused on his job. Obviously, a different response needs to be considered. The *Perspective Cards* have proved helpful by opening up conversations regarding various worldviews.

Another example of a meaningful gospel conversation took place between this researcher and Emma, a recent high school graduate from the UK, on a flight from Raleigh/Durham to Orlando. This researcher, aware that Emma was noticeably uncomfortable with a conversation involving God, asked about her change of tone. This

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[23] Teresa, personal email, April 16, 2020.

[24] Cru, Perspective Cards, https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/share-the-gospel/outreach-strategies/perspectivecards.html. These are available as a complete deck of cards or as an app.

question freed Emma up to explain her faith journey that started and stopped due to her aunt's battle with cancer. Emma believed in God long enough to ask God to either heal her aunt or to take her own life in exchange for her aunt's. God did not answer her prayer, and her aunt eventually passed away. This researcher then entered into Emma's pain and told her about experiencing the death of her own mom. The believer also shared with Emma that God loves her a lot like she loved her aunt, that God sent his Son to die in her place. She listened intently for a while and also shared the ways in which she is now trying out New Age spirituality, and then the conversation turned to Disney World.

Discoveries and Further Research

A vital component of Feature Two is learning about society's posture toward authority, which serves to underscore the importance of this feature for believers. The societal trends in the US continue to provide important illustrations of the culture's demand for moral authority, which is evident in recent campaigns that have surfaced. Examples of this include #GeorgeFloyd, #Me Too, and #NeverAgain,[25] all of which represent important issues that reflect the desperate cry for a morality that draws an indelible, albeit relative line in the sand. These moral outcries provide great opportunity for gospel witness.

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[25] Evan Hill, Ainara Tiefenthaler, Christiaan Triebert, Drew Jordan, Haley Willis, and Robin Stein, "How George Floyd Was Killed in Police Custody," *The New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html, report that George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man was killed by Minneapolis police officers on May 25, 2020. This event served to expose a deep and long-festering wound of racial discrimination against the black population and incited protests around the world. According to https://www.metoomvmt.org, #MeToo is a movement to end sexual violence. #NeverAgain is dedicated to supporting Human and Civil Rights with a particular emphasis on supporting gun regulation in the US, https://www.neveragain.com. These movements signal both the events that affect gospel witness in the US and also provide evidence for the ideology of humanism.

The process of formulating Feature Two came about as a result of recognizing and contemplating the predominance of the authority of God across the canon of Scripture. This realization, coupled with a growing understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God and the *missio Dei*, served to breathe new life into meaningful gospel presentations for those involved in this research. This realization has also provided a renewed sense of confidence in God, as proclaimed in Habakkuk 2:14, "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," (see also Num 14:21; Psa 72:19; Is 6:3; 11:9; 45:6) and the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God" is now realized in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6). Followers of Jesus are called by God to be witnesses of this truth, and God's Spirit leads, guides, and empowers us each step of the way. Peter affirms, "God's divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence" (2 Pet 1:3). There is something freeing and also compelling here—especially for evangelicals. Utilizing a theological framework that yields to the full weight of God's authority helps to create a posture of humility, invites a cautious ecumenism, and encourages a more vigorous understanding of the Trinity's role in the *missio Dei*.

As Chapter 2 demonstrated, humanism's eschatological vision of a utopian world is at odds with the Christian gospel that is rooted in the redemptive reign of God. On the one hand, this research reveals that humanism's influence is everywhere, including in the church. Feature Two is meant to provide a basic awareness of the ideology of humanism and to foster courage for followers of Christ who are called to be God's witnesses in a Secular$_3$ culture. On the other hand, ongoing research is necessary on the topic of humanism. In addition, further research is necessary in order to understand the

implications of Feature Two in Cru as an organization and with respect to the missionary nature of the church. Additionally, an increased confidence in the authority of God lends courage in the face of ambivalence and opposition.

Feature Three: Faithful Recontextualization, by Design, Reflects the Multicultural Reality of the Twenty-First Century

Feature Three introduced the fact that ethnic diversity is a key component of recontextualization and is significant for meaningful gospel conversations. Chapter 4's missiological snapshot helped to lay the groundwork for this feature. Cru City's executive leadership has made a concerted effort to enter into meaningful and often painful gospel conversations with our ethnic staff. This effort began by listening as they explained to us what it has been like to serve on staff with Cru. They answered questions with humility and kindness, yet with honesty and boldness, and these conversations are now becoming a collaborative dialogue.

Significantly, as research for this dissertation continued, the researcher's conversations with ethnic staff on the ETT helped to reveal the reality that *Four Spiritual Laws* was developed within the context of a predominantly White, Protestant context. In fact, Chapter 4's genealogy of contextualization not only informed the context within which Bright developed *Four Spiritual* Laws. It also shed light on the lack of contextualization in the US and the ways in which evangelicalism's priorities left critical gaps that eventually became fissures with regard to ethnic diversity.

These gaps included assumptions regarding the use of finances, a lack of awareness about racism, and an undeveloped understanding of social justice. These realizations underscore the need for recontextualization. Jackson Wu affirms, "Contextualization cannot be defined merely in terms of communication or application. I

suggest contextualization refers to the process wherein people interpret, communicate, and apply the Bible within a particular cultural context.… Good contextualization seeks to be faithful to Scripture and meaningful to a given culture."[26] Equally, historian Vince Bantu warns against contextualization that slants toward a White, Western context. He argues that contextualization must include "(1) deconstruction of the Western white cultural captivity of the Christian tradition and (2) the elevation of non-Western expressions of Christianity."[27] Bantu's perspective sheds light on the growing need to understand and embrace various perspectives that are surfacing in twenty-first-century America and it accentuates the challenges this presents to the work of contextualization.

A prominent feature of recontextualization, therefore, must reflect the multicultural twenty-first-century context and is possible when Feature One plays a prominent role. The TSWW demonstrates that a multicultural reality is God's design. Here, Adam Edgerly's theology revealed in his lecture, "When I Don't See Color: From Color Blind to Color Conscious,"[28] traces the multicultural reality of God's design from Genesis to Revelation. Edgerly argues that a more robust theological framework provides the basis for these difficult conversations.[29]

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[26] Jackson Wu, *One Gospel* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015), 8.

[27] Vince L. Bantu, *A Multitude of All Peoples: Engaging Ancient Christianity's Global Identity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 6.

[28] Adam Edgerly, "When I See You I Don't See Color: From Color Blind to Culture Conscious," Student Congress On Racial Reconciliation, Biola University, March 11, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?=H38xHDGBQHs.

[29] The importance of cross-cultural and inter-cultural awareness became increasingly clear for me as I became more aware of the Native American, African American, Latin American, Japanese American, and Chinese American people around me. For example, my husband and I helped with an urban church plant in our city. The pastor and most of the people in the congregation were African American. I began to hear their stories and the challenges that they face on a daily basis. I also began to hear the gospel in a different way as I saw God through their lenses and experiences. Hearing the gospel from multiple perspectives enlarges our view of God.

Praxis

Cru's newly developed Oneness and Diversity team began to provide cross-cultural and intercultural training through The Lenses Institute.[30] The Oneness and Diversity team also provided practical ways to understand and chart personal and organizational growth in this area and it now requires that all executive leaders engage in action learning through the use of the Intercultural Development Inventory.[31] The steps Cru has taken have helped staff to better understand the need to recontextualize—to be present and listen, to walk in another's shoes, to find common ground.

Over the past few years this researcher has had numerous conversations with African American believers who participate in advocacy programs that provide information and helplines for people. This included helping those who are at risk for lead poisoning because they live in low-income housing or working with the local government to discover and eradicate what are known food deserts. Many low-income, often minority, peoples are unable to gain access to healthy food because it is not available within walking distance of their home. Native Americans who have grown up on reservations have suffered want because of laws and regulations that isolate them from the same opportunities the average White person often takes for granted. Asian Americans who have also suffered abuse and discrimination in the past few months because of the perception that the Chinese infected the US with COVID-19. Engaging in meaningful gospel conversations with people from these ethnic backgrounds requires a great deal of humility, a learning posture, which sometimes results in repentance.[32]

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[30] The Lenses Institute, http://lensesinstitute.com/.

[31] The Intercultural Development Inventory, https://idiinventory.com.

[32] Cas Monaco, in "Confessions of a Middle-Aged White Woman: Five Leadership Lessons on the

Discoveries and Further Research

Once again, Chapter 4's research revealed that certain groups of evangelicals have made valiant efforts to raise awareness of our social responsibilities, but there continues to be a sharp divide among evangelicals on this issue. As noted earlier in this chapter, Tautolo reminds us that the TSWW is neither heartless nor armless. The triune God and the kingdom permeate all walks of life as well as systems and structures, and God has designed the church to bear witness to the gospel in every place.

Feature Three also identified, first, the multicultural reality of the *imago Dei* and God's intention for every tribe, tongue, and nation to worship at God's throne. The four features work together to underscore God's design. Second, both the research and praxis around this feature inform the multidimensional nature of the gospel. The research and praxis discussed in Feature Three continue to necessitate a humble posture. The recent events surrounding the murder of George Floyd[33] have fueled a smoldering fire in ethnic communities across the US and around the world that can no longer be ignored by the church. It is important to understand why the gospel transcends racial division and paves a way for reconciliation. This conversation is best led by persons of color.

Feature Four: Faithful Recontextualization Necessitates a Dynamic and Dialogical Encounter with Culture

Chapter 4 provided an overview of Cru City's research project, *Understanding Faith and Purpose in the City*. This research alone provided an avenue to begin reimagining gospel conversations in the twenty-first-century context and continues to energize staff and key

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Way to Diversity," *Christianity Today, The Exchange with Ed Stetzer*, March 16, 2016, https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/march/confessions-of-middle-aged-white-woman-5-leadership-lessons.html, n.p., discusses what a learning posture looked like.

[33] See note 26 earlier in this chapter.

church partners across the US. The ETT provided the space to cultivate a growing understanding of the gospel and the TSWW and spurs the development of new approaches that are slowly being introduced into the organization as a whole. However, Cru's bent toward quick pragmatism could rush this process and bypass the important learning that must take place as an organization.

As stated in Chapter 5, a dynamic and dialogical encounter with culture in the midst of the multifaceted and ever-changing shape of twenty-first-century culture necessitates a robust missional ecclesiology, which provides a more holistic way of thinking about contextualization and mission. A dynamic and dialogical missionary encounter with culture includes the following four marks: (1) an affirmation that the Spirit-created church lives as the very body of Christ in the world; (2) a dynamic and prophetic faith; (3) a cruciform way of discipleship; and (4) a heightened awareness of exclusive humanism and hyper- and non-religious faiths coupled with agility to engage in meaningful gospel conversations.

Praxis

The aforementioned Cru research accelerated the development of the first stages of a narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations. The Road Show: Gospel Engagement in a Changing Culture (The Road Show)[34] helps to educate, inform, and equip Cru staff and partners with relevant approaches. As a result of the research findings summarized in Chapter 4, Cru has begun to develop a narrative approach to meaningful

[34] Cru, The Road Show: Gospel Engagement in a Changing Culture, https://www.cru.org/communities/city/roadshow/. Cas Monaco, "Cru Research Reveals New Insights for Gospel Conversations," The Send Institute, April 17, 2018, https://www.sendinstitute.org/insights-gospel-conversations/; and Monaco and Runn, "Scattering Gospel Seeds," n.p., provide a summary of The Road Show content.

gospel conversations on a practical level and to suggest ways for followers of Jesus to more readily engage in dialogue.

MyFriends Lifestyle: A Swiss Approach to Meaningful Gospel Conversations

A MyFriends Lifestyle[35] PopUp was held on February 17–18, 2020 at Cru's Headquarters in Orlando, Florida. This event served to launch a twelve-month Learning Community for seventeen people of different ages and ethnicities. Swiss staff member Juerg Schaufelberger, his wife Barbara, and their Swiss friends Hans and Ursula were also in attendance. MyFriends Lifestyle provides an excellent example of what a dynamic and dialogical encounter looks like today. This unique approach was developed by Juerg in Zurich, Switzerland in 2014. Juerg emphasizes that MyFriends Lifestyle is not a strategy but rather provides a pathway to a lifestyle.

The MyFriends Lifestyle training manual states, "MyFriends is about how you can invite your postmodern, unchurched friends to discover Jesus together with you. Many postmodern people aren't interested in the gospel. However, if they have the opportunity to experience God, they are often enthralled."[36] This innovation provides simple ideas for initiating conversations within each person's network of influence. It is based on the foundation of God's love, the invitation to pray, and the encouragement to actively care for others.

The training begins with "Share,"[37] which focuses on learning how to tell thirty-second stories about personal experiences with Jesus in the midst of everyday challenges.

[35] MyFriends Lifestyle, https://myfriends.life/.
[36] MyFriends Lifestyle, *MyFriends Training: Code of Practice*, 4.
[37] MyFriends Lifestyle, *MyFriends Training*, 4.

The second step is “Experience,”[38] which is meant to focus attention on God’s presence and availability in any given circumstance. This step trains believers how to ask friends and acquaintances about the challenges they are currently facing and involves asking for permission to pray with them right then. The training demonstrates how to interact with God, with a friend or acquaintance, and how to pray short prayers with simple vocabulary. The third step, “Connect,”[39] trains believers how to encourage their friends and acquaintances to take a step toward God and to ask God for help, healing, or provision. Then, the fourth step includes asking about their experience with God in a later conversation and encouraging them to “Release”[40] and tell someone else about this experience. The fifth and final step results in “Form a Group to Discover the Basics.”[41] The MyFriends Discovery Groups are short Bible studies that encourage discussion and interaction with God through the Word, and each lesson provides simple steps for application.

To the seasoned evangelist this approach may seem obvious and perhaps even anti-climactic. However, the results of this approach are multifaceted. First, it sets the course for believers in Jesus to talk openly and authentically about how God is actively involved with them in their struggles. This also reminds believers that they can pray for God’s intervention in circumstances in unconventional and even seemingly irrational ways. Second, this approach encourages a growing awareness of the Spirit’s presence and a greater sensitivity to the Spirit’s voice. Often the Spirit prompts believers to make a

[38] MyFriends Lifestyle, *MyFriends Training* 4.
[39] MyFriends Lifestyle, *MyFriends Training*, 4.
[40] MyFriends Lifestyle, *MyFriends Training*, 4.
[41] MyFriends Lifestyle, *MyFriends Training*, 4.

phone call, to buy groceries, or to show up in unplanned and unchoreographed ways. Third, this approach also allows Secular$_3$ people to experience God in transcendent ways.

After receiving the training, this group of Cru staff started a WhatsApp group in order to share with one another about their experiences with God as they interacted with others. Two weeks later, the COVID-19 pandemic turned these well-laid plans upside down. However, because of the MyFriends Lifestyle training, this group was prepared to engage in new ways with their neighbors and to step out in faith. Despite their sheltering in place, God has been using this group of people to share the gospel with their hearts and their arms, sometimes online and often in their neighborhoods, in cities such as New York, Chicago, Indianapolis, and Dallas. Several of the older, more traditionally trained staff were skeptical of a different approach, but they have stepped out in faith in new ways, initiating prayer with strangers and developing a new sense of awareness of the people around them. This experience may well prove informative in a world that is locked down.

This feature requires that Cru continue to work more closely with the local church than in years past. Church Movements, a local-church-focused ministry in Cru, is gaining ground by serving local church pastors in the US and around the world. Another way Cru is serving the local church in America is by allowing certain staff to serve as pastors in addition to fulfilling the responsibilities of a Cru staff member. This approach has proved to be an excellent way to partner with the church.

Another important aspect of a dynamic and dialogical encounter with culture is learning how to live with suffering and hardship. The past six months in the US have been filled with suffering on multiple levels and required engagement with culture and

society in ways that are difficult to measure. Conversations with college students and campus ministry staff have revolved around the topics of disappointment, suffering, and death. Several Cru staff members and students have been directly affected by COVID-19 in the most adverse ways. One young Asian staff guy living in Brooklyn has experienced discrimination and knows at least two people who have died. As a result, he was questioning the very foundation of his faith in God and the meaning of the gospel. These kinds of conversations are so important as Americans encounter pain and suffering in many different ways. In addition, this season provided multiple opportunities for conversations regarding the effects of George Floyd's death[42] and the resultant protesting and rioting. The TSWW provides for us a narrative of how the *missio Dei* is powerfully present, though sometimes seemingly absent, during the best and worst of times.

Cru City's Global Impact team has been wrestling with the 2020 realities of international mission. The restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic have radically affected their jobs and their calling and have paved the way for more humble and collaborative conversations with Cru leaders in other countries. In an effort to speak into the conversation, a virtual PopUp was held in July 2020 and highlighted Alan Hirsch's work. He provided his timely perspective on "Reframation: Seeing God, People, and Mission Through Reenchanted Frames."[43] It is a new day in Cru for engaging in mission.

Discoveries and Further Research

Feature Four requires that Cru take a fresh look at the Spirit-filled life and discipleship both of which reflect Bright's influence and leadership. Feature One and Two will

[42] See note 26 earlier in this chapter.
[43] Alan Hirsch and Mark Nelson, *Reframation: Seeing God, People, and Mission Through*

provide a solid foundation for exploring the role of God's Spirit and the topic of discipleship in a twenty-first century context. This feature presses into Cru tradition in many ways and hopefully this dissertation will help to lay the groundwork for innovation in these areas as well.

Summary of Chapter 6

The work of this dissertation began with a thesis—that Bill Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws* developed in a twentieth-century context is no longer sufficient for most gospel conversations in today's context. This dissertation has argued for a reimagined, narrative approach to meaningful gospel conversations for an American context. The central research focus of this dissertation has been to answer the following question: How can Cru honor Bill Bright's vision and maintain his commitment to evangelism by training others to present the gospel in an American, twenty-first-century secularized context?

As stated earlier in this chapter, the assumption that the need for a reimagined approach to evangelism or meaningful gospel conversations was due in large part to the current secularized context, which was corroborated by Taylor's genealogy of secularization and Rieff's Three Worlds or Cultures. The formulation of the argument took a surprising turn when the research surfaced various influences that helped to shape Bright, particularly that of William Carey, the WMC, and the emergence of contextualization. These influences exposed a hidden layer of his twentieth-century context. This vein of research, covered primarily in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, provided insight into the reasons why Cru's traditional approach to evangelism has, in many cases,

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Reenchanted Frames (100Movements Publishing, 2019).

fallen flat today. This research, in a sense, helped to clear the fog and gave place for the identification of the four prominent features for faithful recontextualization.

In August of 2020, the Cru City Executive Round Table unanimously agreed that Cru City's purpose is to "Engage the curious and equip the follower so that people can find their place in God's story." The group believes that this statement honors Bill Bright's legacy and also provides a pathway for meaningful gospel conversations in the twenty-first century, opening the doors for a rich narrative of inquiry, collaboration, and discovery. The City Executive Round Table is working on incorporating the theological framework presented here, along with the four prominent features for faithful recontextualization to provide the foundation for our ministry and our approach to meaningful gospel conversations.

This dissertation reflects this researcher's strong sense of call and has been completed by God's grace and the compelling of God's Spirit. Time and again the Spirit brought this researcher back to 2 Cor 4:5–7. "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of the darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."

This researcher's vision is that Cru will develop a robust theological framework that, above all else, will glorify the triune God and energize millions of meaningful gospel conversations. May the Spirit of God so lead.

APPENDIX 1

CRU CITY QUALBOARD DISCUSSION GUIDE

Understanding Faith in Christians, Spiritualists & Agnostics

Qualboard Discussion Guide

May 24 – May 26, 2016

The Link Lab, 1277 Avon Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30310
Phone: 718-450-4420 E-Mail: thelinklab@gmail.com

ALL QUESTIONS WILL BE PARTIALLY MASKED - Respondents will not see others' responses until their own is completed. After that they may review others' ideas.

INTRODUCTION

DAY 1 AM: Welcome, instructions and warm-up questions

Welcome everyone! My name is Gail and I will be the moderator for the discussion over the next three days. I'm an independent moderator, and I have conversations with people about a variety of topics, sometimes online, and sometimes in person. **This discussion will focus on faith, spirituality and purpose. I know some of these questions might be very personal and I want to assure you, this is a safe space. We won't tolerate disrespectful or unkind behavior, and anything you say here will not be shared publicly.**

I've got some guidelines that I want to go through before we get going with the fun stuff.

1. First of all, I value your unique perspective. That's why you're here! You may represent literally thousands of people, so what you have to say is really important. Thank you again for participating.
2. Second, there are no right or wrong answers! There's just your answer – and that's what I want to hear. So, tell me whatever is on your mind.
3. Give me as many descriptive details and explanation as possible in your posts. Telling me why you feel the way you do is really important. If you give me a yes/no answer when I've asked for an explanation, I'll have to come after you to explain more. So, the more you tell me upfront, the better!
4. Don't worry about spelling, typos or grammar. I'm shur we'll be abul 2 figure out what yur saying.

5. **I encourage you to log on multiple times** a day (there's no limit to how many times you can log in and participate). There will be follow-up questions from me and posts from others in the group that you can comment on. It will also help me to keep the conversation more interesting.

Here are some helpful hints to make this an easy process for you:

- Any time you have a problem, feel free to check out the "participant help" area (http://participanthelp.qualboard.com/s/participant/m/participant). Also look for the "Chat with Customer Support" button on the bottom of the page. There is a lot of really great information in there to help you out along the way!
- If you would like, please upload a photo of yourself so that we can associate a face with your name. It just makes our discussion a little more personable. You can do this under "Update my profile".
- You can click "Highlight Unanswered Questions" on the bottom or top of the Navigation Section to see if there are any questions from me that you may have missed. To make things even easier...on the left hand side of the screen you'll see the number of questions or follow ups that I may have left for you! Just look for the blue box titled "Project Alerts."
- Any questions that you have not answered will have a large red button stating "You have not replied. Click here to reply". This way you can easily tell what you still need to answer.
- To add to your reply or to reply to another participant just click on "Reply" in the bottom left corner of the posting.
- On the left of your screen you'll see a tab titled "Message Center". Click on that feature to see any emails that the moderator might have sent to you that you might have missed in your personal email inbox.

I thank you in advance for your time and your willingness to share your opinions.

If you have any technical difficulty while participating in this discussion, please contact the support staff by clicking on the "Help Desk" option at the bottom right of your screen.

OK so let's get started!

DAY 1 – TUESDAY, 5/24
Objective: Explore the relationship Christians, Spiritualists & Agnostics Have with Purpose & Faith

Exercise 1: "What Makes Me Who I Am" ***[MEDIA RESPONSE]***

Upload 1 Video

1. Pretend you're on a reality show. Speaking to the camera as you take a video, tell me a little bit about yourself:
   a. What are three (3) words you would use to describe yourself to a stranger that you wanted to get to know better and who you wanted to get to know YOU better.
   b. Where do you live? What city? Do you live in-town or the suburbs?
   c. What do you do during the day?
   d. Now tell me what inspires you to get out of bed in the morning. What are some of the things you are most passionate about and/or what gives your life meaning?
   e. Finally, to what extent do you feel a responsibility to others in your community that are less fortunate than yourself?

Exercise 2: "My Spiritual Life"

[MEDIA RESPONSE] I'm hoping you all are going to have a little fun with this next exercise. Our main goal for this exercise is to better understand how faith/spirituality **may or may not** play a role in your life.

1. Using the digital collage tool provided, I'd like you to create a "My Spiritual Life" collage of people, places, and things that represent what faith/spirituality mean to you and the role it plays in your life.
   a. You will want to download all of the images to your computer and then use the collage tool to upload them to the platform. Once uploaded, you can arrange the photos and change their sizes. **There are no rules to what you can include in your collage but please include examples from the list below**:
      i. **People** – People who play a role in your faith and/or spiritual beliefs and/or practice – people that influence you, that you talk to about faith, etc.
      ii. **Places** – Places that play a role in your faith and/or spiritual beliefs and/or practice. These might be places:
         1. That inspire your faith/spiritual beliefs and practice

2. Where you practice your faith/spirituality and/or where you see your faith/spirituality at work
iii. **Quotes/ "Words of Faith"** – Quotes, verses, mantras, and/or affirmations that speak to you and your beliefs around faith/spirituality. If you cant find certain images that contain these "Words of Faith", post them in the next section where I'd like you tell me about your collage.

If you do not have a specific faith/spiritual practice, please create a collage of people, places, or things that inspire the way you live your life. You can also include images that speak to why you don't have a faith/spiritual practice.

2. ***[TEXT RESPONSE]*** Now I'd like you to tell me what each image is that you selected and why you chose that image – what it means to you and the role it plays in your faith/spiritual life.

3. ***[MULTIPLE ANSWER WITH MANDATORY EXPLANATION]*** Finally, I'd like you to take a look at several images below consider how they relate to your faith/ spiritual beliefs and practice. On a scale of 1-5, give each one a "speaks to me" score. And tell me why you selected that score.

   - **1** = This image **does not speak to me** or my faith/ spiritual beliefs and practice at all
   - **5** = This image **speaks to me** and my faith/ spiritual beliefs and practice **very well**

[8 IMAGES A-H, RANDOMIZE ORDER IF POSSIBLE]

Exercise 3: Faith, Purpose, & Meaning in Life

Thank you to all of you for sharing those collages and for your feedback on the images! Just a few more questions for today:

1. What comes to mind when I say to you the following words: "Life Purpose"?
2. How often do you think about your purpose in life? What do you think about?
   a. How do you feel when you are having these thoughts?
   b. Do you ever talk to others about your life purpose?
      i. If yes, who?
      ii. If no, would you be open to talking to others about this? Why or Why not?
3. Do you still have questions about your purpose in life? **[MULTIPLE CHOICE]**
   a. *YES*
   b. *NO*
   c. ***[IF YES]***:
      i. Tell me about your purpose in life – what is it? How are you putting it to practice in your daily life?
      ii. How did you arrive at that realization?
      iii. What or who do you rely on to know whether or not you are living your life as you were meant to?

d. ***[IF NO]:***
    i. What or who do you rely on to know whether or not you are living your life as you were meant to?
    ii. Why is that?

4. How does your purpose relate to your faith/spiritual beliefs and practice?
5. Which if any of the following statements "speak to you" in capturing how you feel about your purpose and or your faith/spiritual beliefs and practice? Select all that apply and tell me why it speaks to you? ***[MULTIPLE ANSWER – SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]***

    a. *"Don't just live in you city, thrive in it!"*
    b. *"Becoming whole. Being Unleashed. Bringing Flourishing."*
    c. *"There is something deep inside you that knows who you truly are."*

Thank you everyone! We are done for today. I am looking forward to continuing the conversation tomorrow!

DAY 2 – WEDNESDAY, 5/25
Objective: Understand Their Journey & Faith/ Spiritual Practice & Religion

Welcome back! You all really have been a great group...I mean really! Thank you for all of the time and detail you are giving to these questions.

1. First of all, please make sure there are no follow-up questions you have not answered from yesterday.
2. Yesterday you helped me to understand the role of faith/spiritual beliefs and practice in your lives and how that relates to your life purpose. Today I'd like to talk to you about your journey and faith.

[MEDIA RESPONSE] Exercise 1: "My Journey To And/Or From Faith"

1. I'd like you to create a journey map that shows the path you have taken or are on, to your current beliefs/stance on faith, spirituality, and religion and then take a picture and upload it. I'd like you to represent on that map: key steps on that path or moments in your life that introduced you to new spiritual beliefs, changed your perspective/beliefs, or made you question your beliefs.
   a. You can have as many steps/moments as you want
   b. Below is a visual guide of what the map might look like – don't worry about adding pictures, just include the text.
   c. For each step/moment, Please write down
      i. Thoughts and or questions that you had
      ii. Emotions and feelings that you experienced
      iii. People who played a role, or that you would have liked to have played a role, in that step/moment – who were they and what role did they play?
   d. For the last step, describe the moment or where you are in your journey now.

[SHOW "JOURNEY MAP EXAMPLE"]

DAY 3 – THURSDAY, 5/26
Objective: Explore the Relationship of Christians, Spiritualists & Agnostics to Christianity, Christian Institutions & Organizations, & The Messaging of Christian Institutions

Happy Thursday everyone! Good to see you here again!

- First of all, please make sure there are no follow-up questions you have not answered from yesterday.
- Since this is the last day, and the topics are still very important, please be sure to log on more than once today - At least one time to complete the questions and then another time at then end of the day to make sure you don't have any follow-up questions.

Exercise 1: "My Thoughts & Feelings on Christianity"

Today I want to understand your thoughts and feelings on Christianity and how you feel about representations of Christianity in your community and in society today.

1. ***[MEDIA RESPONSE]*** I'd like you to upload a video telling me how you feel about Christianity as a spiritual practice? If you are not Christian yourself, just tell me your thoughts, feelings, and perceptions:
    a. How familiar are you with the principles and teachings of Christianity? What do you think/feel about them? What makes a "good Christian"?
    b. How do you feel about the way those teachings are being practiced today?
        i. By individuals? By the church?

2. ***[TEXT RESPONSE]*** What should the role and responsibility of a church be? Again, if you are not Christian, tell me what the role of a "spiritually-focused" or faith-based institution should be.
    a. Do you see any national or local churches/ "spiritually-focused" or faith-based institution fulfilling this role? Which ones? What are they doing that serves this role?

3. **[TEXT RESPONSE]** I'd like you to read several statements and tell me **which of these "speaks to you" personally** as being representative of the role that a church or "spiritually-

focused"/faith-based institution should play in the city/community? **Select all that apply**: **[MULTIPLE ANSWER - SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]**

a. "Multicultural, non-denominational church"
b. "Has a unique open door to minister to the cross-cultural melting pot of a city"
c. "A Network of Millennials"
d. "Renewing the city socially, spiritually, and culturally"
e. "Winning people to faith"
f. "A caring community passionate about connecting people to Jesus Christ"
g. "We serve and mobilize the church to live out God's heart for the poor, so all can grow in Christ to build spiritual movements everywhere"
h. "Transforming cities with hope and justice"
i. "Transforming cities with the hope and justice of the gospel"
j. "Live out the love, hope and joy of the gospel in every neighborhood in order to see the city flourish"
k. "Creating options together. Poverty is defined as the lack of options; we create options together"
l. "Creating options together. Poverty is defined as the lack of options; we create options together with the whole body of Christ"

4. **[TEXT RESPONSE]** For the statements you **DID NOT select** above, I'd like you to tell me why they **DO NOT speak to you**. What would you change in the statement so that it **DOES** "speak to you"?

Exercise 2: "My Reactions to the Thoughts and Feelings of Other Viewpoints on Christianity – People & Institutions/Organizations"

I'm going to ask you to watch two videos representing the views of others (individuals and organizations) on Christianity and the role of Christians and Christian organizations.

[VIDEO #1] Click on the following link to watch the first video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IAhDGYlpqY

1. **[TEXT RESPONSE]** Tell me about your experience watching the first video:
   a. What did you **like** about the video?
   b. What did you **dislike** about the video?
   c. What did you find meaningful and/or relevant to you and your spiritual views and beliefs?
   d. Would you have a conversation with someone from this organization about faith? Why or why not?
   e. Would you work with this organization to help those less fortunate in your city? Why or why not?
   f. How did the video make you feel about Christianity? Tell me why it made you feel that way.

[VIDEO #2] Click on the following link to watch the second video
https://vimeo.com/70523346

2. **[TEXT RESPONSE]** Tell me about your experience watching the first video:
   a. Had you ever heard of "cru" before watching the video?
   b. What did you **like** about the video?
   c. What did you **dislike** about the video?
   d. What did you find meaningful and/or relevant to you and your spiritual views and beliefs?
   e. Would you have a conversation with someone from this organization about faith? Why or why not?
   f. Would you work with this organization to help those less fortunate in your city? Why or why not?
   g. How did the video make you feel about Christianity? Tell me why it made you feel that way.

3. **[TEXT RESPONSE]** Now take a quick look at the home-page of cru's website https://www.cru.org.
    a. What if anything, on the home-page would make you want to know more about the organization?
    b. Is there anything on the home-page that would "turn you off" from engaging further? If so, tell me what it is and why.

Exercise 3: "My Interest in Engaging with Other Faith-Based Media"

Now we've finally made it! You all are awesome and thank you SO much for hanging in there with me. For the last exercise, I'd like you to take a look at two more websites and tell me about your interest in hearing more from those sites.

[Site #1] Click on the following link to visit the first site:

http://www.flourishingcity.com

1. **[TEXT RESPONSE]** Tell me about your experience visiting site #1:
    c. What did you **like** about the site?
    d. What did you **dislike** about the site?
    e. What did you find meaningful and/or relevant to you and your spiritual views and beliefs?
        i. Why was it meaningful/relevant to you?
    f. If this website were a person, would you have a conversation with this person about faith? Why or why not?
    g. Would you work with this person or an organization representing the views of this person to help those less fortunate in your city?
    h. How did the video make you feel about Christianity?

[Site #2] Click on the following link to visit the second site:

http://www.relevantmagazine.com

2. **[TEXT RESPONSE]** Tell me about your experience visiting site 21:
   i. What did you **like** about the site?
   j. What did you **dislike** about the site?
   k. What did you find meaningful and/or relevant to you and your spiritual views and beliefs?
      i. Why was it meaningful/relevant to you?
   l. If this website were a person, would you have a conversation with this person about faith? Why or why not?
   m. Would you work with this person or an organization representing the views of this person to help those less fortunate in your city?
   n. How did the video make you feel about Christianity?

WRAP UP

You all have been great! Thank you so much for your time and insightful responses.

APPENDIX 2

CRU CITY BRAND MESSAGING SURVEY

CRU City Brand Messaging Survey

Sample:

N=250
Country: US
Age 22-60

- (30) 22-24 CHRISTIAN
- (40) 25-34 CHRISTIAN
- (30) 35-45 CHRISTIAN
- (20) 46-60 CHRISTIAN
- (30) 22-24 NON-PRACT
- (35) 25-34 NON-PRACT
- (45) 35-45 NON-PRACT
- (20) 46-60 NON-PRACT

120 Male / 130 Female

- (30) MALE CHRISTIANS- CONTENT
- (30) MALE CHRISTIANS- CURIOUS
- (30) FEMALE CHRISTIANS-CONTENT
- (35) FEMALE CHRISTIANS-CURIOUS
- (30) MALE NON-PRAC-CONTENT
- (30) MALE NON-PRAC-CURIOUS
- (30) FEMALE NON-PRAC-CONTENT
- (35) FEMALE NON-PRAC-CURIOUS

(75) African American/ (25) Asian/ (75) Hispanic (75) Caucasian

- (18-19) AA CHRISTIAN-CONTENT
- (18-19) AA CHRISTIAN-CURIOUS
- (18-19) AA NON-PRAC-CONTENT
- (18-19) AA NON-PRAC-CURIOUS
- (18-19) Hispanic CHRISTIAN-CONTENT
- (18-19) Hispanic CHRISTIAN-CURIOUS
- (18-19) Hispanic NON-PRAC-CONTENT
- (18-19) Hispanic NON-PRAC-CURIOUS
- (18-19) Caucasian CHRISTIAN-CONTENT
- (18-19) Caucasian CHRISTIAN-CURIOUS
- (18-19) Caucasian NON-PRAC-CONTENT
- (18-19) Caucasian NON-PRAC-CURIOUS
- (5-6) Asian CHRISTIAN-CONTENT
- (5-6) Asian CHRISTIAN-CURIOUS
- (5-6) Asian NON-PRAC-CONTENT
- (5-6) Asian NON-PRAC-CURIOU

CRU City Messaging Survey

The Relationship of Christians & Non-Practitioners to Christianity & Faith-Based Institutions

1. How would you describe the role of faith or spirituality in your life?

****ONLY ASK IF SELECTED CHRISTIAN AS AFFILIATION****

2. Which of the following describe(s) the role of a Christian or Faith-Based organization or institution? **(Select all that apply)**
   - ☐ Teach and promote positive values
   - ☐ Be a faith-based community
   - ☐ Provide faith-based social activities
   - ☐ Nurture its members to be good Christians and improve their lives
   - ☐ Work with others to improve the surrounding city or community
   - ☐ Engage its members to help others and improve the surrounding city or community
   - ☐ Spread/ teach the word of Jesus Christ & The Bible to the outside community
   - ☐ Empower Christians to share their faith with those around them

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

****ONLY ASK IF SELECTED NON-PRACTITIONER AS AFFILIATION****

3. Which of the following describe(s) the role of a non-religious spiritual organization or institution? **(Select all that apply)**
   - ☐ Teach and promote positive values
   - ☐ Be a spiritual community
   - ☐ Provide social activities for its spiritual community
   - ☐ Provide spiritual guidance and support to its members and improve their lives
   - ☐ Work with others to improve the surrounding city or community
   - ☐ Engage its spiritual community to improve the surrounding city or community
   - ☐ Empower its community to share its teachings with those around them

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

****ONLY ASK IF SELECTED CHRISTIAN AS AFFILIATION****

4. To what degree do you see Christian organizations or institutions in the community where you live or work, fulfilling each of the roles you selected above? **(Select all that apply)**
   - ☐ Very much
   - ☐ Somewhat
   - ☐ Not at all

   (**PIPE IN ROLES SELECTED**)

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

****ONLY ASK IF SELECTED NON-PRACTITIONER AS AFFILIATION****

5. To what degree do you see non-religious spiritual organizations or institutions in the community where you live or work, fulfilling each of the roles you selected above? **(Select all that apply)**
   - ☐ Very much
   - ☐ Somewhat
   - ☐ Not at all

   (**PIPE IN ROLES SELECTED**)

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

Perceptions of Attributes & Values

6. Earlier you indicated that you were open to working with a faith-based or spiritual organization to improve the lives of others in your city. We'd like you to indicate which of the statements below would be an important value or characteristic of that organization - one that would encourage you to work alongside it to improve the lives of others in your city. You can select one, some, or all of the statements. **(Select as many as apply)**

   (RANDOMIZE**)**
   - ☐ **Be present and listen**
     Follow the conversation, not your agenda.
   - ☐ **Find common ground**
     Discover a relational bridge, not a spiritual chasm.
   - ☐ **Walk in their shoes**
     Understand their story, not your conclusion.
   - ☐ **Talk like a real person**
     Use words meant for people, not for the pews.
   - ☐ **Create a better story** It's about sharing your faith through care for the city, not counting the converts

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

---

7. Which of these statements would you find refreshing, or surprising in a good way, coming from a Christian organization?

   - ☐ **Be present and listen**
     Follow the conversation, not your agenda.
   - ☐ **Find common ground**
     Discover a relational bridge, not a spiritual chasm.
   - ☐ **Walk in their shoes**
     Understand their story, not your conclusion.

- ☐ **Talk like a real person**
  Use words meant for people, not for the pews.
- ☐ **Create a better story** It's about sharing your faith through care for the city, not counting the converts

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

---

8. Again, thinking about an organization that you would want to work alongside to improve the lives of others in your city. Please indicate which of the statements below would be an important value or characteristic of that organization - one that would encourage you to work alongside it to improve the lives of others in your city. You can select one, some, or all of the statements. **(Select as many as apply)**

   (RANDOMIZE**)**
   - ☐ **Listen first**
     Follow the conversation. Making a genuine connection with another human means understanding. To understand, first we must listen.
   - ☐ **Find common ground**
     To build understanding, start from a shared foundation, something everyone in the conversation believes.
   - ☐ **Walk in their shoes**
     Relationships are formed around shared experiences. To truly know someone, spend time with them.
   - ☐ **Talk like a real person**
     Relationships are strengthened by continued conversation. Always talk simply, show empathy, be your true-self.
   - ☐ **Share a better story**
     Personal stories are fuel for our imaginations. They inspire us and allow for deeper connections. And connections are a powerful path to faith.

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

---

9. Which of these statements would you find refreshing, or surprising in a good way, coming from a Christian organization?
   - ☐ **Listen first**
     Follow the conversation. Making a genuine connection with another human means understanding. To understand, first we must listen.
   - ☐ **Find common ground**
     To build understanding, start from a shared foundation, something everyone in the conversation believes.
   - ☐ **Walk in their shoes**
     Relationships are formed around shared experiences. To truly know someone, spend time with them.
   - ☐ **Talk like a real person**
     Relationships are strengthened by continued conversation. Always talk simply, show empathy, be your true-self.

- ☐ **Share a better story**
  Personal stories are fuel for our imaginations. They inspire us and allow for deeper connections. And connections are a powerful path to faith.

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

Exposure to Creative Territories

We are going to show you five (5) statements that might describe the mission of a faith-based/ spiritual organization.

Please read the first statement.

RANDOMLY EXPOSE TO 1 OF 5 CONCEPT STATEMENTS & REPEAT QUESTIONS 10 - 15

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

---

10. What, if anything, did you particularly like about the mission statement that you just saw? **(Type in answer below – please be as specific as possible)**

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

---

11. What, if anything did you particularly dislike about the mission statement that you just saw? **(Type in answer below – please be as specific as possible)**

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

---

12. How different is this mission statement from what other faith-based/spiritual organizations say? **(Select one)**
    - ☐ Completely different
    - ☐ Somewhat different
    - ☐ Not at all different

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

---

13. How open would you be to having a conversation about your faith/spiritual beliefs, with people involved with this organization? **(Select one)**
    - ☐ Very open
    - ☐ Somewhat open

- ☐ Not that open
- ☐ Not at all open

Please explain why you would or would not be open to having a conversation.

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

---

14. Thinking about the Mission Statement above, and thinking about the role of a faith-based/spiritual organization, On a scale of 1 – 5 (with one being "not at all appealing" and 5 being "very appealing") how appealing is the statement overall? (Select one)
    - ☐ 1 ("not at all appealing")
    - ☐ 2
    - ☐ 3
    - ☐ 4
    - ☐ 5 ("very appealing")

(**SCREEN BREAK**)

(**THANK RESPONDENT AND END SURVEY**)

CRU City Messaging Survey

MISSION STATEMENTS

#1 THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

We share a love for our city and want to see it at its best. Each one of us can play a role in making that happen.

Our city may be big, but the power comes from the communities within it. Those many groups who come together around shared value, belief and space

Our goal is to help create and connect communities of people who come together to make our city a better place.

We believe that we are all connected to a powerful purpose. A purpose that pulls us together to strengthen each other, and change the lives of those in our city.

#2 A SIMPLE CONVERSATION:

There is a bold new way to impact our city. And it starts with a simple conversation.

Conversation. That simple, authentically human desire to connect with others. Conversation is the most powerful way to understand each other and the values and beliefs we share.

Our goal is to help start more conversations. On every street, in every community—everywhere in our city. We believe conversation is the path to making our city a better place.

While we are a Christian organization, we care more about seeing lives changed than converting people to *our* faith. If you care about helping others and impacting the lives of everyone in our city, let's talk.

#3 OUR COMMON GROUND

When we find common ground and truly understand each other, we can create *uncommon* change in the lives of everyone in our city.

Our cities are filled with thousands of people who share a sidewalk but don't share their lives. We may not know each other, but we're probably more alike than we think. It only takes an honest conversation to find what we have in common.

This common ground allows us to connect as people. When we connect with each other, we can come together to bring real change in our neighborhoods and community.

We believe that we are all connected to a bigger purpose, one that brings change to our lives and enables us to impact our city.

#4 THE BARRIER OF BELIEF

Belief can create barriers and walls that divide us. Only by tearing down these walls can we heal our communities and our city, together.

CRU City Messaging Survey

The world is an increasingly noisy place. We've developed a sound barrier to tune out what we don't understand. We won't listen to each other, and this adds more bricks to the barrier. And if we can't listen to each other, how can we hear the needs of our city?

Shouting louder is no longer enough to break through. We have to reach through the wall and make a real, personal connection. We have to push through it and meet others where they are.

Every personal conversation loosens a brick. Every shared experience builds understanding. And understanding is a powerful path to faith, stronger community and healthier cities.

#5 DIFFERENT, BUT STRONGER TOGETHER

It's time to start a new conversation. One that brings understanding of our differences, and focus to how we're the same. Because we are stronger together, and together we can help change our city.

Our city is filled with unique people, from different walks of life with different beliefs. When we take time to learn about each other, we can discover places where we're very much the same.

While we need to understand where we may be different, we must build from what we have in common. Because only together can we help change our city.

We are a movement of people for everyone who wants to create a positive impact in our city. We believe the teachings of Jesus challenge us to care for each other and our communities. We want to be a catalyst to connect people, to impact our city—regardless of what you believe.

APPENDIX 3

CRU CITY INSIGHTS AND PLANNING: QUANT TESTING

CRU City Insights & Planning: Quant Testing

Understanding Christian & Spiritual Urban Dwellers

Screener and Screening Specifications

N= 250

1a. In the past three months, have you taken part in any type of individual interview or group discussion for the purpose of marketing research?
- Yes..................................[ ] **(THANK & TERMINATE)**
- No..................................[ ] **(CONTINUE)**

1b. Are you currently scheduled to take part in any type of individual interview or group discussion for the purpose of marketing research?
- Yes..................................[ ] **(HOLD)**
- No..................................[ ] **(CONTINUE)**

1c. Thinking back over any market research studies you have participated in during the last six months, what topics have been discussed? **(RECORD BELOW)**

____

2. Are you, your spouse, members of your family, or close friends employed in any of the following types of professions or at any of the following types of companies?
- A marketing, or market research firm [ ]
- An advertising agency [ ]
- For a media (magazines, TV, movies, internet content) company [ ]
- For a church or religious organization [ ]
- None of the above [ ] **MUST SELECT**

3. Which of the following metro areas do you live near?
- New York City [ ] – **MIN 12**
- Los Angeles [ ]
- Chicago [ ] – **MIN 12**
- Philadelphia [ ]
- Dallas-Fort Worth [ ]
- San Francisco [ ]
- Washington, D.C. [ ]
- Boston [ ]
- Atlanta [ ] – **MIN 12**
- Kansas City [ ] – **MIN 12**
- Portland [ ] – **MIN 12**
- Houston [ ]
- Tampa [ ]

Phoenix [ ]
Detroit [ ]
Seattle [ ]
Minneapolis [ ]
Miami [ ]
Denver [ ]
Cleveland [ ]
Orlando [ ]
Sacramento [ ]
Other ____________________ [ ]

MUST SELECT ONE OF THE TOP 20 DMAs TO CONTINUE

4. Do you believe in a higher power?
   - Yes [ ]
   - No [ ] - **TERMINATE**
   - I'm not sure [ ]

5. In terms of faith and spirituality, which of the following do affiliate yourself with?
   - Christianity [ ] –**(125)**
   - Hinduism [ ]
   - Islam [ ]
   - Judaism [ ]
   - Buddhism [ ]
   - Not a practitioner of an organized religion & BELIEVE in a higher power [ ] –**(75)**
   - Not a practitioner of an organized religion & UNCERTAIN about a higher power [ ] –**(50)**
   - Other religion ___________ [ ]

   MUST SELECT CHRISTIANITY OR "NOT A PRACTITIONER" TO CONTINUE

6. **ASK TO THOSE WHO SELECT CHRISTIANITY IN Q5:** Which of the following best describes you?
   - I am a recent convert to Christianity [ ]–**(20-25) MIN RECRUITS**
   - I am currently an active member in my church (meaning I attend church regularly) [ ] – **(70-75) MIN RECRUITS**
   - I am currently an inactive member in my church (meaning I have not attended church regularly in awhile) [ ] – **(70-75) MIN RECRUITS**
   - I am not a member of a church [ ]

7. If you had to classify where you are in terms of your faith/spiritual beliefs, which of the following groups would best describe where you are? **"Curious"** means **"I am still defining my belief system, or my personal relationship to or practice of my faith/spirituality"**

   - Christian and CONTENT with my faith/spiritual beliefs & practice [ ] –**(60) RECRUITS**
   - Christian but still CURIOUS about my faith/ spiritual beliefs & practice [ ] –**(65) RECRUITS**
   - Not a practitioner of an organized religion, BELIEVE in a higher power, and CONTENT with my spiritual beliefs/practice [ ] –**(40) RECRUITS**

Not a practitioner of an organized religion, BELIEVE in a higher power, and CURIOUS about my spiritual beliefs/ practice [ ] –**(35) RECRUITS**

Not a practitioner of an organized religion, UNCERTAIN about the existence OF a higher power, and CONTENT with my spiritual beliefs/ practice [ ] –**(25) RECRUITS**

Not a practitioner of an organized religion, BELIEVE in a higher power, and CURIOUS about my spiritual beliefs/ practice [ ] –**(25) RECRUITS**

8. How open are you to discussing your faith/ spiritual beliefs and practice with others?

Very open	[ ]
Somewhat open	[ ]
Not open at all	[ ] - **TERMINATE**

9. How open are you to working with a faith-based or spiritual organization to improving the lives of others in your city?

Very open	[ ]
Somewhat open	[ ]
Not open at all	[ ] – **MAX 25**

10. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

Employed full-time (35 + hours weekly)	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
Employed part-time (less than 35 hours weekly)	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
Unemployed/laid off	[ ]
Student	[ ]
Homemaker (not currently seeking employment)	[ ]

MUST BE FULL OR PART TIME EMPLOYED TO CONTINUE

(ASK Q. 4 IF EMPLOYED, OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q. 5)

11. What is your occupation and the name of the company you work for? **(RECORD INFORMATION BELOW.)**

______________________________ **(JOB TITLE/DUTIES)**

12. Please indicate your gender:

Male	[ ]
Female	[ ]

IDEAL QUOTAS:

(30) MALE CHRISTIANS- CONTENT
(30) MALE CHRISTIANS- CURIOUS
(30) FEMALE CHRISTIANS-CONTENT
(35) FEMALE CHRISTIANS-CURIOUS
(30) MALE NON-PRACTITIONER-CONTENT
(30) MALE NON-PRACTITIONER-CURIOUS
(30) FEMALE NON-PRACTITIONER-CONTENT
(35) FEMALE ON-PRACTITIONER-CURIOUS

OVERALL:
(120) Males **(150) Females**

13. Which best describes the area you RESIDE in?

Inner City	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
City Metro Area	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
Rural	[ ]
Small Town	[ ]

MUST LIVE IN AN URBAN AREA TO CONTINUE – HOLD OTHERS AND CONTINUE SCREENING

14. Which best describes the area you WORK in?

Inner City	[ ]
Metro Area	[ ]
Rural	[ ]
Small Town	[ ]

FALL BACK: IF DOES NOT RESIDE IN INNER CITY OR METRO AREA, MUST WORK IN INNER CITY OR METRO AREA

15. What is the last year of schooling that you had the opportunity to complete?

Did not complete high school	[ ]
Completed high school	[ ]
Some trade school/completed trade school	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
Some college	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
Completed college	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
Post graduate	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**

MUST HAVE AN EDUCATION OF SOME COLLEGE OR HIGHER TO CONTINUE

16. Into which of the following groupings does your age fall (**READ LIST**)?

Under 18 years of age	[ ]
19 – 21 years of age	[ ]
22 – 24 years of age	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
25 - 34 years of age	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
35 – 45 years of age	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
46 – 60 years of age	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
More than 60 years of age	[ ]

IDEAL QUOTAS:

(30) 22-24 CHRISTIAN	**(30) 22-24 NON-PRACT**
(40) 25-34 CHRISTIAN	**(35) 25-34 NON-PRACT**
(30) 35-45 CHRISTIAN	**(45) 35-45 NON-PRACT**
(20) 46-60 CHRISTIAN	**(20) 46-60 NON-PRACT**

OVERALL:

(60) 22-24 year olds **(75) 35-45 year olds**
(75) 25-34 year olds **(40) 46-60 year olds**

14. Into which of the following ranges does your annual household income fall?

Under $35,000	[ ]
$35,000 to $49,999	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
$50,000 to $74,999	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
$75,000 to $99,999	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**
$100,000 or more	[ ] – **MUST SELECT**

MUST HAVE AN INCOME OF $35K OR MORE TO CONTINUE

15. So that we may represent all backgrounds, please tell me which of the following best describes you?

African American	[ ]
Asian	[ ]
Caucasian	[ ]
Hispanic/Latina	[ ]
Native American	[ ]
Other (please list) _________	[ ]

IDEAL QUOTAS
(18-19) African American CHRISTIAN-CONTENT
(18-19) African American CHRISTIAN-CURIOUS
(18-19) African American NON-PRAC-CONTENT
(18-19) Hispanic CHRISTIAN-CONTENT
(18-19) Hispanic CHRISTIAN-CURIOUS
(18-19) Hispanic NON-PRAC-CONTENT
(18-19) Hispanic NON-PRAC-CURIOUS
(18-19) African American NON-PRAC-CURIOUS
(5-6) Asian CHRISTIAN-CONTENT
(5-6) Asian CHRISTIAN-CURIOUS
(5-6) Asian NON-PRAC-CONTENT
(5-6) Asian NON-PRAC-CURIOUS
(18-19) Caucasian CHRISTIAN-CONTENT
(18-19) Caucasian CHRISTIAN-CURIOUS
(18-19) Caucasian NON-PRAC-CONTENT
((18-19) Caucasian NON-PRAC-CURIOUS

OVERALL:
(75) African American **(75) Hispanic**
(25) Asian **(75) Caucasian**

16. If you could have dinner with any 3 people, living or dead, who would you choose and why?

____

____

____

DO NOT RECRUIT PEOPLE WHO ONLY GIVE SHORT, ABRUPT ANSWERS. THIS IS CRITICAL TO OUR RESEARCH. LOOK FOR THOUGHTFUL ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS OF THE REASONS BEHIND THEM.

17. Do you have daily access to a computer with high-speed internet access? By computer, we mean a traditional laptop, iMac/MacBook, or desktop machine, NOT a tablet or mobile device. CHECK ONE

    ( ) Yes
    ( ) No - [Thank and Terminate]

18. On average, how often do you use the Internet? CHECK ONE

    ( ) I'm pretty much always online
    ( ) More than once a day
    ( ) Once a day
    ( ) A few times a week
    ( ) Once a week – [Thank and Terminate]
    ( ) Less than once a week – [Thank and Terminate]

19. This study will require you to take and upload videos and photos. Are you willing and able to complete these activities?

    ( ) Yes
    ( ) No – [Thank and Terminate]

20. This study may require you to watch a video with sound. Do you have working speakers on your computer?

    ( ) Yes
    ( ) No – [Thank and Terminate]

21. Do you currently own and use any of the following, working (i.e., video and photo function is working) mobile devices? Please indicate all that apply.

    ( ) iPhone
    ( ) iPad
    ( ) iPod Touch
    ( ) Android Mobile Device
    ( ) Samsung Galaxy
    ( ) LG G3
    ( ) Blackberry
    ( ) Windows phone
    ( ) iPod
    ( ) None of these – [Thank and Terminate]

[MUST SELECT IPHONE, ANDROID MOBILE DEVICE, IPAD OR IPOD TOUCH, SAMSUNG GALAXY OR LG G3]

INVITATION

Thank you for your responses. I have been asking you these questions because we are going to be conducting a consumer study about faith and surrounding attitudes, values and behaviors and we would like to invite you to participate.

~~We would like to invite you to participate in a QualBoard study that will take place from 5/24 – 5/26. QualBoard is an online bulletin board where you will be able to see and respond to questions as well as go through a variety of interactive tasks. QualBoard is not a real-time chat so you can log in at your convenience as often as you like each day. It should take you about 45 minutes each day to complete your participation, including taking and posting videos and photos. For your time and complete participation you will receive $110.~~

~~Your personal information and your responses, including uploaded images and videos, will not be shared with other participants. Additionally, the data acquired from all participants in this study will be combined to ensure your confidentiality. Your participation in this study is voluntary.~~

-

~~By selecting "I agree" below, you signify that you have read, understand, and agree with these terms.~~

~~(Please select one.)~~

~~a. I agree~~

~~b. I do not agree [TERMINATE]~~

~~You will receive further login instructions on (TYPICALLY THE DAY BEFORE THE DISCUSSION BEGINS). The login instructions will be sent from the email address noreply@qualboard.com. Please add this email to your safe sender list to ensure that your login instructions do not go to junk mail. If you do not receive your login instructions by (DATE AND TIME) please call (RECRUITER PHONE NUMBER).~~

~~Please log in for the first time as soon as you receive your login instructions so we know you are all set to participate. If for any reason you cannot keep your commitment to participate, please call me at (RECRUITER PHONE NUMBER) as soon as possible so that we can find a replacement and meet our obligation to our clients.~~

~~Per our standard policy, approximately 10-15 business days after the study has ended, you will receive an email from support@2020researchincentives.com that will provide instructions on how to choose either a virtual Discover card that can be redeemed online, or a physical Visa Card to be mailed to you (takes an additional 7-10 days).~~

APPENDIX 4

d Visa

						Q4	Q5	Q6	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
		First Name	Last initial	City	State	Faith	Higher Power	Christianity Segment	Gender	Residence Area	Work Area	Education	Age	HH Income	Ethnicity
				Min (1/1) Kansas City Min (5/1) Atlanta Min (1/1) Portland Min (4/1) NYC Min (3/1) Chicago	Record	(8/8) Christian (8/8) Agnostic (8/8) Spiritual	Yes	(2) Convert (2) Active Member (4) Inactive Member	IDEAL: (5) Male Christian (3) Female Christian (5) Male Agnostic (3) Female	Urban	Record	Some College+	IDEAL: (1) 22-24 CHRISTIAN / (4) 25-34 CHRISTIAN (2) 35-45 CHRISTIAN / (1) 46-60 CHRISTIAN (2) 22-24	$35k+	(2) AA CHRISTIAN / (2) AA AGNOSTIC / (2) AA SPIRITUAL (1) As CHRISTIAN / (1) As AGNOSTIC / (1) As SPIRITUAL (2) Hisp CHRISTIAN / (2) Hisp
C-Content	1	Wes	B	Portland	OR	Christianity	n/a	I am currently an active member in my church (meaning I attend	Male	City metro area	City metro area	Completed college	35	$35,000 to $49,999	White/Caucasian
(Did not complete)	2	Anthony	B	Seattle	WA	Christianity	n/a	I am currently an active member in my church (meaning I attend	Male	Inner city	City metro area	Some college	31	$50,000 to $74,999	Asian-American
C-Content	3	Melinda	P	Atlanta	GA	Christianity	n/a	I am currently an inactive member in my church (meaning I have not attended church in a while)	Female	City metro area	Inner city	Completed college	44	$35,000 to $49,999	Black/African-American
C-Content	4	Hida	T	Dallas-Fort Worth	TX	Spiritual but not religious	Yes	n/a	Female	Inner city	Inner city	Post graduate	45	$100,000 or more	Asian-American
NonC-Curious	5	Akshay	A	San Francisco	CA	Agnosticism	Yes	n/a	Male	Inner city	Inner city	Completed college	31	$100,000 or more	Asian-American
NonC-Content	6	Carmen	L	New York City	NY	Spiritual but not religious	I'm not sure	n/a	Female	City metro area	City metro area	Completed college	56	$100,000 or more	Hispanic/Latino
NonC-Content	7	Meaghan	K	Boston	MA	Agnosticism	Yes	n/a	Female	Inner city	Inner city	Post graduate	31	$75,000 to $99,999	Black/African-American
NonC-Curious	8	Kevin	A	Atlanta	GA	Spiritual but not religious	Yes	n/a	Male	Inner city	Inner city	Some trade school/completed	53	$35,000 to $49,999	Black/African-American
C-Curious	9	Brian	K	Kansas City	KS	Christianity	n/a	I am currently an inactive member in my church (meaning I have not	Male	City metro area	City metro area	Post graduate	30	$50,000 to $74,999	White/Caucasian
C-Curious	10	Richard	J	New York City	NY	Christianity	n/a	I am currently an inactive member in my church (meaning I have not	Male	Inner city	Inner city	Completed college	24	$35,000 to $49,999	Hispanic/Latino
NonC-Curious	11	Aaron	G	Detroit	MI	Agnosticism	Yes	n/a	Male	City metro area	Inner city	Completed college	24	$100,000 or more	White/Caucasian
C-Curious	12	Charlotte	H	Atlanta	GA	Christianity	n/a	I am a recent convert to Christianity	Female	City metro area	City metro area	Post graduate	33	$75,000 to $99,999	White/Caucasian
(Did not complete)	13	Joe	E	Chicago	IL	Agnosticism	Yes	n/a	Male	City metro area	City metro area	Completed college	54	$50,000 to $74,999	Hispanic/Latino
NonC-Content	14	Jen	A	Atlanta	GA	Agnosticism	Yes	n/a	Female	City metro area	City metro area	Completed college	43	$100,000 or more	Hispanic/Latino
NonC-Curious	15	Daniel	S	Los Angeles	CA	Agnosticism	I'm not sure	n/a	Male	Inner city	Inner city	Completed college	24	$75,000 to $99,999	White/Caucasian
NonC-Content	16	Carmina	B	Seattle	WA	Spiritual but not religious	Yes	n/a	Female	City metro area	City metro area	Completed college	24	$50,000 to $74,999	Hispanic/Latino
NonC-Content	17	Dietrich	D	Los Angeles	CA	Spiritual but not religious	Yes	n/a	Male	City metro area	City metro area	Some college	24	$75,000 to $99,999	Hispanic/Latino
NonC-Curious	18	Paul	N	Phoenix	AZ	Spiritual but not religious	Yes	n/a	Male	City metro area	City metro area	Completed college	27	$50,000 to $74,999	White/Caucasian
NonC-Content	19	Becky	B	Dallas-Fort Worth	TX	Christianity	n/a	I am currently an inactive member in my church (meaning I have not attended church in a while)	Female	City metro area	City metro area	Some college	57	$50,000 to $74,999	Hispanic/Latino
NonC-Content	18	Jason	S	Atlanta	GA	Agnosticism	I'm not sure	n/a	Male	Inner city	Inner city	Completed college	35	$75,000 to $99,999	Black/African-American
(Did not	19	Tory	B	New York City	NY	Spiritual but not religious	Yes	n/a	Male	City metro area	City metro area	Post graduate	26	$35,000 to $49,999	Black/African-American
C-Content	22	Shawn	W	New York City	NY	Christianity	n/a	I am a recent convert to Christianity	Male	Inner city	Inner city	Completed college	27	$75,000 to $99,999	Black/African-American
NonC-Content	23	Rifah	A	Chicago	IL	Spiritual but not religious	Yes	n/a	Female	City metro area	City metro area	Post graduate	37	$75,000 to $99,999	White/Caucasian
	24	Colleen	D	Chicago	IL	Agnosticism	I'm not sure	n/a	Female	City metro area	Rural	Post graduate	46	$75,000 to $99,999	White/Caucasian

CRU CITY QUAL PARTICIPANT FAITH PROFILE

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