FROM SCOPES TO REAGAN: PRESBYTERIANS AND THE PERSISTENCE OF ANTIEVOLUTION

By

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To Joshy and Mariamma Abraham
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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

FROM SCOPES TO REAGAN: PRESBYTERIANS AND THE PERSISTENCE OF ANTEIEVOLUTION

By

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Chair: Frederick Gregory
Major: History

Creationism in America as a protest about evolution in the public schools erupted three times—in 1925 with the Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1981 with the call for equal-time for young-earth creationism in Arkansas schools, and in 2005 with the Dover, Pennsylvania battle that resulted in the legal system categorizing “intelligent design” theory as a variant of creationism. While George Marsden’s history of evangelicalism and fundamentalism, Ronald Numbers’s history of creationist institutions, and Edward Larson’s history of legal developments surrounding creationism are important foundational works, the three eruptions still appear hard to discern as part of a larger pattern. Among the various entities that comprised the body known as the “Religious Right” in the 1970s, there was one stream that provided the articulation for this pattern—conservative Presbyterians beginning with the story of J. Gresham Machen in the 1920s and leading up to the story of Francis Schaeffer in the 1970s. Their concern that Enlightenment thought was overtaking the legacy of the Protestant Reformation in America through the changes in the federal judiciary and sociological upheaval involving interest-group politics demonstrated that the three eruptions of creationism were clear evidence that bursts of antievolutionist sentiment were not haphazard events. Instead, they were manifestations of constant Protestant
fear and resentment through the twentieth century of the growth of federal power in relation to the states.
By 1980 Ronald Reagan, then merely a presidential hopeful, received applause and support from fundamentalists and religious others of the New Right when he publicly undermined the status of evolution. To an audience numbering approximately ten thousand fundamentalists in Dallas, Texas, he responded to questions about his belief in evolution by stating: “Well, it is a theory, it is a scientific theory only, and it has in recent years been challenged in the world of science and is not yet believed in the scientific community to be as infallible as it once was believed. But if it was going to be taught in the schools, then I think that
also the biblical theory of creation, which is not a theory but the biblical story of creation, should also be taught.”

----from Unifying Biology by Vassiliki Betty Smocovitis

The Scopes “monkey trial” that pitted Protestant fundamentalism against university science and the American Civil Liberties Union occurred in 1925, before the space age and science’s triumphs in nuclear power and medicine, among many fields. But as late as 2012 Republican presidential candidates were still supportive of the idea that creationism was a valid alternative to the consensus of the scientific community. According to the Huffington Post, Texas Governor Rick Perry called evolution a flawed theory that contradicted the reality of divine creation; former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum was so vocally opposed to evolution that he had over a decade earlier sponsored an amendment defending the teaching of “intelligent design”, a recent movement that complemented young-earth creationism among evangelicals; Mitt Romney, the eventual nominee, former Massachusetts Governor, and a Mormon, called for acceptance of both creation and evolution, as did the former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.¹ For creationists like Perry and Santorum, evolution was antithetical to belief to God and the root of many social problems that seemed to prove America had become a secular nation. The philosopher of science Michael Ruse spoke for another group of Americans in stating that “by 1859… nearly all intelligent and informed people realized that one could no longer hold to a traditional, Biblically inspired picture of the world.”² Creationism’s persistence had become a riddle for science. Who were creationists, and why did they survive the twentieth century so intact as to have influence in the highest corridors of American power? Were they


really the opposite of intelligent and informed people as many involved in the Scopes fiasco had been portrayed by the media? Or were they something else, and did features of American social structure promote their survival at least on a limited scale?

My interest in this question began with exposure to Baptist fundamentalism at a small Christian school in Southern West Virginia. The young-earth creationism of Henry Morris and the Institute for Creation Research dominated the science textbooks published by Bob Jones University and Pensacola Bible College that were in use there. After going to a large boarding school close to Philadelphia for high school, I entered Yale University as a biology major in 1988, just the intelligent design movement was about to burst on the national scene. The national debate over evolution began to raise fascinating questions; e.g., why had the evangelical campus organization Campus Crusade for Christ switched sides from its previous defense of Henry Morris’s young earth position to support an ancient earth? Campus Crusade approved an ancient earth by endorsing Berkeley law professor Phillip Johnson as he toured New England campuses promoting his book *Darwin on Trial*.

As time passed two observations impressed my thinking about science and religion both during a stint teaching evolutionary theory as a biology teacher and later when I entered an evangelical seminary. Firstly, among evangelicals it was the Presbyterians who exhibited the most academic orientation to the issues. Secondly, the antievolutionist leaders I was meeting were all white male Protestants who were politically conservative. Was there a relationship between race, religion, politics, and one’s ideas about science? Why had antievolutionism so much staying power after the fiasco of the Scopes trial in 1925? Perhaps an historical study of the Presbyterian tradition could help provide answers to such questions.
Creationism in America as a protest about evolution in the public schools erupted three times. The first instance was in 1925 with the Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee. The second occurred in 1981 with the call for equal-time for young-earth creationism in Arkansas schools. (In fact, the term “creationism” has come to so closely aligned with the young-earth variety championed by evangelist and engineer Henry M. Morris since the 1970s that the term “antievolutionism” will be used in the present work to refer to a more inclusive vision of those Americans, young-earth, old-earth, and intelligent design, who railed against evolution since the 1960s.) The third occurred in 2005 with the Dover, Pennsylvania battle that resulted in the legal system categorizing “intelligent design” theory as an unconstitutional establishment of religion in the public schools like Morris’s creationism.

Interpreting these eruptions among academics was done initially at a cultural distance, until three historians appeared in the academy with understanding of the fundamentalist and evangelical subcultures after 1980, the year of Reagan’s ascension. Reagan gave his public support to equal-time proposals as the opening quotation suggests. Church historian George Marsden and two historians of science, Ronald Numbers and Edward Larson, presented respectively an evangelical/fundamentalist history since the Civil War, a history of antievolutionist institutions, and a history of legal developments emanating from the creation-evolution battles. Numbers above all became known as America’s leading authority on antievolutionist movements, and he made Morris the focus of antievolutionism’s rebound in the 1970s. Marsden, Numbers, and Larson provided an important foundation upon which others could build; still, nagging questions remained about the nature of creationism’s, or antievolutionism’s, persistence to the present.
Numbers’s 2006 revised edition of his 1992 masterwork *The Creationists*, for example, did not elaborate on the issue of the persistence of antievolutionist attitudes after the defeat in Arkansas in 1981. He mentioned the supportive infrastructure behind the equal-time campaign, such as megachurch pastor Timothy LaHaye, only in passing. What were the views of LaHaye and his fellow Moral Majority leaders that gave Morris so much aid? Moreover, how did the millions of antievolutionist laypeople relate to pastors compared to the scientist Morris? Secondly, the intelligent design movement appeared in Numbers’s narrative *de novo* in the 1980s without connection to historical precedents and without a relationship to the young-earth movement. The gaps in Numbers’s treatment do not take away from the magisterial effort *The Creationists* represents. However, the dimensions of antievolutionism require more than a narrative of the institutions like Morris’s Institute for Creation Research. They also entail an account of the anxieties antievolutionists articulated about their nation, not just their fears about the trajectory of its science.

The present work began as a search for the group best suited to serve that function of articulation. The Moral Majority (created in 1979) provided an initial clue. Its leadership comprised theologically conservative Protestants who were Baptist and Presbyterian. Although the Religious Right eventually incorporated Catholics, Mormons, and Pentecostals among others, those groups do not serve as the focal point here. Henry Morris himself was a Baptist; hence it seemed logical that Baptists would emerge as the articulating group. But here a roadblock appeared as I sought in vain for a cohesive narrative about evolution among Baptists between the 1920s and the 1970s. Examinations of Baptist archives reveal little except for an occasional attack scattered among an ocean of competing concerns. Yet when the 1970s battles came,
Baptists rallied to the cause of antievolutionism. Who can explain the basis for the unity of the
Majority?

The Presbyterians and their cousins the Reformed were uniquely suited for this task of
articulation, because they had a dual identity. They were allies of the Moral Majority but they
also had the longest-standing connection with the academic world, seen most visibly in the
relationship of Presbyterians with Princeton Theological Seminary. The Seminary links the story
of evangelical leaders Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield, well aware of Darwin’s theory in the
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to that of New Testament scholar J. Gresham Machen,
who in the 1920s responded to the Scopes situation and led an exodus out of Princeton to found a
new seminary, Westminster, in Philadelphia. From this school graduated a future leader of
American fundamentalism, Francis Schaeffer.

As Reagan contemplated a run for the White House in the late 1970s, Schaeffer became
an inspiration to Timothy LaHaye and his friend Jerry Falwell. Schaeffer’s books reflected his
unique history as an American fundamentalist transformed by contact with secularizing Europe
in the 1940s; Schaeffer feared for the West and his native land. He attacked the legacy of the
Enlightenment and upheld America purely as the product of the Reformation. He feared his
America was evolving—the federal judiciary was taking new powers to itself and creating law
without legislative approval based on perceived sociological needs, such as the call for
desegregation of schools or for the outlawing of school-sponsored prayer. In a dramatic 1962
lecture, Schaeffer blasted both the Brown v. Board of Education decision and the Engel v. Vitale
decision as evidence of the Supreme Court’s deviance from the Reformation ideal of law being
“king”. Since the Engel ruling was quintessential for all of the later court decisions about
antievolutionism, Schaeffer’s words were particularly important. In the late 1970s after the Roe

18
v. Wade decision, Schaeffer reiterated his 1962 perspective now in the very context he feared before as the Court continued to extend its role in interest-group politics using the Fourteenth Amendment.

The story of Francis Schaeffer and other Christian leaders of the Presbyterian tradition reveal that the three eruptions of creationism were not haphazard events, but were manifestations of constant Protestant resentment of centralization of authority in the hands of the federal government to the detriment of the power of the states. Schaeffer epitomized the antievolutionist spirit, and though he disagreed with Morris’s young-earth view he rallied to his defense during the Arkansas trial of 1981. Simultaneously Schaffer influenced the younger generation who later became leaders in the intelligent design movement of the 1990s.

Recapitulation of the Thesis

The following narrative explores the odyssey of conservative northern Presbyterians as they negotiated the culturally turbulent middle decades of the twentieth century. An assumption underlying the text is that these Presbyterians, like others, experienced stress on multiple dimensions between 1925 and 1960 and extreme stress on the dimensions of federal power, interest group politics, and Enlightenment science almost simultaneously after 1960 and have ever since, compelling the construction of Manichaean dualistic narratives about secular humanism’s ruining of a Christian America with the help of evolutionary theory. These dualistic narratives serve both the purpose of reassuring the faithful that a divine order will come out of America’s social and moral chaos after 1960 and of facilitating engagement in national politics. Enlightenment science was subdivided by these fundamentalists into historical science, which involved worldview, religion, and satanic forces, and experimental science, which could be accepted universally. The expansion of federal power which scientists clamored for remained a dream unfulfilled and a nightmare to creationists. Ultimately, evolution was to fundamentalists
deeply connected to the rights revolutions as well, especially feminism and the crusade for abortion, as well as gay rights movements. But the expansion of federal power that civil rights represented came first, and Presbyterians like Schaeffer were ready with their rejection of increased judicial authority over the states as counter to the values of a Reformational heritage understood to be the root of American government. Thus the story of antievolutionism in America after 1960 is profoundly interconnected with other dimensions of American history in this period.

Chapter 1 tells the story of J. Gresham Machen of Princeton Theological Seminary and the fundamentalist-modernist controversy Machen avidly engaged in the 1920s. Machen’s social respectability even with the likes of Baltimore Sun reporter H.L. Mencken, who loathed William Jennings Bryan, demonstrated that not all fundamentalists were cut of the same cloth. While refusing to aid Bryan in the Scopes trial prosecution, Machen nonetheless wrote in Christianity and Liberalism that the two views represented two separate religions. Machen was mentored by the noted Presbyterian theologian B.B. Warfield, who was himself educated at Princeton during the heady days when Charles Hodge was opposing Charles Darwin there. But rather than choose the path of anti-intellectualism that characterized later fundamentalists, Machen chose to utilize modern higher critical methods in a way consecrated to God. However, socially and politically Machen remained a staunch conservative very resistant to the growth of federal power in areas such as child labor and women’s rights—the state was to be feared as the usurper of local rights and parents’ rights. He publicly denounced the creation of a federal department of education because he saw the centralization of education as an absolute tyranny. His conservatism climaxed with his opposition to Roosevelt’s New Deal, which he understood as both social engineering and a path to dictatorship. In the field of science and faith, Machen was more willing
to tolerate ambiguity than other fundamentalists, but still held that evolution could never be truly creative.

Chapter 2 illustrates the pluralism among antievolutionists between the Scopes era and the 1950s. Both Adventist George McCready Price and old-earth creationist Harry Rimmer saw evolution as linked to dangerous social and political change. Rimmer was an apologist, who had a reputation as a rhetorical fighter as he toured the nation. He established an early form of creationist institute in the Research Science Bureau, exerting much of his energy trying to save youth from the teachings of higher criticism. Later he turned his attention to evolution as an enemy to be conquered as well. Rimmer was a Baconian in his science and avoided theorizing, choosing instead to prove how the Bible was prescient in its ability to predict scientific discoveries. He attacked evolutionists’ certainty by reshuffling the family tree of life into an indiscernible mass of species each without either ancestor or descendant. Nonetheless, he was flexible about the age of the earth. Evolution’s chief social evil was that it promoted autonomy from God and the notion of rights apart from the Bible’s jurisdiction.

Price, acting as an apologist for the Adventist teachings of prophetess Ellen White, took a stricter view of the age of the earth as being limited to mere thousands of years and defended the Noachian flood as the cause of fossilization. At the root of Price’s confidence was “the law of conformable stratigraphic sequence” which denied that any rock could be judged as younger or older than another. Price also attacked uniformitarianism by stating the divine forces were at work at the beginning of earth history that have not acted since. Price also held that Mendelism denied the possibility of infinite variation needed for Darwin’s selection process to work. For Price everything in creation appeared nearly instantaneously and simultaneously. Finally Price believed in the divinely ordained superiority of the white race. Because of his bookish approach
compared to Rimmer’s crusading evangelism, Price was a proto-creationist and model for later individuals such as Henry Morris.

The period between the Scopes trial of 1925 and the Second World War was not a time of inflexible dogmatism about the age of the earth or even biological life among fundamentalists. The pressures to consolidate came from extra-scientific and extra-theological directions only in the next three decades.

Chapter 3 moves the story back to the 1930s and the northern antimodernist Presbyterians who followed Machen’s lead in distancing themselves from Princeton Theological Seminary and founding new denominations and new seminaries of their own. The exodus Machen led was itself divisive and soon split into Orthodox Presbyterian and Bible Presbyterian parties, led by Machen and Carl McIntire respectively and connected to Westminster and Faith Theological Seminaries respectively. At the same time, a body of evangelical moderates were forming with leaders such as Machen disciple Harold Ockenga. McIntire soon proved to be a domineering leader who could tolerate not even a nuance of difference among his followers with his teaching. McIntire and the Bible Presbyterians expressed through their newspaper, *The Christian Beacon*, a fear of apostasy and compromise springing up everywhere in American culture. Ecumenism expressed among modernists in the Federal Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches was one target for McIntire’s scorn; national control of the economy, Billy Graham and evangelical moderates, and the civil rights movement (suspected of leading to the redistribution of private property) were others. Overshadowing all was the threat of Communism, which McIntire and his group zealously fought and imagined as bursting into the American scene daily. Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy’s anticommunist witchhunt was a cause the Bible Presbyterians admired and aided. A symbiosis between right-wing politicians and right-wing
pastors began in this period of the 1940s and 1950s, to reach its climax in the Reagan Revolution of 1980. McIntire’s dualistic vision was embodied in a cartoon about an “ecumenical monster” that threatened along with civil rights to drag America into Marxism and away from the true God. However, in this period very little attention was paid to the evils of Darwinism as the source of these threats. Nonetheless, the theological, social and political dimensions of American life were changing in ways white Protestant fundamentalists found deeply offensive to their cultural values.

Chapter 4 is an intermission that examines the legal dimension and how changes in the power of the federal judiciary frightened fundamentalists greatly. The Fourteenth Amendment essentially gave greater power to the federal government over the states in the name of defending the rights of citizens, especially minorities of all kinds. Though ratified in 1868, the Amendment’s real power did not affect fundamentalists’ lives until between the 1930s and 1950s, as the Supreme Court began to make decisions touching the nature of free speech, race, and church and state issues (eventually women’s rights and the teaching of evolution became the Court’s concern in the 1960s also.) New protections of religious minorities by the Court revolutionized the public school as an empty “secular” space devoid of references to God as had been commonplace in communities with Christian majorities. Suddenly white fundamentalists realized they were but one of a pluralism of interest groups jockeying for recognition by the courts.

Chapter 5 returns to the story of the conservative Presbyterians in the 1960s. McIntire launched an anti-civil-rights and pro-school-prayer campaign, allying himself with segregationists like South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond. The Supreme Court was a chief culprit in both desegregation and school prayer, as far as McIntire was concerned.
Fundamentalists, ignited by Republican Barry Goldwater’s 1964 presidential run, dreamed of a conservative President appointing conservative justices. (In the midst of the Goldwater excitement, California governor Ronald Reagan came to public notice and was published in the *The Christian Beacon.* ) Federal control over the states was profoundly terrifying to fundamentalists in this period. Nonetheless, the national discourse about race that the civil rights protests ignited did make a lasting mark on the followers of Carl McIntire and upon McIntire himself.

Here the story takes an important turn. Believing holiness should be a church priority, McIntire was content to be known as a “separated” Christian along with fundamentalists John R. Rice and Bob Jones, in contrast to “evangelicals” like Billy Graham, who sought to engage liberal Christians and secular culture for the purpose of evangelism. McIntire’s Bible Presbyterian colleague Francis Schaeffer underwent a profound transformation as a result of missionary work in Europe and founded L’Abri Fellowship in Switzerland to minister to the needs of the young, the seeking, the unchurched, and the educated. Nonetheless, Schaeffer remained a fundamentalist in his theology and in his political views about the evils of federal power. But he chose to separate himself from the vitriol of McIntire in the mid-1950s. Schaeffer welcomed doubters into his Swiss chalet while he lectured about “a change in the concept of law” that the Supreme Court of Earl Warren represented. He openly opposed court-ordered desegregation as a form of tyranny while simultaneously acknowledging its beneficial impact. Schaeffer believed the Protestant Reformation’s view of politics forbade such federal action over the states as eventually the courts would relativistically rule for causes against the interests of God’s people.
Schaeffer gained some inspiration for his views of the nation from an Orthodox Presbyterian named Rousas J. Rushdoony, the founder of Christian Reconstructionism which promoted the application of Old Testament civil law to American society. Rushdoony was an admirer of Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary, a colleague of Machen’s; Rushdoony was hostile to the notion of Enlightenment influence upon American history. Seeing its connection to Enlightenment heresies, Rushdoony was very vocal in his opposition to Darwinism and advised Henry Morris in the publication of *The Genesis Flood* in 1961. Rushdoony also repudiated the notion of public schools, favoring religious groups’ control over education instead. Rushdoony’s idea that the Reformation gave rise to American government had a notable influence on Schaeffer’s thought.

Chapter 6 explores the intellectual context out of which the most recent challenges to evolution in American education emerged. It sets a spotlight on a lecture by Schaeffer about evolution in the late 1960s at L’Abri. (Because this lecture precedes America’s controversy over Morris’s creation science and the equal-time question in the 1970s, it has a special significance for revealing the diversity of antievolutionists.) In this timeframe, Schaeffer befriended a chemist and a later leader in the intelligent design movement named Charles Thaxton. Schaeffer revealed that he had read broadly about evolution and was up to date regarding recent developments in the debate about origins. In his lecture entitled “Chance and Evolution”, Schaeffer dimly described the super-tranquilizer, the dark solution of journalist Arthur Koestler to the tortured brain of humans created by the evolutionary process. Schaeffer celebrated the doubt about natural selection’s power that mathematicians at the Wistar symposium appeared to have uncovered by defining evolution as solely chance. Finally, he detailed physical chemist Michael Polanyi’s contention that the informational content of biological systems involved
higher-order principles than could be deduced from observing the workings of physics and chemistry alone.

Schaeffer’s major works, *How Should We Then Live?* (1976) and *A Christian Manifesto* (1981) have an important place in the narrative of the culture wars of the 1970s of which equal-time campaigns to include creationism in public school curriculums were a part. The first book continued the themes of “The Change in the Concept of Law” lecture that the Reformation was the basis of American government. Where Schaeffer seemed an irenic evangelical at L’Abri in the 1960s, he returned to militant fundamentalism by the 1970s. He saw secular humanism as rooted in a desire for autonomy from God, and the Supreme Court as creating sociologically-driven law that had no philosophical base other than relativism. With the abortion ruling of 1973 a thing of the past, Schaeffer’s worst fears about such lawmaking appeared to be realized. In the second book, Schaeffer made a call for open activism—for an entry by reticent Christians into politics. The power of the state had grown too great and God was being erased from the public sphere. Schaeffer wrote these words just as the state of Arkansas was debating equal time for creationism in the public schools.

The final chapter is a convergence of streams. The first six chapters only occasionally mention the story of independent and Southern Baptists. But the 1970s—the focus of Chapter 7—were a period of alliance among fundamentalist Presbyterians such as Schaeffer and these other two parties to form the Moral Majority as well as a myriad of other vehicles for protest. Morris’s creation science benefitted from the collective furor. The Arkansas “Balanced Treatment” trial bookends the chapter, as the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment divides Americans into creationist and evolutionist camps, a dualism that masked the complex dimensions of the political realities emerging as Reagan ran for office. The tactics of the New
Left both offend and instruct fundamentalists concerned about the direction the American family was taking. Foremost among fundamentalist leaders are Schaeffer-linked televangelists Jerry Falwell and Tim LaHaye. Darwinism swiftly became linked to the transformation of the family and the school by the forces of civil rights, feminism, and the gay rights cause. Fundamentalists had to create a simple narrative of America’s decline and chose the path of dualism; however, their response was multi-dimensional, with political, legal, and academic aspects. LaHaye wove a political story of good and evil with secular humanism and evolution at the helm of America’s new immorality. Above all was the problem of growing federal power. Jerry Falwell, in the words of his associate Elmer Towns, preached at the Thomas Road Baptist Church according to opinion spikes from polling more than direction from Henry Morris or Francis Schaeffer, but he allied with both men in cobelligerence nonetheless. For both LaHaye and Falwell, the disappointment of the “born again” president Jimmy Carter was a turning point in the political organization of American Christian conservatives.

On the legal front, a host of young attorneys came to public attention around 1980. Wendell Bird was the crusader for equal time for creationism in schools, on the grounds that the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment was at stake. Bird’s colleague John Whitehead was a friend of Schaeffer’s and Rushdoony’s, a help to many leaders in the Religious Right, and the founder of the Rutherford Institute, a religious liberties organization named after Samuel Rutherford, who linked the Reformation and American history in Schaeffer’s telling. Bird’s climactic achievement was arguing on behalf of the state of Louisiana regarding equal time before the Supreme Court—the 1987 Edwards v. Aguillard ruling maintained that creation science was a sectarian concern only and had substantial influence on the tactics of the intelligent design movement that Charles Thaxton along with others later led.
Finally, there was the academic story. Henry Morris and his group debated scientists, while Francis Schaeffer debated evangelicals like historians George Marsden and Mark Noll about America’s origins. Marsden had become America’s leading historian of Protestant fundamentalism and irked Schaeffer for deciding to testify on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union at the Arkansas trial. Meanwhile Charles Thaxton as a chemist and historian of science found himself neither able to side fully with Morris nor with theistic evolutionists in the American Scientific Affiliation and chose instead to work with Probe Ministries in Dallas, an early intelligent design organization. George Marsden, as a Ph.D. with a Yale background and a history linking to the story of J. Gresham Machen, was a new kind of evangelical—an academic schooled in the values of the university—and represented a hybridization of church and academy. Thus he was unwilling to engage in the culture war tactics Schaeffer, Falwell, and the rest of Religious Right demanded. In Marsden’s final conclusion, Schaeffer’s dualism limited him because he could not entertain middle categories in his warfare for the gospel.

The America of the twenty-first century is thus a pluralistic nation of juxtaposed belief systems, the fruit of a legal system and a federal government that neither aids nor hinders religion but claims certain spaces such as the public school “neutral”. Thus creationists have their domain, and evolutionists theirs. The story of northern Presbyterians from the 1920s reveals the varied dimensions of a people’s struggle, and their joining with various Baptists in the 1970s was a necessary union of ideological cousins to save a nation that they all perceived as turning to apostasy and away from its roots in the Reformation.

**The Changing Historiography of the Post-Scopes Era**

After the Scopes trial of 1925, the academy, including scientists, had to wait for over forty years for their colleagues in the humanities and social sciences to take up the challenge of evaluating fundamentalism as something more than a momentary aberration worthy of caricature
and little else. Therefore, in the period when Darwinism became enshrined and reinserted into textbooks, between the 1920s and 1960s, fundamentalism remained veiled in mystery to most observers.

The story began with the 1925 trial of Tennessee schoolteacher named John Scopes, who intentionally violated the Butler Act which outlawed the teaching of evolution. The law was the result of efforts by the Anti-Evocation Movement. Its champion William Jennings Bryan created a pattern for his ideological descendants of linking Darwinism to sinister social forces threatening to destroy faith’s place in American life. Bryan, the former presidential candidate whose ability to rally populist support earned him the moniker “The Great Commoner”, was convinced after World War I that Darwinism was a sinister force. He had already witnessed the destructive theological effects of the European import known as modernism (especially in its manifestation in the textual science of higher criticism) upon the old-time religion of evangelical Protestantism that had grounded American life with a strong faith in the miracles of Scripture.

Bryan came to believe that Darwinism threatened to bring naturalism into the minds of schoolchildren by teaching them that random chance, not a loving Designer, had brought them to be. In a 1921 group of unbelievers to avoid, which included the agnostic and the atheist, Bryan listed “the Higher Critic.” “But while a few men are brazen enough to call Christ a bastard, that is exactly the belief of most of the Higher Critics, many of whom teach in our colleges”.3 He also warned about “the Evolutionist”, who was a close ally of the Higher Critic and even more lethal because of greater numbers, “Atheists, Agnostics, and Higher Critics begin with Evolution: they build on that.”4 In a 1922 apologetic entitled In His Image, Bryan announced that Darwinism “is

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4 Ibid., p. 19.
obscuring God and weakening all the virtues that rest upon the religious tie between God and
man” and that “the Darwinian doctrine has been the means of shaking the faith of millions.”

Arming for battle, Bryan had studied two implications of Darwinism running unchecked through
society: militarism in Germany during World War I and the loss of faith among college
students.  

Though Scopes was found guilty and told to pay a fine, the real loss was Bryan’s and the
antievolutionists’ in the court of public opinion. The media portrayal of anti-evolutionism at the
trial was shaped by the words of both revered defense attorney Clarence Darrow, who humiliated
Bryan by putting the prosecutor on the stand and asking him about miracles of Scripture, and by
Baltimore Sun journalist H.L. Mencken, who continued the tar-and-feathering even after Bryan’s
death shortly after the trial. “What moved him at bottom, was simply hatred of the city men who
laughed at him so long, and brought him to so tatterdemalion an estate. He lusted for revenge on
them. He yearned to lead the anthropoid rabble against them, to punish them for their execution
upon him by attacking the very vitals of their civilization.” Mencken understood a vast chasm
already existed between the world of Bryan’s faith culture and the world of urban sophistication
that ridiculed the Commoner’s “baroque theology” and the “rustic ignoramuses” of

See also the study of college students in James H. Leuba, The Belief in God and Immortality: A Psychological,
Anthropological, and Statistical Study (Boston: Sherman, French, and Company, 1916); on the matter of militarism,
see the two sources mentioned by Bryan in the Seven Questions citation: General Friedrich Von Bernhardi, Germany
and the Next War, translated by Allen H. Powles (New York: Longsman, Green and Company, 1914), and Benjamin
Kellogg, as a prominent scientist whose reflections about German propaganda in Headquarters Nights (Boston: The
Atlantic Monthly Press, 1917) affected Bryan profoundly (see Edward Larson, Summer for the Gods [Cambridge,
MA: Harvard University Press, 1999,] pp. 40-42). For a view from Bryan and his wife about the events motivating
the Scopes prosecution as well as correspondence, see William Jennings Bryan and Mary Baird Bryan, The Memoirs

Knopf, 1965), p. 230. The section was printed originally in the Baltimore Evening Sun, July 27, 1925, according to
a note provided by Mencken.
fundamentalism openly. The evidence of the trial became a certain indicator for Mencken’s culture that it was only a matter of time before Bryan and his species would go extinct.\(^8\) The caricature of fundamentalism as anti-modern and anti-science became the dominant public image of the subculture. The media treatment proved a public relations disaster immensely damaging to evangelicalism.\(^9\) In academic circles, no serious challenge to Mencken’s caricature was seen until the 1960s. Evangelicals began to go underground as far as the urban sophisticates of Mencken’s ilk could tell.\(^10\)

In fact, three historians in the decades immediately following the trial prognosticated about the fundamentalism’s destiny by amplifying Mencken’s sarcasm or by adding an element of authentic alarm. Stewart Cole in *The History of Fundamentalism* (1931) predicted an utter disintegration of the cause, “a babel of witnesses to Christian truth and purpose.”\(^11\) He reflected openly about the backwardness of his subjects, whose endearment to ignorance seemed to reflect a mental instability.\(^12\) The theme of hostile anti-intellectualism apparently became the hallmark of the fundamentalist movement. In *The Fundamentalist Controversy 1918-1931* (1954), Norman Furniss focused on the rejection of the insights provided by evolution and that “ignorance … was a feature of the movement; it became a badge the orthodox often wore


\(^9\) In 1980, George Marsden said of the Scopes outcome: “It would be difficult to overestimate the impact of ‘Monkey Trial’ at Dayton, Tennessee, in transforming fundamentalism…The rural setting, so well suited to the stereotypes of the agrarian leader and his religion, stamped the entire movement with an indelible image.” See Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 184.

\(^10\) George Marsden notes that in reality evangelicals’ lower visibility hardly meant a lack of activity, as an alternative to secular civilization began to grow in the form of Christian radio and colleges, among other things (*Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 194).


\(^12\) Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 212.
But no one would be more influential among his peers in stamping the obscurantist label on evangelicals than Richard Hofstadter, Pulitzer-prizewinning historian of Columbia University, who wrote the related works Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (1963) and The Paranoid Style in American Politics (1965), both of which touched upon the fear-based tactics of fundamentalism.\(^{14}\)

In Anti-Intellectualism, Hofstadter set forth explicitly what today remains the orientation of many academics across many disciplines toward evangelical thought. In addition, he questioned those who would argue for the quick demise of the fundamentalist cause and saw a magnification of the opposition to modernity instead. He was supremely aware of the real presence of fundamentalists on the national scene—they had not gone quietly away as Cole predicted. Hofstadter foresaw inevitable confrontations between fundamentalists and secularists given the likelihood of their interface in American society and discerned a frightening “all-or-nothing” attitude among the fundamentalists (“determined that no one shall have the right to challenge them”).\(^{15}\) For him, fundamentalism was “a religious style shaped by a desire to strike back against everything modern—higher criticism, evolutionism, the social gospel, rational criticism of any kind.”\(^{16}\)

What gave fundamentalism its impetus? Hofstadter answered, “Here is the crux of the matter: the juncture between populistic democracy and old-fashioned religion.”\(^{17}\) The instincts of the average person were validated, being “just as good as—indeed better than—that of

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\(^{14}\) Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 211, footnote 20.


\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 121.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 128.
intellectuals.”

Hofstadter was nervous about what real powers of persuasion the fundamentalist forces possessed immediately after the Scopes trial:

No doubt, the militant fundamentalists were a minority in the country, but they were a substantial minority; and their animus plainly reflected the feelings of still larger numbers, who, however reluctant to join in their reactionary crusade, none the less shared their disquiet about the trend of the times, their fear of the cosmopolitan mentality, of critical intelligence, of experimentalism in morals and literature.

The second wind fundamentalists received came from the anticommunist propaganda campaign that the American government encouraged as the Cold War ensued. The country’s survival seemed based upon the support of technology and ideology, both big science and a civil religion with mainly Judeo-Christian undertones. In an atmosphere where the positions an intellectual took could be read as atheistic, and therefore disloyal, Hofstadter read a Mencken-like vision into his portrayal of evangelicals—most notably Billy Graham, who as William Bell Riley’s successor at Northwestern Bible College in Minneapolis, had a direct link to the Scopes trial. (Riley had been a leader of the World Christian Fundamentals Association that gave impetus to the antievolution cause.) It should therefore be no surprise what the spark for Anti-Intellectualism in American Life was—fighting the shock of McCarthyism.

But after the publication of Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, two challengers took Hofstadter to task for underanalyzing what constituted the evangelical worldview. Ernest Sandeen and George Marsden have been among the most influential among new historians of fundamentalism. Sandeen’s The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 130. Emphasis is mine.
20 Ibid., p. 15; Hofstadter calls Graham’s comments about the moral relativity present in secular education to be evidence of “anti-intellectualism in the evangelical tradition.”
21 Ibid., p. 4.
(1970) defined the fundamentalist movement as specifically reactionary against the liberalizing influences of modernism. In 1967, Sandeen’s The Origins of Fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Interpretation claimed that fundamentalists were rooted in a previously ignored, but recent, synthesis of Plymouth Brethren dispensationalism (a belief that God organized history into episodes with a conclusion foretold in the book of Revelation) with Princeton Seminary theologians’ defense of Biblical inerrancy. Sandeen began by challenging the theses of his predecessors, Stewart Cole and Norman Furniss, who had both claimed earlier that fundamentalism was merely a momentary jolt in denominational evolution soon to be forgotten. He charged that “in their accounts it never appears to have been a religious movement at all.”

Writing two decades after the rise of neo-evangelicalism, Sandeen also pressed his contemporary opponents who too quickly had dismissed fundamentalism as ephemeral and obscurantist. The author was essentially defending the genesis of the movement as having a cosmopolitan character, contrary to the mocking tone of a Mencken or the conspiracy thinking of a Hofstadter:

Fourth, we ought to stop referring to Fundamentalism as an agrarian protest movement centered in the South. Only by uncritically accepting the setting and conduct of the Scopes trial as the model of all Fundamentalist activity can such a parody of history be sustained. If one turns to Fundamentalist periodicals and conference platforms, he does not find them dominated by ill-taught stump preachers or demagogues. In the nineteenth century, especially, the proto-Fundamentalists were frequently men held in high esteem in their own denominations and communities. Only later in the twentieth century (if then) did Fundamentalism become a phenomenon primarily of the South. Fundamentalism was not a sectional controversy but a national one, and most of its champions came from the same states as their Modernist opponents. Fundamentalism originated in the metropolitan areas of the northeastern part of this continent, and it cannot be

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explained as a part of the Populist movement, agrarian protest, or the Southern mentality.\(^{25}\)

Sandeen heralded the rise of a new generation of scholars who were willing to take evangelical Protestantism seriously as a cultural fixture not to be easily shaken. George Marsden challenged Sandeen’s thesis mainly by suggesting his predecessor did not go far enough in examining the cultural history that undergirded the movement’s popularity. In *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (1980 and updated in 2006), Marsden argued that Sandeen’s focus on a particular eschatology and exegetical method did not clarify how the early, 1920s-style of fundamentalism gave rise not only to the ultra-conservatives of today but also to “the wider coalition of contemporary American evangelicals whose common identity is substantially grounded in the fundamentalist experience of an earlier era.”\(^{26}\) Marsden identified fundamentalism as the product of religious pluralism and the decentralization Eugenie Scott of the NCSE noted. In Marsden’s words, “*Fundamentalism was a loose, diverse, and changing federation of co-belligerents united by their fierce opposition to modernist attempts to bring Christianity into line with modern thought.*”\(^{27}\) According to Marsden, the rise of neo-evangelicalism seen in the success of Billy Graham and others emerged from a cultural heritage that shared some of the perspectives of fundamentalists like Bob Jones, Jerry Falwell, and the like, but not the militant attitudes of the latter in relation to secular culture. The historian active after 1980 is able to note the political demographic fundamentalists represented throughout the 20\(^{th}\) century: mainly Northern European, evangelical Protestant, with male leadership, and defending the heterosexual parenting of the family.

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\(^{26}\) Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 5.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., p. 4. Emphasis mine.
Marsden also posed a most important challenge to Hofstadter’s premise that merely anti-intellectualism drove the fundamentalist cause. Still, he acknowledged Hofstadter for providing the “most subtle analysis of fundamentalist intolerance” but also countered that fundamentalists did not mindlessly reject all intellectualism out of prejudice.28 Still, Hofstadter’s theme of majoritarian rule, realized through the equalization of common and expert opinions, is echoed in *Fundamentalism and American Culture*: “There was a strong tradition in America that the Bible in the hands of the common person was of greater value than any amount of education.”29 Marsden’s new contribution was then to elevate the motives of fundamentalists using Thomas Kuhn’s model of paradigms in conflict, since “a difference in perception”, not a primitivist orientation, compelled fundamentalists to join the battle against modernism:

The paradigm theory... helps to clarify the nature of the fundamentalist experience. Fundamentalists had committed themselves totally to a “normal science.” That is, they took one model of perception as normal for all persons. This was a “Baconian” model based on common sense. Almost all their apologetic and interpretation of Scripture rested on this foundation. Their opponents, however, belonged to a philosophical tradition that, especially since Kant, was willing to see perception as an interpretive process. Hence they were more open to speculative theories. They nevertheless considered these theories to be reliable inferences from the facts, and felt no modern scientific person could seriously doubt them.30

Marsden adds that “between 1860 and 1925 something like the general acceptance of a new perceptual model [closer to the Kantian view] took place in both the scientific and theological communities.”31 He concludes, “Communication between the two sides [modernists accepting the newer model and fundamentalists adhering to Baconianism] became almost impossible.”32

28 Ibid., pp. 199 and 212.
29 Ibid., p. 212.
30 Ibid., p. 215.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
Marsden thus demonstrated why the cultural appeal of fundamentalism had not waned, given that in the American political context a value for the common man’s intellectual conclusions has always been celebrated at the expense of cloistered elites.33

After the success of Ronald Reagan in the 1980 election, historians reconsidered their understanding of evangelicals, and Marsden became their guide. The fissures that had separated academy from church cultures had been long in development, and Marsden noted that the Scopes outcome illustrated the facets of each: “But in the trial by public opinion and the press, it was clear that in the twentieth century, the cities, and the universities had won a resounding victory, and that the country, the South, and the fundamentalists were guilty as charged.”34

Evangelicalism had developed an image of having a regional base in 1925— labeled “Southern”. The groupings are revealing. The strength of evangelical support in the ensuing decades most often arose outside the states that have historically developed as the academic centers of gravity for the nation (the urban Northeast ). Ultimately, the likelihood of animosity between antievolutionists and Neo-Darwinians was exacerbated by their separation in physical space, by regions.

The secret of evangelical adaptability occupied scholars when the academy most needed interpreters for a language distant from their experience. Joel Carpenter has examined the period of evangelicalism’s social eclipse (between the Bryan years of the 1920s and the Billy Graham years of the 1940s) when the movement adjusted to the shock of its defeat in Dayton. Carpenter, siding with Sandeen, challenged Cole, Furniss, and Hofstadter’s tendency “to reduce it [fundamentalism] to a passing populist reaction to America’s rapid modernization [thus lacking

33 Ibid., p. 212.
34 Ibid., p. 186.
real intellectual grounding].” Carpenter in addition referred to Marsden’s *Fundamentalism and American Culture* as “magisterial” and throughout his own book demonstrated no small debt to his predecessor. 

In explaining the rebound, Carpenter suggested that evangelicals not only found their audience through making a less controversial appeal but also learned to tailor their salesmanship to the needs of the religious “market”. Evangelicals constructed an alternate civilization of Christian radio, colleges, camps, ministries, and book publishing apart from the world of the secular academy and the big city after 1925. Their exercises of free enterprise and religious freedom allowed by the Constitution surprised observers in the 1980 election.

The simple fact was that academics waited for insiders to the conservative Protestant subculture to bridge the gap between church and university. Marsden (see Chapter 7) was such a person, as a member of Calvinist Presbyterian and Reformed groups, including the Orthodox Presbyterians, a church founded by J. Gresham Machen of Princeton Theological Seminary in response to modernism. Similarly, Ronald Numbers, a former member of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, first came to public attention in the 1980s as an interpreter of creationism.

What Marsden’s *Fundamentalism and American Culture* did in elucidating the general history of fundamentalism Numbers accomplished in the specific history of antievolutionism with the nationally recognized work *The Creationists* published in two editions in 1992 and 2006. Though in the nineteenth century “even in the ranks of evangelical Christians…belief in special creation seemed destined to go the way of the dinosaur,” by the 1970s clearly demands for equal time for young-earth creationism in the public schools shocked the academy into

35 Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, p. 9. See also footnote #17.


action. Numbers marveled at the sudden swing to the extreme option regarding the age of the earth particularly, given that “by the late nineteenth century even the most conservative Christian apologists readily conceded that the Bible allowed for an ancient earth and pre-Edenic life.” That included William Jennings Bryan himself and the authors of the 1910-1915 pamphlet series The Fundamentals, which Numbers called “the manifesto of militant evangelicals.” Although deeply concerned about higher criticism, “few [authors], if any, saw the necessity or desirability of launching a crusade to eradicate [evolution] from the schools and churches of America.”

Thus during the Scopes era and into the 1930s, greater pluralism existed among fundamentalists about origins than the 1970s scenario might suggest. Numbers described the coexistence of old-earth creationist and popular speaker Harry Rimmer with George McCready Price of the Seventh-Day Adventists, whose young-earth ideas became the foundation of Henry Morris’s creation science (see Chapter 2 of the present work). Price, who followed the Adventist prophet Ellen White’s teaching that Genesis had to be taken literally because of Adventist teaching about the Sabbath, wrote prolifically against evolution and in defense of “flood geology,” which assumed that the Noachian deluge was the source of all fossilization, not the billions of years demanded by uniformitarianism. His 1923 work, The New Geology, was the epitome of this theory, but his reputation as “scientist” Clarence Darrow dismissed as quackery when Bryan attempted to cite Price at the Scopes trial.

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38 Ronald Numbers, The Creationists, pp. 6-7.
39 Ibid., p. 7.
40 Ibid., p.53.
41 Ibid., p. 76.
42 Ibid., pp. 89-90 and 98.
The humiliation of fundamentalism the Scopes encounter represented might have been the end of public agitation against Darwin. However, the unseen and unacknowledged networks creationists were able to build are an essential part of Numbers’s continuing narrative. Price likely would be remembered as merely the product of a very small Christian sect had not he met a young Henry Morris. After Price and other antievolutionists attempted to organize the Religion and Science Association in the late 1930s, that organization fell apart by 1937 due to differences among members about the age of the earth. The Deluge Geology Society was an attempt to learn from the past and create a more homogeneous group of young-earth creationists, including Price; it lasted until 1947. Most importantly, Morris joined the group and later became an engineering graduate student at the University of Minnesota who considered writing a dissertation about flood geology. Numbers claimed that Henry Morris and theologian John Whitcomb repackaged Pricean flood geology partly in response to another evangelical network’s perceived liberalism/compromise with mainstream geology and biology. (See Chapter 2).

Numbers was focused on the birth and flourishing of institutions connected to Morris. He followed the birth of the Creation Research Society in 1963 and Morris’s Institute for Creation Research (ICR) springing from an earlier organization, the Creation-Science Research Center, created in 1970 and associated with Christian Heritage College in San Diego, a project of Timothy F. LaHaye (1926-), who was a close friend of Jerry Falwell during their co-founding of the Moral Majority as a political organization in 1979 (see Chapter 7). Young-earth creationism also found fertile soil with the Australian Kenneth A. Ham who rose to prominence

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43 Ibid., p. 134.
44 Ibid., p. 140 and 159.
46 Ibid., p. 313.
within ICR and eventually founded a sister organization, known as Answers in Genesis, in Kentucky in 1994. Finally, Morris’s crusade to save America from Darwinism “entered a new political phase” when Yale Law school student Wendell R. Bird (1954-) articulated an argument for giving equal-time to creationism in the public schools. Numbers skillfully tracked the battles and the alliances that either aided or hindered the success of Morris’s creationism.

In 1992, Numbers gave the academy the most researched account of American fundamentalists who lived in the cultural space between mainstream science and conservative Protestantism; The Creationists has stood the test of time as a document of the history of religious apologists with advanced science degrees who saw science only in terms of service to the cause of extending Christ’s kingdom on earth. However, in coming to conclusions about the resurgence of young-earth creationism as a phenomenon among the general population of fundamentalists in the 1970s, Numbers made some claims that need examination.

“To understand twentieth-century creationism, little knowledge of formal science and philosophy is necessary; familiarity with the Byzantine world of popular religion is essential.” By Numbers’s writing, America had developed into a nation of neighbors in close proximity with sharply conflicting worldviews in places such as university towns in the South. Furthermore, fundamentalists close to Henry Morris like Tim LaHaye had enough political influence to aid Reagan’s pursuit of the White House in 1980 and enough understanding of the publishing market to sell 70 million books about end-times biblical prophecy in the 1990s and 2000s (see Chapter 7). LaHaye’s success cannot be easily dismissed—the “Byzantine world” however was a common set of assumptions about reality disseminated for thousands of years

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47 Ibid., pp. 365 and 400.
48 Ibid., p. 351.
49 Ibid., p. 369.
among billions of people, assumptions that the Abrahamic faiths held in common though some particulars arose from the history of Protestant Christianity specifically, as the evidence will show. But Numbers’s audience was a subset of Western culture withdrawn from fundamentalism to such a degree that only in 1980 with Marsden’s *Fundamentalism and American Culture* did the field of history find a scholar able to bridge the psychological and sociological gap between the world of fundamentalism and the secular university.

Thus, first of all, there are dimensions to fundamentalist success that Numbers ignored because he was not seeking to understand the multiple dimensions of fundamentalist anxiety after 1960, anxiety into which the narrative of creationism eventually fit with the equal-time battles after 1980. For example, on the critical matter of politics, Numbers saw the issue as a secondary or tertiary add-on to the core matter of religious apologetics. Commenting upon occasional comments by creation scientists in the Creation Research Society about social debates over abortion and feminism, he concluded that “politics lagged far behind religion as a motivating force.” Numbers, pages before, mentioned a figure famous in fundamentalist circles, Josh McDowell, known in Campus Crusade for Christ, the world’s largest parachurch organization, as an apologist for the old-time gospel to the secular mind. McDowell was noted for writing “glowing endorsements” of Morris’s books. In some sense, as the interview with Morris’s son John in Chapter 7 will show, the elder Morris was always preeminently concerned with apologetics—he was a Josh McDowell with an engineering doctorate. But what about the support system of pastors and churches who followed Morris’s teachings? To what extent did Morris matter in the fundamentalist activism of the 1970s?

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50 Ibid., p. 370.
51 Ibid., p. 316.
If one limits one’s view to just the group of apologists within the larger system of pastors, churches, Christian schools and colleges, Numbers is probably right. But then he considered “why so many conservative Christians spoke out against evolution after about 1960 and the narrower issue of why increasing numbers of creationists shifted from accommodation to repudiation of historical geology”. He took note of the re-entry of evolution into textbooks, which sounded the alarm to conservatives, and how “antievolution agitation rode the political coattails of the New Religious Right,” but he did not examine what the leaders of the Religious Right were thinking in the years after 1960, partly because of the scope of his project and the emphasis on creationist institutions and their leaders. With regard to the ascendancy of flood geology at the expense of old-earth creationism and theistic evolution, Numbers credited Whitcomb and Morris solely and stated that the cultures supporting the “verbal inerrancy of the Bible” and a belief in a literal interpretation of Revelation meshed easily with creation science doctrine, which did away with the ambiguity about science that options like an old-earth position suggested.

But since Numbers gave no historical connection between the intelligent design movement (ID) and the 1960s, ID seems to appear almost de novo in the 1980s and included old-earth perspectives (“Although the intellectual roots of the design argument go back centuries, its contemporary incarnation dates from the mid-1980s.”) He mentioned Charles B. Thaxton (1939-) as an early leader of ID, but no predecessor. In fact Chapters 6 and 7 will show that antievolutionism always had multiple faces among American fundamentalists—old- and young-

52 Ibid., p. 370.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., p. 371.
55 Ibid... p. 373.
earth proponents coexisted in the 1960s. As a Baptist, Morris spoke for the latter and gave creationism a public visibility and an organization. But it was a Presbyterian, Francis Schaeffer, who discipled young evangelicals like Thaxton to consider fighting Darwinism but from an old-earth viewpoint that was culturally overshadowed by the glamour and publicity of Morris’s campaign in the 1970s.

Lastly there are some real questions about the nature of Morris’s influence. Some called it immense, but others, as we shall see, called Morris’s impact negligible as far as the political direction of the Moral Majority was concerned. Thus Morris may not have cared much for politics, but others most certainly did. What is thus needed is a history of fundamentalist pastors over the decades since 1925, which this work attempts to provide in the case of Schaeffer’s group.

The dimensions of fundamentalist concerns and anxiety between the 1925 Scopes trial and 1980 equal-time battles are several, many beyond the scientific domain. Scholars have contributed to the growing discourse into which the story of creationism can fit. Numbers’s student, legally trained, and winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Edward J. Larson, reviewed the “legal rights and restrictions [that] have applied to the teaching of evolution and creation in American public schools” in *Trial and Error: The American Controversy Over Creation and Evolution*, first published in 1985 and updated in 1989 and 2003.56 Beginning prior to the Anti-Evolution Movement of the 1920s which resulted in some states enacting antievolution statutes, Larson depicted the changing structure of legal interpretation about the origins issue across the twentieth century. But Larson did not discuss the role of race in the resistance of fundamentalists to the Fourteenth Amendment and the Supreme Court’s application of it in the case of *Brown v. Board*

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of Education. Chapters 5 and 7 will show how Francis Schaeffer and Jerry Falwell, as Presbyterian and Baptist respectively, reacted to federal commands to desegregate schools and to make school-sponsored prayer illegal as essentially two manifestations of big government tyranny.

In tandem with the legal facets of the creation-evolution struggle, the work of sociologists has become important. Among the most helpful is James Davison Hunter’s *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (1991). Increasing degrees of cultural and religious pluralism in American life from the colonial period to the present have created a veritable galaxy of allying and conflicting groups. He claimed that initially the end of the “pan-Protestant hegemony” was the result of immigration by Catholics and Jews beginning in the 1830s, but that the new arrangement was recast as a national “Judeo-Christian” consensus in the early twentieth century. However, the doors were about to open to more than just the religions of Abraham: Hunter argued that the second half of the twentieth century demonstrated a widening of what pluralism meant:

The “organizing principle” of American pluralism has altered fundamentally such that the major rift is no longer born out of theological or doctrinal disagreements—as between Protestants and Catholics or Christians and Jews. Rather the rift emerges out of a more fundamental disagreement over the sources of moral truth.

Hunter understood that evangelicals from the nineteenth century onward championed “the Bible…[as] the Word of God, inerrant in all of its teachings”, noting *The Fundamentals* for

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“refuting the methods of higher criticism” and “thirty-seven anti-evolution bills…submitted to twenty state legislatures between 1921 and 1929.”

Repeatedly noting the contribution of next-generation fundamentalists Tim LaHaye and Jerry Falwell, Hunter claimed that the protests of conservative Christians in the 1970s and beyond were multi-dimensional, touching five realms: family, education, media and the arts, law, and politics. But the first dominated above the others: “In many ways, the family is the most conspicuous field of conflict in the culture war. Some would argue that it is the decisive battleground.” Citing women’s rights, abortion, and gay rights as core issues, he stated “there is little doubt that the issues contested in the realm of family life are central to the larger struggle and are perhaps fateful for other battles being waged.”

Close behind was education. Hunter acknowledged that the Scopes trial was a turning point in education, but he made clear that it had to be seen in a larger context. “The creation-evolution debate is really only one component of a much more comprehensive conflict that has taken shape over the content of public education.”

The larger term “culture wars” comes closer to revealing the multiple dimensions behind the seemingly one-dimensional battle between Enlightenment science and Reformation religion that America’s evolution controversy has become. Interestingly, Hunter’s opening narrative touched upon the legacy of Francis Schaeffer’s mentor, J. Gresham Machen. Machen founded the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) in the 1930s in response to Presbyterian modernism (see Chapter 1). Hunter’s prologue depicts a 1970s gay rights battle of an OPC church in San Francisco to expel its organist, a conflict between the church’s claim that the First Amendment’s protected “a religious community’s right to order its affairs without government interference”

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59 Ibid., pp. 82-83.
60 Ibid., p. 176.
61 Ibid., p. 197.
versus “the organist and his supporters [who] charged discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.”

Hunter failed to mention that the lawyer aiding the church was John Whitehead, a disciple of Rushdoony’s and soon to be a collaborator with Schaeffer, who likewise sought to restore America to what he understood to be its Reformational heritage. Furthermore, Whitehead partnered with Wendell Bird and many other Christian attorneys in the 1980s as an arm of the Religious Right (see Chapter 7).

Hunter’s fellow sociologist, William Martin, echoed the theme of culture war but chose an episodic treatment that began in the 1940s with the story of Billy Graham. In *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (1996 and 2005) he moved from Graham to Richard Nixon, Jerry Falwell and on to the larger Religious Right of Marion “Pat” Robertson and others. Martin like Hunter talked at length about family issues being at the center of fundamentalist concern in the 1970s, but his book lacked a clear argument from start to finish, its segmented construction reflected in the PBS television series based on it.

Christopher P. Toumey brought anthropological insight to the question of creationism in *God’s Own Scientists: Creationists in a Secular World* (1994), in which he examined both the national movement as well as a local example of an activist group in North Carolina. He calls Henry Morris “undoubtedly the most influential leader of modern U.S. creationism” and believed that “all modern creationist thought must be measured in relation to Morris’s teachings.”

(Toumey was writing during the birth of the intelligent design movement but did not mention it as a competitor to Morris for laypeople’s attention or as a revival of old-earth creationism generally.) He noted that creationists were intelligent people aware of their cultural

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circumstances, contrary to their enemies’ characterization “that creationism is nothing more than a rote exercise in biblical literalism, and that the source of creationism is ignorance of science.”

Toumey’s thesis is powerful. He focused upon the question of feeling.

Because the problem of modern creationism is more complicated, more subtle, and more interesting than is ordinarily supposed, I propose to approach it by seeing creationism as a system of cultural meanings about both immorality and science that helps fundamentalist Christians make sense of the realities, anxieties, changes, and uncertainties of life in the United States in the late twentieth century. As a system of meanings about immorality, creationism offers a series of theories that allege that the idea of evolution is intimately involved, as cause or consequence or both, in the moral disintegration of modern U.S. life. These feelings about immorality are the common stock of fundamentalist thought…

At the same time, fundamentalists respected the plenary authority of science. “The problem for creationists,” he wrote, “is that too many people take science too seriously.” Creationism needed a baptism as legitimately scientific, a “scientific sanctification.” They sought a secular grace that could be invoked to enhance the appeal and provide a cloak of legitimacy.

Toumey explored the belief system motivating creationists thoroughly. He made a convincing argument for three models of science in competition in America—the Protestant model that utilized nature for religious apologetics, the secular model based upon the European Enlightenment, and the trivial model which “looked to science only for useful knowledge that would unlock the natural resources of a great continent…Science meant nothing more than engineering and technology.” Speaking of the period between the 1925 Scopes trial and

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64 Ibid., p. 5.
65 Ibid., p. 6.
66 Ibid., p. 7.
67 Ibid., p. 15.
Sputnik event in 1957, he declared that evolution had not won over many Americans by that point:

Even if the idea of evolution had practically unlimited credibility among U.S. scientists, it was poorly understood and not necessarily believed by most of the public. And so it was not the secular model of science that won the hearts of most people in the middle decades of the twentieth century, but rather the trivial model…

Toumey noted the interconnection of Scottish Common Sense philosophy, which stated that specialized knowledge could mislead when the facts of nature were evident to all people, and the theology of Princeton Theological Seminary in the nineteenth century. The latter “asserted that scripture, like nature, comprised a body of uncomplicated facts.” Toumey saw a common reducing tendency as both Common Sense and the Princeton Theology “reduced knowledge to its most simple, obvious, tangible qualities.” These ideas had enormous importance for fundamentalism in the 1920s and up to the present as it confronted the advances of science. The tendency to doubt the value of theorizing and speculative structures made skepticism about Darwinism acute. Such a skepticism also created a divide between historical science and experimental science in the minds of fundamentalists that did not exist for the participants in Enlightenment science. A war between cultures was brewing.

During the middle third of the nineteenth century, many U.S. scientists turned toward the secular model of science. Their change of heart was not a conscious rebellion against the Protestant model. Rather, it was a consequence of the specialization and professionalization of higher education…The finest scientists of that time, the role models for U.S. scientists in the mid-nineteenth century, were Europeans, most of whom embraced the secular principles of the Enlightenment, which recognized an important role for theories and hypotheses.

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68 Ibid., p. 27.
69 Ibid., pp. 16-17.
70 Ibid., p. 18.
With the re-entry of Darwinism into high school textbooks in the 1960s, creationists developed a narrative about evolution and the destruction of America. Toumey noted that there was a strong independent Baptist presence among the creationists, citing Henry Morris, and pastors Tim LaHaye and Jerry Falwell.\textsuperscript{71} Their foe was secular humanism, which appeared to them to be a unified anti-Christian force visible since the 1950s. Attitudes about sexual freedom beyond Judeo-Christian restraints, the increase in divorce, the availability of birth control, the new judicial lenience toward pornography, and the outlawing of school prayer and Bible reading were all indicators that America was falling into apostasy.\textsuperscript{72} LaHaye’s definition of secular humanism, informed by the thesis of a lawyer named John Whitehead, eventually an ally of Francis Schaeffer, centered around the concept of complete autonomy from God, and presumably, fundamentalist truth about God.\textsuperscript{73} Toumey took a dim view of LaHaye’s conclusions. “LaHaye illustrated the evils of humanism by referring frequently to pornography, homosexuality, drug addiction, abortion, and giving away the Panama Canal to Communists. The cumulative product was a low-brow Manichaeanism.”\textsuperscript{74} However, there was a design to LaHaye’s arrangement, as the oversimplification of complex issues into a black-and-white dualism made LaHaye and the Religious Right ready to engage the dualism of Republican-Democratic politics in the 1970s. Finally, a particular understanding of evolution colored the Religious Right’s reaction to it.

As Secular Humanism is said to be a process by which autonomy generates anarchy, so evolution is accused of promoting this process by implying that

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 56.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., pp. 78-79.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p. 82.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p. 82.
randomness in nature justifies anarchy in society…Note that the task of fitting
evolution into that theory requires one to represent it as a celebration of
randomness: evolution is described in terms of its stochastic features, especially
mutation.\textsuperscript{75}

Such a incomplete view “deletes evolution’s deterministic features, such as adaptation and
differential reproductive success” which are essentially nonrandom aspects of the theory working
in tandem with stochastic forces.\textsuperscript{76} But framing evolution as chaos fit the narrative the Religious
Right was building about the moral chaos of America in 1970s. Creationism helped
fundamentalists make order out of disorder. “Their creationism makes them whole..It is, for them, a personal way in which science makes sense morally.”\textsuperscript{77}

Toumey’s treatment of creationists as a group of Americans with a culture and belief
system thick with symbols unknown to outsiders comes closest to the purposes of the present
work, though he does not explore the road from Charles Hodge of the Princeton Theology to
Francis Schaeffer as a Presbyterian ally of independent Baptists such as Falwell. Nonetheless,
Toumey’s book has much to commend it as a study of one group of the major backers of Henry
Morris’s creationism in the 1970s.

Two works of political science provide additional dimensions to the understanding of the
creation-evolution controversy. Michael Lienesch’s \textit{In the Beginning: Fundamentalism, the
Scopes Trial, and the Making of the Antievolution Movement} (2007) applied social movement
theory to creationism. Noting that initially scholars saw movements as “irrational products of
mass behavior”, Lienesch claimed that labor and civil rights protests of the 1960s forced the
academy “to treat movements more sympathetically, depicting them as the rightful efforts of

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 91.

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 265.
rational people seeking their own economic interests and political rights”. Lienesch showed the same sympathy to creationists by looking at the linkages among ideas, activism, organizations, and strategies. Importantly, he stated a commonly held belief among scholars that “movements are the product of discourse,” an insight the present work will attempt to utilize in treating six decades of dialogue that occurred first among Presbyterians and then between Presbyterians and Baptists about America and academic learning.

Lienesch reflected on the resilience of creationism by making a comparison to work done on the women’s movement.

The studies also suggest some of the means by which activists have managed to adapt to changing circumstances, including (1) the construction of institutions, or the forming of new groups and transforming of older ones; (2) the development of issues, especially critical concerns that can initiate a resurgence of protest and solidarity; (3) the establishment of overlapping connections between movements, in which they penetrate or “spill over” into other ones; and (4) the introduction of new strategies and goals that allow them to respond to changes in the political and social climate…in order for movements to continue, they must constantly be re-creating themselves.

Creationist activists exemplify all four of the means Lienesch identifies. 1. Institutions. In the Scopes era of the 1920s, the World Christian Fundamentals Association championed the cause; in the 1970s, the Institute for Creation Research did. During the decades intervening, other institutions such as associations, fellowships, and independent churches and individuals such as George McCready Price and Harry Rimmer formed a bridge between the two periods of high

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79 Ibid.

80 Ibid., p. 7.

81 Ibid., p. 199. Emphasis is Lienesch’s.
activity. 2. Issues. As we will see, creationist “activists tend to mobilize around issues” such as the shocking revival of evolutionary teaching in the public schools in the 1960s. 3. Connections. Henry Morris’s creationism converged with the cause of the Religious Right and specifically of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Falwell. “They [creationists] found old friends and strong supporters [in televangelists LaHaye and Falwell], as well as access to their millions of viewers.” 4. Strategies. First with the help of law student Wendell Bird, creationists tried to protest that their rights were being violated in the rights-oriented 1970s. When Bird and other attorneys failed to win a hearing for creation science in the public schools as a matter of the free exercise of religion according to the First Amendment, a new group of creationists known as the intelligent design movement capitalized on the Supreme Court’s 1987 *Edwards v. Aguillard* ruling for allowing a diversity of opinion about origins within the science classroom. Here Lienesch mentioned the involvement of Charles B. Thaxton, a Christian chemist, but did not explore Thaxton’s background and connection to Francis Schaeffer. Still, Lienesch concluded that there was more continuity than discontinuity between the Scopes era and the present: “The movement’s message has remained remarkably consistent. From the 1920s on, antievolutionists have developed an elaborate critique of evolutionary theory, attacking it with an arsenal of

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theological, philosophical, and scientific arguments.”

Lienesch’s treatment is helpful because it takes creationists seriously as an American social phenomenon.

In *Evolution, Creationism, and the Battle to Control America’s Classrooms* (2010), Pennsylvania State political scientists Michael Berkman and Eric Plutzer focused on the decisionmaking power of teachers as the pivotal aspect of the differential in evolution education from school district to district nationwide. The scientific community appeared out of touch both with the local teacher and the historical context in which he/she operated, and instead maintained an attitude of complete confusion.

Scientists are at a loss to understand how so many educated Americans believe that creationism should be accorded “equal time” in science education. And they cannot comprehend why evolution occupies such a marginal place in the high school biology curriculum and why it continues to be controversial today. How is it possible that we are still in a “war” over evolution?

The authors contended that judging the controversy as merely an intellectual debate between Protestant theology and Enlightenment science is insufficient and distorts conclusions:

But a disagreement about ideas is not sufficient to account for the amazing durability of this conflict on the American scene. A more complete explanation for why the conflict continues to exist must account for politics…Who should govern the nation’s public schools and determine what students should learn?

A complex picture of teaching and teachers in the twenty-first century emerges. The authors called the creation-evolution conflict a “distinctly American” conflagration caused by an inevitable clash. The 1920s were the critical moment—American Protestantism split into fundamentalist and modernist wings, science continued its professionalization begun in the late

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88 Ibid., p. 229.


90 Ibid., p. 3. Emphasis is the authors’.
nineteenth century, and expansion of public schooling brought scientific ideas to the masses.\textsuperscript{91} Moreover, national politics has absorbed the polarization between conservative religion and modern science.

This conflict has been further institutionalized within the American party system. We have noted that three serious Republican candidates for president in 2008 acknowledged that they do not accept evolution. On the other side, antifundamentalism has found a home in the Democratic Party. Thus as the two major political parties have become increasingly polarized along social, cultural, and religious lines, the issue has mapped comfortably onto this cleavage.\textsuperscript{92}

The authors point to a problematic feature of the American system that greatly exacerbates the likelihood of a culture war: the decentralized education system, a “fragmentation of governance, combined with the federal courts’ role adjudicating claims related to civil rights and civil liberties, [that] creates thousands of potential arenas for conflict.”\textsuperscript{93} The authors saw the creation-evolution controversy as a stable and massive conflict that had become institutionalized as part of the American landscape and showed no sign of diminishing in the future.\textsuperscript{94} They conclude that ultimately the teachers decided what is presented to students, but that the teachers nationwide were sharply divided themselves, with one-fifth teaching straight Enlightenment science with a missionary zeal, one-fifth undermining “the conclusions of evolution biology by explicitly telling students that they believe…that creationism or intelligent design is a ‘valid scientific alternative’ to evolution,” and the remaining three-fifths stepping away from the controversy by minimizing evolution or avoiding it altogether.\textsuperscript{95} Thus the history

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., p. 215.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 216.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., pp. 216-217.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 217.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., pp. 219-221.
\end{footnotesize}
and politics of education in this country have essentially made impossible the uniformity scientists assume American public schools will pursue in imitation of their European counterparts. Berkman’s and Plutzer’s addition of a political dimension at the grassroots level makes this work a valuable contribution.

Finally, *The Anointed: Evangelical Truth in a Secular Age*, a 2011 polemic against fundamentalists attempting to reshape the academic world in their image, pitted two Eastern Nazarene College professors against their theological cousins. Historian Randall J. Stephens and Physicist Karl W. Giberson unabashedly blasted fundamentalist attempts to reshape science and history, to dismiss the findings of secular psychology, and to promulgate end-times prophecy. Stephens and Giberson were aghast at creationists who “presumed to pass judgments on the conclusions of the scientific community” and believed that “secular experts at leading universities should retreat” when Christians tried to pass on a conservative heritage to their children. The fear of fundamentalists was that “a secular, liberal, elitist minority held sway in the public schools and jettisoned a traditional, God-honoring, and patriotic curriculum for one that undermined their values and corroded their faith.”

Christian leaders like creationist Ken Ham and end-times writer Tim LaHaye have challenged the secular Goliath with conservative Christians cheering such defiance of the “experts.” Ham’s education demonstrated only “the most limited of scientific credentials…And yet Ham’s message is warmly embraced by millions of evangelicals”; LaHaye the authors called “the most remarkable teacher of end-time prophecy…[and] an authority for

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evangelicals for half a century.”

In their description of the amateurish character of Christian leaders rewriting American history to preserve a distinctly fundamentalist vision, Stephens and Giberson mentioned Francis Schaeffer’s 1976 *How Should We Then Live*. Calling Schaeffer “a self-styled intellectual” and “irascible”, they noted how he “battled secular demons by writing popular history and philosophy” and that *How Should We Then Live* pretended to be actual history “minus the scholarly apparatus”. Nonetheless, the book was a million-seller, and the popularity of dualistic history in which the Christian God triumphs along with the faithful had immense appeal.

*The Anointed* set a tone for evangelicals in the academy who wanted to create as much distance between themselves and popular fundamentalists as possible. But still in 2013 the phenomenon of conservative evangelicalism, or fundamentalism, has as much strength as ever. The fundamentalist response to evolution must be considered in light of the larger fundamentalist response to America changing in multiple dimensions between 1925 and the 1980s. Three religious groups formed the leadership of the Moral Majority that championed Henry Morris’s creationism: independent Baptists, Southern Baptists, and the Presbyterian Church in America. The latter, though Southern in origin, was eventually Francis Schaeffer’s denomination. The northern Presbyterian story leading from J. Gresham Machen of Princeton Theological Seminary in the 1920s leading up to Schaeffer’s experiment in engagement with secularism at L’Abri Fellowship in Switzerland in the 1960s represented the long-lasting contact between fundamentalists and the academic world. Therefore the Machen-Schaeffer linkage has been chosen deliberately to illustrate that not all fundamentalists tracked with every jot and tittle of

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Morris’s teachings even if court battles over equal-time threw Schaeffer and Morris together after 1980.

Understanding creationism as an American phenomenon did not occur prior to the 1980s, and only then with the help of historians, political scientists, sociologists, and one anthropologist. But between the Scopes era of the 1920s and the decade of Reagan, scientists made their move to sequester biology away from supernatural causes. A review of how this sequestration occurred is important to understanding the fundamentalist recoil from biology’s presuppositions based on the mathematization of nature that the Enlightenment project represented.

The Darwinists who offended Henry Morris and Jerry Falwell were of a far more robust and assertive kind than Bryan had denounced in the 1920s. Because no consensus of biologists existed in the early 20th century during Bryan’s heyday, “evolution” was not in fact primarily understood to be the result of natural selection. Borrowing a phrase from the biologist Julian Huxley historian of science Peter Bowler referred to the decades around 1900 as the “eclipse of Darwinism.” Bowler claimed the eclipse temporarily resulted from “the revival of a more traditional philosophy of nature which could never be taken seriously today.” 101 Nonetheless, in the years of the eclipse, there was a series of options that permitted real room for the spiritually minded to maneuver around the discomfort caused by Darwin’s hypothesis. Theistic evolutionism, orthogenesis, mutationism, and Lamarckism were all developmental schemes by which the work of a Creator could be manifested. 102 Enough doubt therefore existed in Bryan’s age that defenders of materialism had not yet proven their case in biology. One famous evangelical, Princeton theologian B.B. Warfield, chose theistic evolutionism as a way of avoiding


102 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
the randomness of evolution. He noted biologist Vernon Kellogg’s linking of the survival of the fittest to the German war machine, but rejected his “antiteleological prejudice”, as David Livingstone has pointed out.103

According to Livingstone, Lamarckism created considerable latitude for people of faith. It featured “an innate life force [that] impelled evolutionary history ever onward and upward, causing a progressive increase in organic complexity” and “the centrality of a transcendent force in the process”.104 There was much more flexibility even among respected scientists to question Darwinism’s validity in years around World War I than many today may realize. When the Neo-Darwinian synthesis did arrive, Bowler claimed, “the creators…were aware that they were rescuing Darwinism from a crisis [of scientists’ confidence].”105

The success of Darwinism over its rival theories would create the environment for a much sharper conflict with creationism. The project of reductionistic science had always been to prove that supernatural causes were superfluous to explanation. Biology thus became a fully mature and enlightened science only when the Neo-Darwinian synthesis expelled other options from the table. For the biologists at the forefront, the language of conquest and unity and dissemination occurred throughout this quiet revolution to change American education, and one unintended consequence would be an immense clash with another culture motivated by the same issues---the fundamentalists and evangelicals who were weathering their own eclipse between the Scopes fiasco and the 1950s.


104 Ibid., p. 54.

105 Bowler, The Eclipse of Darwinism, p. 5.
The hour of this momentous cultural clash would be the 1960s, when the evolutionary synthesis was in its maturity and the Goldwater campaign sowed the seeds of the future Religious Right. What these evolutionists did not realize was that a culture unseen by them framed their public image as purveyors of deception to Christian laity. That culture held to the evangelical worldview as various subcultures united to save what they understood to be a disintegrating America, an adulterous New Israel. In the ivory tower, the scientists’ response to creationist resistance consistently reiterated the soundness of Enlightenment science as a method and little more, failing to speak to the larger chaos of the 1960s and the decade to follow.

The language of Neo-Darwinism has become subject matter for historians of science. According to Betty Smocovitis, the synthesis was a gradually building tidal wave in the first half of the twentieth century, created by external pressures from the accomplishments of the physical sciences, feats for which the life sciences had no comparable answer.\(^{106}\) Biology at the time might better have been termed “biologies,” because the field was not at all an integrated entity, but a disorganized potpourri of disciplines collectively known as biology. The call for a mathematization of natural history, instigated by Theodosius Dobzhansky’s *Genetics and the Origin of Species* in 1937, and the organization of a new research community under Ernst Mayr’s leadership were the turning points that finally set natural selection in the same central location within biology that Newton’s laws occupied in the world of physics.

Smocovitis described how heated historical debates about the nature of the evolutionary synthesis have been, calling the situation “downright discord”.\(^{107}\) She pinpointed the 1930s and the 1940s as the critical period for the synthesis’s emergence, which allowed the “fusion between


the newer genetics and the older Darwinian selection theory” and which required different disciplines of biology to interact, from field studies, to laboratory experiments, and mathematical modeling of selection, to name a few.\textsuperscript{108} The essential conclusion was that Darwinism’s place in biology was “effectively ‘modernized’” and the theory secured its role as “the primary cause of evolutionary change.”\textsuperscript{109} The birth of evolutionary biology as a unifying discipline was the result. However, the synthesis itself created tensions among workers of different fields. Joseph Cain has described how laboratory workers in the fields of “genetics, physiology and cytology were accorded the highest status within biology” in the first decades of the twentieth century because the exactitude of these fields most obviously “matched broader standards of good science” (presumably dictated by chemistry and physics); as these laboratory workers dared to make pronouncements about evolution, they irritated “field and museum workers, who were ‘brought into line’” with the new standards emerging from the synthesis process.\textsuperscript{110} Cain noted however that some field and museum workers quickly accommodated the winds of change, like George Gaylord Simpson, who meshed the new emphasis on quantification with the discipline of paleontology, whereas others railed against the notion of becoming “second-class researchers” simultaneously.\textsuperscript{111} Another process thus began to take place as the structure of the synthesis changed again—at first, the synthesis had been focused merely on matching the mathematical aspects of other sciences, but secondly it had become important to achieve what Cain termed “proper organization [that] ensured balance” among disciplines to ensure the continuance of

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p. 20.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p. 18.
cooperation and the maintenance of Darwinism in its central place. Nonetheless, these initial tensions, enough had been successfully resolved that evolutionists celebrated the triumph of Darwinism at the University of Chicago at the Darwin Centennial of 1959.

However, creationists noted Darwinism’s conquest among intellectuals was fully based on materialist presuppositions. In the nineteenth century, the theory of natural selection became known as a biological application of Thomas Malthus’s economic theory of populations in competition, as Darwin sought to demonstrate why certain adaptations endured and others failed, according to John Maynard Smith. In the twentieth century the single most important event behind the eventual conquest of natural selection was the reconciliation of Mendelian genetics with Darwinism. This union effectively ended the eclipse of Darwinism in the 1940s.

Until then, theistic interpretations of evolution that allowed for a God active in nature still had some limited place within what was considered respectable academic discourse, because a veil of mystery remained. Until the Neo-Darwinian synthesis, biologists lacked proof that selection was at work at the level of deeper physical realities. Supporters of Darwinism had no physical locus around which to build credibility for their view—-that is, until the 1920s when the concepts of genes and chromosomes provided the concrete particles upon which selection could act.

The success of the Neo-Darwinian synthesis essentially occurred away from public view, between Dobzhansky’s 1937 breakthrough work and a piecemeal process over the course of the next four decades, as experts in multiple disciplines organized their fields around the Russian’s

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112 Ibid., p. 19.
113 Smocovitis, Unifying Biology, p. 23.
accomplishment. Vitally important to the understanding of creationism is the fact that the key activities that became the glue of Neo-Darwinist community occurred far outside the reach of Southern culture and religion, in Northern urban centers and university environments.

Smocovitis cited the Princeton conference of 1947 along with the creation of the Society for the Study of Evolution and a journal, *Evolution* as key events. The success of the disciplinary forging process was so complete that another celebratory conference was organized, the Darwin Centennial Celebration at the University of Chicago in 1959. But even more important was the timing of this particular meeting, because the post-Sputnik environment created the perfect milieu for a re-invasion of the anti-evolutionist South:

The special anniversary was also an opportune time to transmit the same synthetic theory and the restoration of Darwinism to American high school teachers in the hope of keeping the increasingly hostile hoards of American fundamentalists at bay: “One Hundred Years without Darwinism Are Enough,” Hermann J. Muller stated emphatically in the title of a paper directed to American high school teachers. It may have been evolutionists’ belief that the quality of their insights had been enough to win strong federal support, but the threat of nuclear war no doubt helped motivate lawmakers toward pragmatically meeting the need of the hour — “to lead the global community in science” and outpace the Soviet Union. Leading historian of creationism Ronald Numbers said of the Sputnik surprise: “An embarrassed United States sought to regain world leadership in science and technology by pouring millions of dollars into improving science education.”

Responding quickly to Muller’s challenge was part of that solution. The opportune moment had


come. The long delay in readdressing Southern education is important because the time lag reveals that the federal government was motivated to act not merely to promote science but also for national survival. Furthermore, it was clearly the widely acknowledged success of the physical sciences in technology and warfare that led the way, with the biologists riding their coattails, back into Southern classrooms.

Nonetheless, the consensus of biologists became clear by the 1970s. The Neo-Darwinian synthesis grew into such a potent explanatory paradigm that the limited and focused nature of the controversies that followed illustrated how thoroughly it had persuaded. Smocovitis described a series of workshops in 1974, organized by Ernst Mayr, involving the former participants in the synthesis project and a volume Mayr coedited with historian of science Will Provine, entitled *The Evolutionary Synthesis: Perspectives on the Unification of Biology* that also incorporated the testimony of ex-participants. Both the workshops and the book demonstrated that evolution was anything but a disputed fact, nor was selection disputed as its driving force. The main question was instead what discipline could take the most credit for the success of the synthesis—experimental genetics (Provine’s position) or systematics (Mayr’s).  

The vocabulary of the life sciences was now fully naturalistic. The days of Paleyan natural theology, theistic evolutionism, or Lamarckian inner forces were over as far as the gatekeepers of the new biology were concerned.

The end of Lamarckism as a potential peacekeeping force between science and theology pointed to the victory of naturalism that made biology a rigorous science by disenchanting it. This result was one of the most important yet quiet revolutions implied by the success of Neo-Darwinism, because science declared finally that a supernatural agent was unnecessary to the

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evolutionary process. Mendel’s concept of the gene was the discovery that made the selection process implied by Darwinian naturalism free of a Creator’s influence; in essence, Mendelian population genetics made Darwinism “Enlightened” by making deity superfluous. Lamarckian inheritance received its answer in Neo-Darwinism. Genes were quantifiable entities through which random variation could diversify a population through time. Secondly, Mendel’s law of the segregation of alleles supported Darwin’s proposal that new variations could endure over time, deflecting the concern that an inevitable blending effect arising from sexual reproduction would wash out innovations.  

But how would Darwinism answer its chief competitor, Lamarckism, which suggested that a feedback loop existed between genes and environment such that acquired characteristics (such as increased muscular strength) could transfer to offspring. There was a real need for an empirical means to adjudicate between these theories. In the late nineteenth century August Weismann had asserted that “the fertilized egg was the starting point of two independent processes:”

One leads by cellular division and differentiation to the individual body, or ‘soma’, which can be modified by external conditions, and which is mortal. A second process of cellular division in the ‘germ line’ gives rise to the sex cells, and hence to the next generation. Thus the germ line is potentially immortal; Weismann held that it was also independent of changes in the soma.  

It took several decades before this conclusion made, on the macrocosmic level, could be shown to have an important parallel in the central dogma of molecular genetics; namely “that information can flow from nucleic acids to proteins, but cannot flow from protein to nucleic

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120 Smith, *The Theory of Evolution*, p. 46.

The feedback loop thus became an untenable hypothesis, and the success of Darwinism was the indirect result of the inadequacy of its rival. Neo-Darwinism won because its competition was unable to explain the data as thoroughly. Again the vocabulary carried with it presuppositions of the adequacy of naturalistic explanations. That language became understood as modern, i.e., testable and quantifiable, and therefore morally superior in the interests of humanity.

The language of the reasonableness of “catching up” through excluding God dominated evolutionist leaders’ public statements, making the alienation of the new generation of evangelicals inevitable. The 1960s was a fleeting golden age for the teaching of evolution, sandwiched between the Darwin Centennial and the rise of creation science organizations in the 1970s. The situation created by the Centennial made public what the culture and value system of biology had been behind the scenes. At this point Southern anti-evolution statutes dating back to the Scopes era still remained in place. But now university science was about to retake lost territory through the synergy of the intellectual accomplishment of the Neo-Darwinian synthesis and a federal government under Cold War-induced pressures.

A three-volume set edited by Sol Tax and Charles Callender documented the Centennial conference and related events, one of which is noteworthy for the televised comments of Sir Julian Huxley, grandson of “Darwin’s bulldog,” Thomas Huxley. Huxley praised Muller’s article for declaring “how absurd it is still to shrink from teaching evolution---the most important scientific development since Newton.”

Since natural selection could account for any known form of life, there was no room for

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Ibid.

a supernatural agency in its evolution.” After centuries of mathematization had tamed the heavens and then the earth, the remaining bit of ground for supernaturalism in nature, organic life, Huxley declared lost. In many ways, Huxley was a new H.L. Mencken—-an intellect bent on illuminating American culture. He was absolute in circumscribing what counted as intelligent discourse. In response to a religious objection about the evolution of mind, Huxley noted that “Darwinism removed the whole idea of God as the creator of organisms from the sphere of rational discussion.”

The Neo-Darwinians argued that human nature arose from below, emerging from the rest of nature, whereas the evangelical teaching from Genesis held that humanity was set apart from rest of nature by being uniquely created in the image of the Creator. Biologists saw their field as distinct from other sciences. Ernst Mayr himself was quick to recognize that evolutionary theory demanded a new category of evaluation sensitive to the limits of historical evidence, one that challenged the traditional tests of “good science” designed according to premises of the physical sciences. Evolutionary science, unlike physics, involved the explanation of unique occurrences. Nonetheless, Mayr saw biology as still completely explained through naturalistic principles that allowed for its apparent non-lawlike behavior. In spite of this “haphazardness of evolutionary change” put to death all teleological visions of nature. Mayr’s claims about human beings summarized the aspect of evolution that creationists found most offensive---the homogenization of all living things:

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124 Ibid., p. 46. Emphasis is mine.
125 Ibid., p. 45.
127 Ibid., p. 187.
But it was Darwin’s theory of common descent which left no escape from the conclusion that humans indeed had descended from apelike ancestors….A few years later Huxley, Haeckel, and others firmly established the principle that there was nothing supernatural about the origin of human beings. No longer isolated from the rest of the living world, *Homo sapiens* and its evolutionary history had become secularized into a branch of science.\(^\text{128}\)

The sequestration of humankind for a special destiny had been at the core of historic Christianity for centuries. No longer the crowning achievement of God’s works and without a special relationship to its maker, humanity was displaced into a set of lateral relationships with other creatures. That concept, understood by evangelicals to create the means for autonomy from God in a post-1960 world, that saw itself as seemingly liberated from absolute truths in the Bible, along with national educational policies that implied the growth of federal power, set the scientific and fundamentalist communities on a collision course.

The present work seeks to expand the terrain from the map given by Ronald Numbers, who argued that Henry Morris and John Whitcomb were the chief reasons for antievolutionism’s persistence. Rather, Morris and Whitcomb sat in a context of pastors of cobelligerent denominations who were deeply worried about America. The Presbyterian leader Francis Schaeffer carried the legacy of Charles Hodge’s Princeton Theological Seminary into the twentieth century. As Schaeffer and the like-minded leaders Carl McIntire and Rousas J. Rushdoony encountered the 1960s, they grew deeply anxious about transformations in America’s power structure, which they had believed earlier had favored the forces of the Protestant Reformation. Antievolutionism found new life in the 1970s because this spreading anxiety about America was articulated by a chorus of conservative Christian leaders, of which Schaeffer was the clearest. Thus the concerns of Presbyterians leaving Princeton Seminary under J. Gresham

Machen’s leadership in 1929 provide the starting point of this investigation. Fears among this
group accumulated in waves over the next five decades, from religious liberalism, to
ecumenism, to neo-evangelicalism, to Communism, to civil rights, and eventually to church-and-
state issues into which antievolutionism was integrated. The preservation of the traditional
family became the Religious Right’s unifying message in the 1970s, and antievolutionism was
only one of many competing concerns, including abortion and homosexuality; in fact,
antievolutionism’s importance to its own supporters was maximized when the spread of
evolution was connected philosophically to the destruction of the family, as the opening cartoon
from Answers in Genesis suggests. The Presbyterians are the weavers of this narrative of
destruction over the decades from the Scopes trial of 1925 to the Arkansas trial of 1981.
Therefore it is vitally important to trace their worldview and response to social issues over these
decades, which the following argument attempts to do.
CHAPTER 2
J. GRESHAM MACHEN, PRESBYTERIAN INTELLECTUAL OF THE SCOPES ERA

If you give the bureaucrats the children, you might as well give them everything else as well.

---J. Gresham Machen of Princeton Theological Seminary, testifying at congressional hearings on a proposed federal department of education, February 1926

The Roaring Twenties was a decade of confrontations. The First World War had shocked many in the devastation left behind, and social forces in urban centers were calling into question the Victorian traditions of the small town. Legal showdowns served as clarifying moments in an age of uncertainty. The decade also saw the Presbyterian scholar J Gresham Machen attempt to stem the tide against the forces of secularism he saw threatening America.

The campaign led by William Jennings Bryan to outlaw the teaching of evolution in the public schools was another effort to identify and root out what was going wrong in America. Bryan had concluded that evolution was a social evil that had not only driven the Germany’s militaristic lust for power during the war, but was also part of a secular educational system threatening to strip Christian youth of their faith. Historian Edward Larson details the impact of Vernon Kellogg’s *Headquarters Nights* (about German views) and James H. Leuba’s *The Belief in God and Immortality* (about the secularization of the academy) upon the Great Commoner.¹ The antievolutionist drive to stop the spread of Darwinism in the public schools succeeded in the State of Tennessee in the form of the 1925 Butler Act, which outlawed the teaching of “any

theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man had descended from a lower order of animal.”

The participation of a high school teacher, John Scopes, as a test case defended by the American Civil Liberties Union to question the legality of the Butler Act, set up a classic confrontation between the astute legal mind of Clarence Darrow and that of the politician and orator Bryan. The newspapers’ narrow telling of the cultural event now known as the Scopes trial cast evangelical Protestants as reactionary voices in the wilderness, when in reality the context of the controversy was obscured by the public melee Bryan and Darrow had engendered. “Fundamentalists”, as Bryan’s group were known, were not only in conflict with secularists like Darrow, but had also been struggling against their own brethren, the liberalizing “modernists”, for approximately fifty years prior to the trial.

Fundamentalism was hardly the monolithic entity the papers depicted. Bryan had recruited diverse thinkers for the trial, two of which declined to show, namely the Seventh Day Adventist George McCready Price and Bryan’s fellow Presbyterian John Gresham Machen. Price defended a recent creation of the earth (within a few thousand years), whereas the Scofield Reference Bible popular among fundamentalists since 1909 had advocated an old earth, and Bryan himself admitted he accepted the concept of Genesis days as eras. Ronald L. Numbers notes that Price’s scientific expertise was openly mocked by Clarence Darrow, who called him “a mountebank and a pretender and not a geologist at all.”

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3 Larson, Summer for the Gods, p. 189.

On the other hand, Machen was respected by the chief satirist of the Scopes episode, H.L. Mencken, who called the Princeton scholar “a man of great learning and dignity…[and] the author of various valuable books.” In the midst of the obvious diversity the term fundamentalism represented and the confusion of the trial, the narrative chosen by reporters was the simplest---Bryan versus Darrow, creation versus evolution. It was a winner-take-all struggle. This outcome neither revealed the complexity of fundamentalist anxiety nor served to predict the reality of fundamentalist survival. The purpose of this chapter is to follow Machen’s ideological journey as a guide to understanding fundamentalism at its most intellectually durable.

Fundamentalism becomes comprehensible in light of its antithesis, modernism, and in light of the relation of each to the unprecedented pressures of the nineteenth century upon historic Protestantism in America. After the Civil War, forces of alienation and of secularization threatened to undo Christian civilization. George M. Marsden notes how Victorian ideals of civic order became unraveled quickly. “America was changing rapidly from a culture dominated by small towns and the countryside to one shaped by cities and suburbs. Waves of ‘uprooted’ immigrants, together with rapid industrialization, created virtually insurmountable urban problems.” Bradley J. Longfield comments that the proportion of the American population living in cities jumped from twenty percent at the time of the Civil War to fifty percent by 1920. In addition, an increase in immigration had the result that “in 1900 immigrants and their children made up over one-third of America’s population” with large numbers of twentieth-century

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arrivals coming from “Southern and Eastern” Europe, i.e., non-Anglo-Saxon and non-Protestant nations. Changing demographics meant the development of two American experiences---that of the pluralistic city and of the monocultural small town. Alienation and accompanying anxiety were the natural results for native Protestants. America was not only industrializing, it was globalizing, and the new threat posed by the study of comparative religions was to put Christianity on an equal level with other faiths and in contact with historical forces.

However, problems were erupting even within previously Christian institutions as secular trends became the norm. European ideas involving the evolution of life and the scientific study of biblical texts (known as higher criticism) were at work transforming American thought as early as the 1890s. There was a related impact on institutions, where the German university model and the rise of scientific positivism and historicism were among the forces that culminated in a transformation of some of America’s evangelical colleges into secular places of scientific research. Further, secular business interests simultaneously freed many schools from dependence on denominational funds.

Two divergent responses to the forces of alienation and secularization became known as fundamentalism and modernism respectively. The former resisted these changes and labeled them as anti-Christian; the latter accommodated and where possible assimilated them as contributions to the transformation of Protestantism. The clash between fundamentalists and modernists ultimately would demonstrate two very different approaches to tradition and innovation. In the words of Longfield, modernism was about adaptation to the age. “This led to a

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8 Ibid., p. 16.
11 Longfield, The Presbyterian Controversy, pp. 16-17.
persistent accent on the immanence of God in human culture, the goodness and value of humanity, the moral interpretation of the atonement [as a lesson from Christ rather than a salvific act], and the importance of experience, feeling, and ethics in religion [as opposed to the doctrine of sin].”

In contrast, fundamentalists in Marsden’s words were “people professing complete confidence in the Bible and preoccupied with the message of God’s salvation of sinners through the death of Jesus Christ.” Fundamentalism developed distinctive features of a movement, including a view of the future that emphasized God’s sovereignty over the stages of human history and an apologetic thrust. But never were such features made part of a unified creed for the whole movement; hence Marsden limits his definition: “Fundamentalism was a loose, diverse, and changing federation of co-belligerents united by their fierce opposition to modernist attempts to bring Christianity into line with modern thought.”

The battles between the fundamentalist and modernist camps went through two stages: a period of building frustration before World War I and a series of clashes---including that over evolution---after the war. Although fundamentalism was a multi-denominational movement, according to Marsden the activities of the Northern Baptists and Northern Presbyterians (Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.) are especially important as each held substantial numbers of conservatives and liberals within its organization. A critical shock in the first stage was the defection of Charles Augustus Briggs, professor of languages at Union Seminary in New York. Longfield comments that Briggs in an 1891 speech attacked the inerrancy doctrine directly

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12 Ibid., p. 19.
13 Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, pp. 3 and 6.
14 Ibid., p. 4.
15 Ibid., p. 6.
16 Ibid., p. 165. Marsden comments that Southern Baptists and Southern Presbyterians were overwhelmingly conservative and thus gave modernism little sway.
through questioning the “Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the unitary authorship of the book of Isaiah, and the conception of prophecy as a detailed prediction of the future.”

The 1893 assembly of the PC-USA voted to remove Briggs and re-articulate its commitment to inerrancy. This moment represented an early warning of the battle to come, as Union Seminary would part with the PC-USA as a result. According to Numbers, Briggs’s preeminence resulted in a “heresy trial [that] rocked the religious world.”

Two significant statements came from the fundamentalist side prior to the war. Between 1910 and 1915 The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth was a privately-financed pamphlet series sent to approximately three million people. Marsden identifies the series as a public coming-out for the fundamentalist cause. Its content included traditional concerns such as the doctrines of salvation and missions but also a strong rebuttal to higher criticism. But two contributors, James Orr and George Frederick Wright, “were well known to allow that limited forms of evolution might have been used by God in creation.”

A second declaration emanated from the PC-USA’s General Assembly, which in 1910 made it mandatory that ministerial candidates affirm a five-part statement in which the supernatural figured prominently in each point. Longfield observes that “the assembly declared that all candidates for ordination should be able to affirm the inerrancy of Scripture and the

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17 Longfield, The Presbyterian Controversy, p. 23.
18 Ibid.
19 Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 117.
20 Numbers, The Creationists, p. 41.
22 Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 119.
23 Ibid., p. 120 and 122.
virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection, and miracle-working power of Christ.”24 By the 1920s fundamentalists of varied denominations would hold up these four of these five statements as a creed.25

As an important sidenote, premillennial dispensationalism as a view of the end of the world was a key component of many fundamentalists’ worldview about the present life and the sovereignty of God in human history. Premillenialists hold that Christ's return to earth occurs before a 1000-year reign prophesied in Revelation and that both events are in the future, out of human hands. By contrast, postmillenialists make human choice paramount by placing the fulfillment of Revelation's battle of good and evil in the present age, with Christ's return occurring at the end. The significance of the terms "premillenial" and "postmillennial," then, is that they reflect polar opposite views of the value of human agency in light of divine power.

According to George Marsden, premillennial dispensationalism is one of the defining intellectual contributions of fundamentalism as it reacted to the perceived failure of postmillennial thinking to prevent secularization in America. Marsden claims the heyday of postmillennial thinking among evangelicals ended with the Civil War, when the success of America economically and scientifically was baptized as God-ordained. When liberalizing tendencies began to downplay the supernatural component in postmillenialism, premillennial dispensationalism thrived as a reaction.

Strongly Calvinistic, the perspective minimized human agency and found its modern prophet in John Nelson Darby of the Plymouth Brethren. Dispensations were seen as divinely bounded episodes that segmented human history leading to Christ's eventual victory over evil. The view was in large measure a fruit of Princeton Theology and the doctrine of the inerrancy of


25 Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 117. He claims that the fifth regarding miracles was later substituted with premillenialism.
Scripture. C.I Scofield popularized this view in his 1909 *Scofield Reference Bible*. Marsden sees this view of history as anti-humanist and anti-developmental. “Natural developments in which humans are the key agents play little if any role. Rather, humans participate in a larger cosmic struggle, the details of which have been planned and often revealed in advance.” Dispensationalism reflected an essential pessimism about human improvement and an other-worldly focus, whereas postmillennialism was engaged with present social problems.  

The *Scofield Reference Bible* was not only widely popular but its views added diversity to the antievolution movement in that it allowed for an old earth via a gap of indefinite time between the first two verses of Genesis. Numbers puts the sales of the Scofield Bible at around ten million copies and states that it “enjoyed immense respect among Christians who shared the editor’s commitment to the inerrancy of the Scriptures.”

However, prior to the clashes of the 1920s there were not only doctrinal but practical aspects to the genesis of fundamentalism. There was a turning away from matters of institutional change and social justice to a private conception of holiness. Marsden terms the turn a “Great Reversal” because suddenly evangelism was set in opposition to liberal ideas of humanitarianism in the first two decades of the twentieth century: “By the time of World War I, ‘social Christianity’ was becoming thoroughly identified with liberalism and was viewed with great suspicion by many conservative evangelicals.” The identification of the Social Gospel with modernist theology would be inevitable as the former tended to obscure the importance of

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26 Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 63. *See also* pp. 5, 44, 46, 49-52, 54, and 119.

27Ibid., p. 119; Numbers, *The Creationists*, p. 60.


29 Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 91.
personal salvation in favor of meeting human needs.\textsuperscript{30} Finally, the Social Gospel prioritized institutional over individual evil, using tactics of collective action rather than focusing upon personal sin.\textsuperscript{31}

Another related characteristic of fundamentalism was a strong unwillingness to fellowship in ecumenical contexts. As the Federal Churches of Christ, founded in 1908, was essentially a fruit of the Social Gospel movement, it automatically came under scrutiny by fundamentalists.\textsuperscript{32} In addition, after the First World War, conservatives were quick to attack the Interchurch World Movement as a humanitarian counterpart to the League of Nations.\textsuperscript{33} According to D.G. Hart, Presbyterian intellectual J. Gresham Machen had a strongly negative assessment of the IWM as an arm of liberalism steering Christians away from concerns of eternal security to “worldly” matters.\textsuperscript{34} Nonetheless, to counter the interdenominational strength of modernism, fundamentalists of diverse traditions united under the banner of the World Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA) in 1919. William Vance Trollinger, Jr. recounts the failed attempt of the WCFA, led by William Bell Riley, to “rescue” denominations from modernism, culminating with a campaign against Darwinism in the public schools in the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{35}

By that decade modernism had achieved a presence in America that shocked the fundamentalists in the Presbyterian camp. In 1923, J. Gresham Machen was unequivocal in

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 92.

\textsuperscript{31} Longfield, \textit{The Presbyterian Controversy}, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 20.

\textsuperscript{33} Marsden, \textit{Fundamentalism and American Culture}, p. 166. Longfield states that “[t]he movement sought to consolidate all of the missionary agencies of American Protestantism into a single effort to fulfill their common task” (\textit{The Presbyterian Controversy}, p. 26).


Christianity and Liberalism that two different faiths were locked in conflict. In *The Faith of Modernism*, Shailer Mathews, the dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School, defended modernism as supremely relevant to the culture: “The use of scientific, historical, social method in understanding and applying evangelical Christianity to the needs of living persons, is Modernism.” According to Larson, modernism set aside divine revelation for “evolutionary development” by making the scriptural testimony a product of flawed human activity; i.e., understanding scripture was an ongoing process of recognizing the circumstances behind past and present contexts. Hence the essence of scripture was given greater weight over its accuracy, and the supernatural became less of an emphasis. Marsden agrees:

> When Mathews said that Christianity was scientific and empirical he had something vastly different in mind from what Machen meant when he said the same thing. The basic premise underlying all of Mathews’ thought, as well as much of the scientific thought of the day, was that ideas and beliefs are not mirrors of external reality but products of the mind shaped by natural evolutionary and cultural developments. Thus religion was not based on static or standardized objective knowledge of God, but rather could best be understood as a social or historical development. Christians had faith that God indeed was acting in history, but they knew of him only through human religious experience which changed as society changed.

Therefore, modernism represented the exact opposite of the doctrine of the Bible as a static entity which had come to be a foundational principle of fundamentalism. As the needs of the present moment came into conflict with the desire of some to preserve tradition, confrontation was inevitable.

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36 Shailer Mathews, *The Faith of Modernism* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1925), p. 35. Emphasis is Mathews’s. The grammatical error with the phrase “social method” is his also.

37 Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, p. 34.

38 Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 176.
When the 1922 sermon “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” was delivered by a modernist Baptist named Harry Emerson Fosdick in a New York Presbyterian pulpit, that moment of clash came. Fosdick called for liberty among Baptists and Presbyterians, and cast the fundamentalist wing of each denomination as agents of intolerance. He challenged the fundamentalists to consider the impact of modern learning upon the interpretation of the Bible, e.g. the scientific mind could not easily accept the doctrine of the virgin birth.\(^{39}\) Longfield observes that Fosdick sounded a familiar theme, “that development, not supernatural intervention, was God’s way of working out his will in the world.”\(^{40}\) Fosdick believed that the Christians of his era had no choice but to bring their ancient faith into discourse with modern realities: “We must be able to think our modern life clear through in Christian terms, and to do that we also must be able to think our Christian life clear through in modern terms.”\(^{41}\) According to Robert Moats Miller, conflict with conservative Presbyterians was inevitable as Fosdick’s outworking of these principles was to attack both the doctrines of inerrancy and of the second coming of Christ (in addition to the virgin birth) and to seek a wide dissemination of his ideas.\(^{42}\) In addition, Marsden notes that Fosdick had already unified his cause with that of science by debating William Jennings Bryan about evolution in the \textit{New York Times}.\(^{43}\) Fosdick represented an aspect of modernist arguments fundamentalists found particularly hard to challenge---a stand taken for the liberty of interpretation. His position was quintessentially Baptist but also connected to the

\(^{39}\) Longfield, \textit{The Presbyterian Controversy}, p. 10.

\(^{40}\) \textit{Ibid}.


\(^{43}\) Marsden, \textit{Fundamentalism and American Culture}, p. 171.
Reformation as a whole; nonetheless, for conservative Presbyterians Fosdick’s call for tolerance posed a grave threat.

The 1923 General Assembly of the PC-USA was a referendum on modern ideas, including evolution and Fosdick’s preaching. Despite Bryan’s campaigning for a ban of evolutionary teaching in Presbyterian schools, the assembly voted instead for a far milder wording and essentially dismissed the matter to focus on Fosdick’s impact. This outcome demonstrated to what degree antievolutionism would be a sectarian crusade beyond the concern of denominational hierarchies. However, the cause was not unrelated to the assembly’s actions to challenge the modernism represented by Fosdick. The assembly voted to reaffirm the 1910 assembly’s statement of the five fundamentals of the faith, thus denouncing the “progressive” concept of revelation that Fosdick championed. Bryan took heart that the fundamentalist crusade was still alive and well in the PC-USA.

The message was not lost upon those in the denomination who shared Fosdick’s notion of liberty. This group composed a response to the creedal actions of the Assembly in 1924, a document that popularly became known as the *Auburn Affirmation*. While the signers agreed that some accepted the traditional interpretations of doctrine, they stated that they were “united in believing that these are not the only theories allowed by the Scriptures” and that diversity posed no block to fellowship. Calling the document “the chief symbol of the liberal movement within the church,” Longfield comments that, most importantly, protesters complained that creedal statements handed down by the assembly without a vote from the presbyteries violated the

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45 Ibid., pp. 74-76.
church’s constitution. With over 1200 signers, the Affirmation was a gauntlet thrown down to question the validity of the domineering fundamentalist faction. Hart comments on Machen’s response: “The distinction between fact and theory [the Affirmation made all doctrine theory] was an argument that Machen opposed vehemently. From his perspective, the Affirmation revealed the telltale flaw of liberalism, that of making theology independent of and secondary to religious experience.” Finally, the document’s varied list of signers had the ancillary effect of revealing a third party in the situation---moderates.

For J. Gresham Machen, fighting modernism was a lifetime battle. Dealing with moderates at Princeton Theological Seminary was however highly problematic and ultimately his conscience led him to found a new school. Machen also addressed modernism in the missions field by creating a separate missions board, an action that pitted him against the denomination itself. For Machen, separation became a necessary tool in the arsenal of weapons to fight modernism, but his methodical approach differed greatly from the outbursts of his fundamentalist colleagues---a fact that reflected his upbringing and his academic exposure. Still, Machen’s views of social issues - his championing of libertarian values - foreshadowed the arguments of the Religious Right. However, his views of science involved nuance and detail, reflecting an academic orientation that would later be obscured.

**John Gresham Machen (1881-1937)**

John Gresham Machen was born into wealth and privilege in a house steeped in Southern culture in Baltimore. Machen’s parents entertained university presidents as well as future U.S.

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President Woodrow Wilson. Machen’s family had strong religious roots in Southern Presbyterianism in which Scottish Common Sense reasoning dominated. According to Longfield, in this line of thinking “Scripture provided ‘facts’ to the theologian in the same way that nature provided ‘facts’ to the physical scientist.” Scottish Common Sense realism, in Hart’s words, “was rooted in the notion that ordinary people, not just philosophers, could truly understand the physical universe and human experience through careful observation.” Mark Noll comments that even time was not a block to perception: ‘The Scottish philosophers regarded truth as a static entity, open equally to all people wherever they lived, in the present or past.’ Common Sense reasoning and the commitment to Calvinism which undergirded it played a defining role in Machen’s later response to modernism.

Machen chose a classical education at Johns Hopkins in 1898 for his undergraduate experience. After graduation he struggled to find a sense of direction, and Machen later matriculated at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1902. As an exemplary student and member of Phi Beta Kappa, Machen graduated with two degrees, a B.D. from the seminary and an M.A. in philosophy from the university. The seminary environment resonated with Machen’s identity as a Southern Presbyterian as well as with the Common Sense reasoning he had been

50 Hart, Defending the Faith, pp. 13.
51 Longfield, The Presbyterian Controversy, pp. 34-35.
52 Hart, Defending the Faith, p. 25.
54 Hart, Defending the Faith, p. 15; Longfield, The Presbyterian Controversy, p. 39.
trained to value. The exact opposite was the case for Machen’s next step into the world of scholarship, at the German universities of Marburg and Göttingen.

Entering Marburg in 1905, Machen faced one of his greatest intellectual challenges in the person of Wilhelm Herrmann, a follower of Albrecht Ritschl, whom Hart calls “the magisterial ethicist whose chief accomplishment was to redefine Christian faith as a moral, not dogmatic, system.” Herrmann’s outlook on religion and science ran counter to Machen’s. Herrmann’s worldview divorced the historicity of Jesus from the ethics of Jesus. Furthermore, Longfield notes that Machen’s Common Sense upbringing came under fire as the realms of science and faith were in Herrmann’s view “completely separate.”

In his writing about Herrmann, Frederick Gregory suggests that Herrmann refused to engage in a dialogue about the warfare between science and religion because he denied the realms could ever have overlapping interests. In addition, striving for a reconciliation was likewise a futile act. Here Herrmann took a cue from his teacher Ritschl, who made a strong separation between the realms of faith and science. Ritschl argued that faith and science diverged as science could offer no information about ultimate meaning without disregarding the scientific method that had made it successful. The end result was that a teleological explanation

58 Ibid.
61 Ibid., p. 203.
62 Ibid., p. 204.
63 Ibid., p. 209.
could not be derived from scientific work. Herrmann would claim that science and metaphysics had no point of contact. Gregory notes that contradictory ideas were a necessary part of science but rejected in the metaphysical realm. But Herrmann also separated metaphysics and theology by claiming that uncertainty in the real world clashed with the religious belief that value could be assigned to the parts of creation. For Herrmann, the core of Christianity lay in its moral structure, not its metaphysical claims. Gregory illustrates Herrmann’s approach with reference to origins—the creation of the world should be articulated without reference to God. But perhaps the most direct assault to Machen’s Presbyterian sense of facts and certainty came with Herrmann’s thought about the biblical accounts of miracles:

Herrmann’s refusal to include miracles among facts was certainly unacceptable to conservative theologians. To Herrmann, miracle applied to the realm of faith and the personal view of the universe but not to the natural world. He opposed trying to explain miracle by saying that God broke through the natural order…The significance of the New Testament miracles was not that they were objects of faith but that they directed people to Christ so that they could experience God’s power for themselves. Herrmann even included the resurrection among the events whose supernatural aspects were not intended as objects of faith. The natural order was the object of cognition and science; it was not to be confused with the realm of faith.

The Presbyterian worldview demanded a tight correspondence between facts as concepts and realities in the natural world in order to defend the claims of miracle in the Bible; Herrmann’s approach separated the realms of nature and theology so totally as to make such

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65 Ibid., p. 213.
66 Ibid., p. 214.
67 Ibid., p. 215.
68 Ibid., p. 245.
69 Ibid., pp. 254-255.
conclusions impossible. Still, Herrmann’s personal sense of spiritual devotion was so powerful that it increased the struggle within Machen. At Göttingen, amidst New Testament studies Machen also realized a gap existed in conservative scholarship that demanded immediate remedy in order to answer the challenges of liberalism---his life calling grew more certain.

Machen returned to the United States in 1906 to take up a post at Princeton that began a relationship of twenty-three years as he moved from instructor to professor of New Testament. This situation brought about the resurrection of Machen’s confidence in the Calvinism of his youth for two reasons. First, as a Presbyterian and an intellectual he was mentored by several seminary professors, preeminently among whom was the noted biblical scholar Benjamin B. Warfield. Here Machen found his bearings again regarding the supernatural Christianity of his past and the means to defend it. Secondly, the history of the seminary had provided an atmosphere supportive of such conclusions. Princeton Theological Seminary had been well-known as a bastion of Scottish Common Sense realism. The teaching of theology at Princeton therefore became a matter of the cataloguing of facts as opposed to speculation. Two of the seminary’s guiding lights, Warfield and Archibald Alexander Hodge, had as early as 1881 stated the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture to counter the impact of higher criticism. In essence, this argument stated that the original autographs of the Bible were free from human error and

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70 Hart, *Defending the Faith*, pp. 21-22.
fully divinely inspired. Machen rebounded with such confidence after his turmoil in Germany that he gave two addresses that warned of a coming battle with modernism: in 1912 he urged a consecration of all academic disciplines under a Christian banner, and in 1915 he countered Herrmann’s arguments by stating that history could not be separated from the meaning of Christianity.

Machen set an example as a Christian leader fully engaged with scholarship. He used higher critical methods to defend the historic faith. In *The Origin of Paul’s Religion* (1921) he examined claims that the Christianity of Jesus and that of Paul were grossly dissimilar and disconnected in time; *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (1930) looked at the authenticity of claims of the miraculous. His 1923 *Christianity and Liberalism* stood as the best intellectual characterization of fundamentalism in contrast with liberal Christianity.

Machen became involved in the struggles of seminary and denominational life. His political views, as will be seen below, were consistently conservative. His understanding of the critical issues in science during the Scopes era prevented him from taking the polemical approach of Bryan; a persistently academic orientation had imbued Machen with a sense of etiquette and self-limitation the Great Commoner lacked. While Machen offered leadership in the 1930s to a subset of Presbyterians who would later add their strength to creationist fervor, his total legacy was complex and requires examination by stages.

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76 Ibid., pp. 218-219.


Machen’s Theological Views

Early Warnings: The Threat of Disciplinary Autonomy

Machen warned of a coming storm even as early as 1913 in The Princeton Theological Review, in a piece entitled “Christianity and Culture”, which was a published version of a 1912 address. Making the case that God ought to be sovereign over all of life, Machen refused to separate the life of the mind from the life of the spirit, as many, including fundamentalists, wanted to argue. “Are then Christianity and culture in a conflict that is to be settled only by the destruction of one or the other of the contending forces? A third solution, fortunately, is possible—namely consecration.”

The remainder of the article read like a battle manual for the Reformed as each coming wave of secularization threatened to displace Protestant orthodoxy from the centers of influence, whether ecclesiastical, academic, economic, or political. One particular section was a critical element of a Reformed worldview---the assumption that human learning was not to be perceived as one among many autonomous, separated compartments of activity but as part of an integrated whole. The very notion of disciplinary autonomy apart from the taming and harnessing power of divine revelation was understood by Machen as ultimately blasphemous:

Furthermore, the field of Christianity is the world. The Christian cannot be satisfied so long as any human activity is either opposed to Christianity or out of all connection with Christianity. Christianity must pervade not merely all nations, but also all of human thought. The Christian, therefore, cannot be indifferent to any branch of earnest human endeavor. It must all be brought into some relation to the gospel. It must be studied either in order to be demonstrated as false, or else in order to be made useful in advancing the Kingdom of God…The Church must seek to conquer not merely every man for Christ, but also the whole of man. 


80 Ibid., p. 6.
Finally he exulted in the idea that ultimately there “will also be a time when doubts have disappeared...when all of science converges to one great conviction...when every thought has been brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ.” 81 The time was short. “What is today a matter of academic speculation begins tomorrow to move armies and pull down empires.” 82 Machen made clear the pressing need: “So as Christians we should try to mould the thought of the world in such a way as to make the acceptance of Christianity something more than a logical absurdity.” 83

There had been a transformation already in Machen’s view of the former Christian consensus that had given the nation its moral shape. “Christianity is exerting a far less powerful direct influence in the civilized world today than it was exerting thirty years ago.” 84 He concedes that a new materialism might be the culprit, but immediately states that the real core of the problem lies at the university level: “The thought of the day, as it makes itself most strongly felt in the universities, is profoundly opposed to Christianity, or at least it is out of connection with Christianity. The chief obstacle to the Christian religion today lies in the sphere of the intellect.” 85 He then comes to the crux of the matter---modernity requires compartmentalization of human activities, and Christianity forbids such segmentation of the world:

The vast majority of those who reject the gospel do so simply because they know nothing about it. But whence comes this indifference? It is due to the intellectual atmosphere in which men are living. The modern world is dominated by ideas which ignore the gospel. Modern culture is not altogether opposed to the gospel.

81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., p. 7.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid., p. 10.
85 Ibid.
But it is out of all connection with it. It not only prevents the acceptance of Christianity. It prevents Christianity even from getting a hearing.\footnote{Ibid., p.11.}

In other words, the Enlightenment project of making the divine superfluous to human endeavor, which had already overtaken the rest of the formerly Christian world, now had within the last decades come to threaten the bastion of Reformation faith, the United States.

Machen faced a series of challenges simultaneously. First, the university had secularized. Longfield observes that in Machen’s view “[s]ince the universities were the intellectual greenhouses of the nation, the cultural apostasy had to be stopped there or it would not be stopped at all.”\footnote{Longfield, \textit{The Presbyterian Controversy}, p. 46.} However, disciplinary separation posed another problem. As Hart states, to Machen “the central problem facing the church was the strain between knowledge and piety.” Many concluded that Christianity “had to do only with the emotions and the will, while intellectual life concerned knowledge and culture. At the seminary, however, these airtight compartments were unacceptable.”\footnote{Hart, \textit{Defending the Faith}, p. 30.}

According to John Higham, there was significant resistance to intellectual specialization in American culture. “The intellectual specialist affronted egalitarian values” in that each person became dependent on the skills of others.\footnote{John Higham, “The Matrix of Specialization,” in \textit{The Organization of Knowledge in Modern America, 1860-1920}, ed. Alexandra Oleson and John Voss (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979,) p. 4.} However, he counts the end of the nineteenth century as the last stand of those who attempted to resist the inevitable shift toward specialization.\footnote{Ibid., p. 5.}

Therefore, the implications for Machen become clear when one considers that Scottish Common
Sense realism’s doctrine of universal access to “facts” faced an immediate challenge from the concept of specialization.

Nonetheless, Machen remained committed to the concept of consecration in all activity, i.e., rather than follow many fundamentalists in rejecting the contribution of secular disciplines, Machen sought to harness the academic world in the service of the sacred. For example, in 1915 at his installation address at Princeton Theological Seminary, he argued for a pattern of using higher criticism to defend orthodoxy. “The modern Church is impatient of history. History, we are told, is a dead thing.”

Machen articulated the position he sought to dismantle:

The true essence of the Bible [interpreted with modernist lenses] is to be found in eternal ideas...It makes no difference whether the history is real or fictitious; in either case, the ideas are the same. It makes no difference whether Abraham was an historical personage or a myth; in either case his life is an inspiring example of faith. It makes no difference whether Moses was really a mediator between God and Israel; in any case the record of Sinai embodies the idea of a covenant between God and His people. It makes no difference whether Jesus really lived and died and rose again as He is declared to have done in the Gospels; in any case the Gospel picture, be it ideal or be it history, is an encouragement to filial piety. In this way, religion has been made independent, as is thought, of the uncertainties of historical research. The separation of Christianity from history has been a great concern of modern theology. It has been an inspiring attempt. But it has been a failure.

This process of division between the real and the fictitious denigrated the core of the faith, as far as Machen was concerned, because the core of the faith was essentially not ideological but dependent on actual events. Other faiths declared ideas as truths, but Christianity, Machen believed, was a body of ideas centered around supernatural contact in past happenings and persons. However, modernists sought to domesticate the faith by sifting its broadly appealing ethical content apart from its exclusivist claims based on supernatural revelation.

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92 Ibid.
But Machen was quick to deny modernists any refuge in their attempts to “salvage” the faith for the modern world. First, they claim that “according to modern naturalism, a supernatural person never existed”. To deal with Christ, they reconceptualized the four Gospels as composed of two layers in need of separation: “genuine historical tradition” that “preserved the real Jesus” versus “myth” that “added the supernatural attributes”. The future of religion in academia was set:

The duty of the historian is to separate the two---to discover the genuine human traits of the Galilean prophet beneath the gaudy colors which have almost hopelessly defaced His portrait, to disentangle the human Jesus from the tawdry ornamentation which has been hung about Him by naïve and unintelligent admirers.

This controversial agenda divided liberal from conservative Christians with long-term effects. At the moment Machen demonstrated the restoration of his faith from doubts that had reached a high point in Germany. Longfield maintains that the “History and Faith” address was a rebuttal of the claims of Wilhelm Herrmann that history could be effectively divorced from devotion to Christ. Machen was not alone in lamenting the loss of universal truths. According to J. David Hoeveler, the New Humanist movement, contemporaneous with Machen, pushed for a re-elevation of the humanities generally and attacked the popularity of dismissing universals for the pleasure of fads, intellectual and otherwise. Machen’s training combined both religion

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93 Ibid., p. 6.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
and the humanities, and it was an integrated vision that motivated him to discuss the Apostle Paul and the virgin birth doctrine using higher critical tools.

**Academic Etiquette and Attempts at the Re-Integration of a Compartmentalizing Modernity**

Maturing as a scholar at Princeton Theological Seminary in the shadow of Warfield in the latter’s waning years (Warfield died in 1921), J. Gresham Machen absorbed the need for a mannerly engagement in the midst of dissecting critics. Respected by foes and supporters of the inerrancy doctrine, Princeton had remained a bastion of orthodoxy as the twenties began and had become the scholarly wing of an otherwise populist fundamentalist movement. But the record of Machen’s scholarship showed a living tension within his personality between engagement with the outside world and the need to defend supernaturalism. In two scholarly works for which he became famous, *The Origin of Paul’s Religion* (1921) and *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (1930), Machen employed higher critical methods, demonstrating that the continued relevance of the Christian faith depended on accepting the rules of the game. He preferred to adopt the etiquette of discourse to the dismissive ways of the polemicist.

Ferenc Szasz clarifies the defining characteristics of the new field of higher criticism: “That the Bible should be studied just like any other piece of literature, using the methods of literary criticism, and that it should be studied and understood within its historic context.”98 The result of this shift from literalism to criticism was a new application of scientific thinking to biblical studies. “Disregarding a priori assumptions, liberals felt they were using the objective methods of science to uncover biblical truths.”99 Szasz notes the counterargument to historical studies was the inerrancy doctrine of Princeton Theological Seminary, championed by Charles

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99 Ibid., p. 34.
Hodge and later Machen. Hart notes that instead of “eschewing the methods and findings of higher criticism as many conservatives did, Machen used the new learning … to defend historic Christianity”. Most importantly, Machen believed that the supernatural basis of New Testament Christianity was still legitimately arguable by these new rules.

In *Paul’s Religion*, Machen on the first page declared that there were two groups at war within the Church over the importance of the origin of Paul’s religion: the liberals argued that “the problem of origin should be kept entirely separate from the present religious interests of the Church” while conservatives argued that faith vitally depended upon history, since it was “a manner of life founded upon a message---upon a message with regard to the Founder” himself. In making this latter case, Machen employed the tools of his trade to strike down several arguments. He debated scholars who, for example, reduced Paul’s version of Christ to a derivative from Judaism’s Messianic accounts. Machen assumed that the reason for this labeling was to denigrate the testimony of Paul as it invoked the supernatural. “In other words, it is dangerous, on naturalistic principles, to bring Paul into contact with Jesus. For if he is brought into contact with Jesus, his witness to Jesus will have to be heard. And when his witness is heard, the elaborate modern reconstructions of the ‘liberal Jesus’ fall to the ground.”

Secondly, he took on those who argued that Paul’s theology was merely a result of the “syncretistic pagan religion of the Hellenistic age” in which one found “the widespread pagan


myth of a dying and rising saviour-god.”

He also considered the matter from the perspective of a potential cross-pollination between Judaism and paganism:

It is exceedingly difficult, therefore, to suppose, in defiance of the Jewish sources, and in the mere interests of a theory as to the genesis of Paulinism, that the Pharisaic Judaism from which Paul sprang was imbued with a mystical piety like that of the mystery religions or of Hermes Trismegistus.

Machen was conceding that “[i]t would be going too far” to claim that no culture had predated Paul with a resurrecting savior-god---he cites an example from Egyptian texts. But, at the same time, he was quick to prove dissimilarity between religious traditions: “Christ is represented as dying voluntarily” but the Egyptian gods “were overtaken by their fate.” Furthermore, the Egyptian resurrection stories were of a “totally fluid character” with many versions; in contrast, Machen believed “the resurrection of the Pauline Christ was a fact of history.”

The purpose behind all of these defenses was to re-establish the link between supernatural and natural using the new indices of proof; higher criticism posed no serious threat to orthodoxy if wielded correctly. Hart elucidates the nature of the debate over Pauline texts in Machen’s time: Jesus was seen by many liberal scholars as an ethical teacher who had been somehow transformed by Paul into a god. Paul had prioritized Jesus’ person over his teaching,

104 Ibid., p. 211.
105 Ibid., p. 256.
106 Ibid., p. 314.
107 Ibid., p. 315.
108 Ibid.
109 Hart, Defending the Faith, p. 48.
and Machen was compelled to re-establish the order but to do it in a way that in Hart’s words “clearly separated his criticisms of liberal scholars from fundamentalist diatribes.”\textsuperscript{110}

In *The Virgin Birth of Christ* one finds the same strategy: a body of Biblical texts that had become the target of skeptical higher critics could now return to its rightful place, using the opposition’s methods. What was the origin of the idea of Christ having been born without a biological father? Could the ancient texts withstand the scrutiny of the higher critic? Machen strove to answer all objections to this the most controversial of all Christian doctrines in a scientific age, in which the laboratory not the chapel was the source of truth. Machen sought to prove the integrity of both birth narratives (Matthew’s and Luke’s) and to disprove ideas of Jewish or pagan derivation. Part of Machen’s task here was to demonstrate how early the doctrine of the virgin birth originated.

In the first place, even if there were no earlier testimonies, the very fact that at the close of the second century there was such a remarkable consensus among all parts of the Church would show that the doctrine was no new thing, but must have originated long before. But as a matter of fact there are earlier testimonies of a very important kind.\textsuperscript{111}

This line of argument supported Machen’s own presupposition that the doctrine of the incarnation emerged with the first century church and was not a later accretion or worse, such as a syncretistic product of Christianity and another belief system.

Taken together, *The Origin of Paul’s Religion* and *The Virgin Birth of Christ* formed a symmetrical defense of the essential doctrines of Christianity as a supernatural faith able to stand the tests of the new “scientific” criticism. But there was also an important style of argument here, one that employed a three-step set of maneuvers. In step one, presuppositions determined the

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p. 50.

range of possible answers—and it was clear that German higher critics assumed a more limited range than Machen, confining their universe to naturalistic causes and effects only. In step two, the process of elimination came into play when analyzing texts and historical concepts. In step three, Machen had not ruled out the supernatural within the realm of the possible but also accepted the idea of naturalistic outcomes as well. In other words, Machen believed his range of possible answers demonstrated his mind was more open than that of the Germans. For this reason, he decried the methods of the new age as anti-intellectual. His method mirrored the higher critics, but his presuppositions freed his imagination in terms of which conclusions were “reasonable.” It was the higher critics’ elimination of anything beyond the objective and scientifically verifiable that in fact made them look more biased to Machen. Finally, there was a lingering ambiguity about the impact of higher criticism upon the Christian religion as a whole. As Szasz comments, suddenly the common person was being told that real understanding in the field of religion was a domain that belonged solely to experts.\textsuperscript{112} This was a substantial leap from the Common Sense worldview, and yet Machen’s use of higher critical tools was a tacit admission that the world had changed and even conservative Christians had to adjust to a degree.

**Machen vs. Fosdick: Conflicting Codings of the Future and the Past**

Machen’s advocacy for the traditional faith was not limited to the seminary cloister but extended into the practical struggles that became known as the “Fundamentalist-Modernist” controversy, with Harry Emerson Fosdick on the opposing side. Fosdick was a militant Baptist with a wide audience. Machen, according to Robert Moats Miller, had already written off Fosdick as early as 1916 for preaching what appeared to be another religion altogether.\textsuperscript{113} Miller

\textsuperscript{112} Szasz, *The Divided Mind of Protestant America*, p. 40.

\textsuperscript{113} Robert Moats Miller, *Harry Emerson Fosdick*, p. 114.
also noted a reply Fosdick made in *The New York Times* excoriating William Jennings Bryan’s campaign to prove evolution as “unscientific and irreligious” in 1922. But Fosdick’s most famous polemic was yet to come.

In May 1922, Fosdick delivered a sermon entitled, “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” Defining modernist Christianity was a straightforward matter for Fosdick. His language of cultural evolution as a result of innovation in science and comparative anthropology reached a crescendo of enthusiasm:

> A great mass of new knowledge has come into man’s possession—new knowledge about the physical universe, its origin, its forces, its laws; new knowledge about human history and in particular about the ways in which the ancient peoples used to think in matters of religion…and new knowledge, also, about other religions and strangely similar ways in which men’s faiths and religious practices have developed everywhere.\(^{115}\)

In light of naturalistic presuppositions he could not avoid, Fosdick questioned the most basic doctrines Machen and other fundamentalists held dear. On the virgin birth of Christ, he claimed a legitimate defense for the plurality of divergent perspectives on a heated issue. If it was true it implied “a biological miracle.” “Well, if the Fundamentalists should succeed, then out of the Christian church would go some of the best Christian life and consecration of this generation—multitudes of men and women.”\(^{116}\) Likewise the doctrine of inerrancy of the Bible was a problem for nonfundamentalists, who lacked no sincerity of faith despite believing “that static and mechanical theory of inspiration seems to them a positive peril to the spiritual life”.\(^{117}\)

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Finally, he proposed that a breakthrough in human thought had occurred and that a threshold in religious perception had been crossed:

Consider another matter upon which there is a serious and sincere difference of opinion between evangelical Christians: the second coming of our Lord...No one in the ancient world had ever thought, as we do, of development, progress, gradual change, as God’s way of working out His will in human life and institutions. They thought of human history as a series of ages succeeding one another with abrupt suddenness.\(^\text{118}\)

In saying this he directly challenged the idea that a mentality that embraced a catastrophic “end times” gave American evangelicals an excuse to ignore this-worldly suffering and moral darkness. How to relate the will of God with notions of development and progress as human life and institutions advanced was the essence of the divide between Fosdick and the Reformed represented by Machen.

Fosdick’s image of science at the conclusion requires citation in full, as it seems to encapsulate so much of the battles in decades to come.

Ministers often bewail the fact that young people turn from religion to science for the regulative areas of their lives. But this is easily explicable. Science treats a young man’s mind as though it were really important. A scientist says to a young man: “Here is the universe challenging our investigation. Here are the truths we have seen, so far. Come, study with us! See what we already have seen and then look further to see more, for science is an intellectual adventure for the truth.” Can you imagine any man who is worth while turning from that call to the church if the church seems to him to say, “Come, we will feed you opinions from a spoon. No thinking is allowed here except such as brings you to certain specified, predetermined conclusions. These prescribed opinions we will give you in advance of your thinking; now think, but only so as to reach these results.”\(^\text{119}\)

The promise of intellectual freedom thus lay on the side of science in Fosdick’s understanding.

The underlying assumption here was that the doctrinaire positions of the fundamentalists would

\(^{118}\) Ibid., p. 198.  
pass away with time as young people realized that at stake was not just scientific discovery but the breaking of unjust bonds upon the whole of their lives.

In December of 1924 Machen demanded a preservation of boundaries for the faith: “The question is not whether Dr. Fosdick is winning men, but whether the thing to which he is winning them is Christianity.”\textsuperscript{120} Machen went on full attack, claiming the historical facts of miraculous events such as the resurrection of Christ grounded Christianity, not opinions and ethical statements ready made for a new world. This shocking alteration was an offensive development that had to be reversed:

But the religion of Dr. Fosdick and of the great host of Modernist preachers in the Presbyterian church and in other churches, is not really a redemptive religion. It regards Christ as the Founder of Christianity not because he redeemed men by paying the price of sin, but because He was the initiator of a type of religious life and had an “abiding experience” which we can share.\textsuperscript{121}

This evolutionary moment in Christianity would therefore create a new faith far removed from the “sinners in the hands of an angry God” version of Jonathan Edwards. Instead, modernism argued that “the real Jesus…preached a simple gospel of filial sonship into which he invited men, as his brothers, to enter.”\textsuperscript{122} To a scholar such as Machen who had spent his life defending orthodoxy, the goal of the modernists appeared to be the one thing intolerable to a believer in the “fundamentals” of the faith: to fashion a worldly and hospitable version of Christianity.

The eradication of the basic need for salvation from sin and eternal condemnation allowed modernists such as Fosdick to re-forge the belief system in an era-friendly way, with grave consequences from Machen’s view. Regarding the atoning work of Christ, “Dr. Fosdick


\textsuperscript{121}\textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{122}\textit{Ibid}.
regarded the Cross only as an inspiring example of self-sacrifice”.  

Regarding man’s nature, Fosdick “seeks to save man by what is already in man; and the fact that what is already in man is called ‘divine’ only serves to enhance human pride.” Machen sarcastically concluded that modernists had achieved in this new humanism “an excellent summary of Greek paganism, with its joyous development of existing human resources; whereas Christianity is the religion of the broken and contrite spirit, and begins with the consciousness of sin.”

At the end of his argument, Machen assailed Fosdick for transforming Christ from the deity at the center of the religion into a new Jesus for a new age: “Christ is to him a “Master” and a leader, but not in any real sense of the word a Saviour; he has love for Christ but not trust in Him.” Machen’s approach is to set the value of inquiry in doubt when in juxtaposition with divine revelation: “Everything that he says is determined by a passionate anti-intellectualism, a pragmatic skeptic than which no skepticism could possibly be more complete.”

Machen again categorized his opponents as “anti-intellectual” for disregarding the possibility of the supernatural out of hand. Machen exemplified the ability to question modernist assumptions without the bombast and vitriolic style of fundamentalists epitomized by William Jennings Bryan. Machen’s theological positions and his ecclesiastical maneuverings compelled him to leave Princeton Theological Seminary to found Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929 and to leave the PC-USA denomination to found the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1936. But his reputation as an academic and front-line fighter for fundamentalism can obscure

123 Ibid., p. 687.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid., p. 688.
127 Ibid.
Machen’s oft-taken stands on social issues that marked him as a conservative politically.

Machen’s social views set him apart, but also foreshadowed the political positions of the later Religious Right.

**Machen’s Social Views**

**Defending States’ and Parents’ Rights Against a Backdrop of European-style Bureaucratization**

The rise of bureaucratic regulation involved a shift in worldview that a leader like Machen would have found difficult. Machen longed for another world that according to Robert H. Wiebe had passed away by the 1920s. Wiebe points to a transformation of America from a universe of autonomous “island communities” to urban realities where centralization and bureaucracy played important regulative functions. The social rules of the small town could not meet the problems of urbanization, as individuality faded into the background and aggregates became more visible. In Wiebe’s words, the bureaucratic vision of the twentieth century “pictured a society of ceaselessly interacting members” with a focus on “techniques of constant watchfulness and mechanisms of continuous management.” One casualty of this new orientation was that the moral behavior of one person became less important compared to the actions of the mass. Machen’s Christian worldview hinged upon individual choice; the bureaucratic approach posed a serious challenge. A secondary effect would be the development of sociologically-based legal decisionmaking rather than recourse to absolutes. Legal definitions changed as bureaucratic structures recontextualized groups of people beyond the

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category of family, from women who later demanded the vote or underage children forced to
work.

But still Machen was too independent a thinker on social issues to be labeled easily.
Machen’s quest for a pure libertarian politics put him at odds with both liberal and conservative
Christians, according to D.G. Hart. On the one hand, “[b]y sanctioning political centralization,
the social gospel minimized the importance of individual salvation … and undermined the
dignity, freedom, and responsibility of the individual,” and, on the other, “most fundamentalists
showed little hesitation to resort to politics in order to promote their beliefs in the public
square”. 133 Hart claims that Machen was of a mindset that pleased neither the inclusivist nor the
polemicist: “Machen said that individuals, families, and private organizations of all faiths should
have the freedom and responsibility to direct their own affairs.” 134 Consequently, in refusing to
use political power to advance Christian goals and instead holding to a culturally disengaged
confessionalism, Machen ultimately sat outside the mainstream of fundamentalist political
activism in his day.

Nonetheless, he remains an important liminal figure. He articulated the central Reformed
position on government, the need to check federal power in favor of the states during the New
Deal era. What Hart calls Machen’s “antistatist” and “noninterventionist” social views, taken
together with his resistance to innovation in theology, create an image of a conservative opposed
to all forms of change imposed from the top down. 135

As a participating member of the intelligentsia, Machen argued three major points in the
social arena. Those three points were states’ rights, parents’ rights in relation to child labor laws

133 D.G. Hart, Defending the Faith, 146.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid., 137.
and federal control of education, and an overarching warning that the United States could never allow itself to mirror European centralization, as individual liberties depended on the maintenance of a separation of powers. Russell notes that Machen “was particularly adamant in opposing trends of centralization in government, declaring that the great American principle of liberty was being threatened.”

**Machen on Suffrage: States Rights**

For Machen the method used to secure change was as important as the change itself. The Princeton professor was quick to attack the crusade to secure the vote for women, as recorded in the *Congressional Record* of January 1918:

In urging you to vote against the Susan B. Anthony amendment I am not animated chiefly by a spirit of opposition to woman suffrage in general, though personally I am not yet convinced that it is just or wise. Even if I were an ardent advocate of woman suffrage I should still be strongly opposed to the present amendment, which seems to me to run directly contrary to the manner in which important constitutional changes ought to be made.¹³⁷

“The manner” of any fundamental change to the social arrangement could not be an imposition from the federal level for Machen. He continued:

Furthermore, I can not for the life of me see why the suffrage issue should not be left to the individual States. The chief argument for Federal action in many concerns of government as against State action is that often Federal action alone is effective. Such an argument might plausibly be urged, for example, in the case of the prohibition amendment. But it does not apply at all to the suffrage issue. Every State can choose the kind of suffrage it desires and make its choice effective, quite independent of the choice of any other State. And conditions in the various States differ so widely that the forcing of suffrage upon the women of some States may be an offensive piece of tyranny.¹³⁸

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¹³⁶ Russell, *Voices of Fundamentalism*, p. 146.


Machen was arguing that extending the vote to women as a veiled act of control by a sinister power, a transformed federal government. He called the amendment “in the interest of an ill-timed and unintelligent feminism. Do such leaders really represent the women of this country? For my part I do not believe it for a moment.” Russell observes that Machen “concluded that the amendment represented an attempt to avoid a popular vote by unscrupulous suffragettes who were not representative of the women of the country.” Innovative maneuvers to address unprecedented problems did not concern Machen as much as the continuance of traditional etiquette between the federal and state levels.

**Alien Registration and Fingerprinting: European Resemblance Abhorred**

Machen would not allow the suffrage issue to become a tyranny of the few over the many; likewise, he resented federal acts of intrusion upon the ordinary citizen. Despite the growing fears of many Americans that communists, anarchists, and subversives threatened to infiltrate the country, Machen would not tolerate any form of surveillance over the mass population by the national administration. In the December 9, 1925 issue of the *New York Herald Tribune*, Machen attacked the federal government’s proposal for issuing registration cards to aliens because it would place common citizens in the bind of having also to provide evidence of their identity. “And so we shall have a full-fledged European police system…And when that happens the real America will be dead.” Russell states that this case revealed “Machen’s fear of bureaucratization in the Federal Government.”

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140 Russell, *Voices of Fundamentalism*, p. 147.


The loss of the “real America” ---the transition Machen feared---consisted of irreversible transformations that would alter the political landscape. “The apparently innocent proposal of the Secretary of Labor for enrollment of aliens is, therefore, a very sinister proposal indeed.”

Machen imagined key aspirations in tension. “An ounce of freedom is worth a pound of efficiency or of material betterment. That is one of the cardinal principles upon which this country is founded.”

Lynn Dumenil observes that reforms were often lumped together by their opponents, “as attempts by a fanatical minority to impose state paternalism on the majority” reflecting “tendencies that would undermine local and state control and sap individuals of initiative and independence.” Machen’s reasons for protest fell within these categories.

Eight years later in a letter to The New York Times, Machen expressed abhorrence for another proposal that called for a new degree of federal oversight. The Senate was considering a proposal of compulsory fingerprinting, and Machen was swift in reiterating a Reformed churchman’s sarcasm for expanding government. “To force people to do things under the plea that it is for their own benefit is paternalism; and paternalism ought to be hated with a perfect hatred by every real American.”

With building anxiety, Machen was reading the signs of the times, as the re-organization of power structures began: “Such paternalism is gradually tightening its grip on the American people,” he wrote. “Thus the whole of life is gradually being placed under bureaucratic control.”

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144 Ibid.


146 Letter from J. Gresham Machen to Editor of New York Times, September 13, 1933.

147 Ibid.
Once again, the reference point for contamination was the ways of Europeans. Using the relationship of America to the Old World Machen reinforced his case:

In this extension of bureaucratic control the climax would be reached by the proposed establishment of a system of compulsory registration. That system…was well known in Europe before the war. We Americans then had a horror of it, and we regarded our citizenship in a country to which it was profoundly abhorrent as our dearest earthly possession.\textsuperscript{148}

Declaring that the growth of bureaucracy here will likely produce the same disorder and instability that resulted when similar acts of control were imposed in Germany, he set forth one of the most important and succinct statements of Reformed understanding of American politics of the time. Countering directly the notion that the measure was “in the interests of the stability of the State,” Machen protested against any attempt to regulate and consolidate in the name of national security.

A nation is the more stable the looser its control is over individual lives. The reason is that the life of any country depends ultimately upon the moral quality of its individual citizens. Bureaucracy, with its narrowing of the area of individual choice, destroys moral fiber; it is liberty which is really stable in the long run.\textsuperscript{149}

A general sense of God-given freedom which no earthly agency had power to alter was the centerpiece of Machen’s enduring social legacy. And though a single man all his life, nowhere was his commitment more vigorous than in the matter of parental control. Two examples of Machen’s approach illustrate his view.

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
**Child Labor: Parents’ Rights**

In 1924, Machen denounced a proposed child labor amendment using many of the same rationales stated above: such a measure created too powerful a bureaucracy based upon a European worldview. The proposed amendment read as follows:

Section 1. The Congress shall have power to limit, regulate and prohibit the labor of persons under eighteen years of age.

Section 2. The power of the several States is unimpaired by this article except that the operation of State laws shall be suspended to the extent necessary to give effect to legislation enacted by Congress.  

According to Russell, Machen saw the amendment as “an extreme example of materialistic paternalism by the modern state as it attempted to usurp family prerogatives.”  

Machen exulted in 1924 upon hearing of the mass rejection of the proposal by Massachusetts voters via referendum. He was quick to attack those who declared business interests had somehow overwhelmed the will of the people: “This other explanation is that the American people is becoming disgusted with the whole tendency that appears in particularly extreme form in this ‘child labor’ proposal---the whole tendency toward the slavery involved in placing control of the intimate details of life in the hands of a centralized Washington bureaucracy.”  

Machen referred to values and ideals under threat, expressing renewed hope that “the lovers of American institutions” had, “despite recent indications” pointing to the stifling of liberty, defended “the sacredness of the American home”.  

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153 Ibid.
Subsequent articles on this topic illustrate a central point in Machen’s worldview: the federal government should always serve at the pleasure of the states, and its very existence was an emergent property of the voluntary federation of the states. “The amendment, be it good or bad, involves at least a revolutionary change in our Constitution; and we do not think such revolutionary changes ought to be made without careful consideration and without direct consultation of the people.”\textsuperscript{154} In fact, on this issue Machen brought the same sense of boundaries to bear upon the conduct of his own denomination: “we do not think that the Presbyterian church ought to become a political lobby; we do not think that it has any right to put itself on record as either favoring or opposing political and social measures about which no direct guidance is found in Scripture”.\textsuperscript{155}

At the core of Machen’s belief system was essentially a Jeffersonian vision of a unidirectional power relationship from the state to the federal level. Writing to the editor of \textit{The New Republic} Machen intended to be clear:

Will you permit me to observe that at this point your conception of American institutions differs fundamentally from ours. We hold that the local autonomy of the States, far from being a mere matter of expediency, is at the very foundation of our American freedom. But under the proposed amendment that local autonomy would practically be destroyed. By far the most important half of life would be placed under the control of a centralized bureaucracy...\textsuperscript{156}

Nonetheless, the idea of the preservation of separate zones of sovereignty was not part of an elaborate argument by Machen to argue for a divinely ordained arrangement. Machen simply saw the Child Labor Amendment as an assault upon parental jurisdiction, previously “beyond the

\textsuperscript{154}Machen, \textit{Trenton Sunday Times-Advertiser}, “Professor Machen Says Child Labor Amendment Would Threaten U.S. With Tyranny Similar to Russia,” January 25, 1925.

\textsuperscript{155}J. Gresham Machen, “‘The So-Called Child Labor Amendment,’ \textit{The Presbyterian} 95, no. 4 (January 22, 1925): p. 6.

possibility of legislative invasion” and protected “from legislative interference by the great ‘bill-of-rights’ provisions in the Constitution of the United States”. Writing to The Presbyterian, Machen framed the social issue within a church context. There was in this framing of the power balance an aspect of ethnocentrism: “The state legislatures are now limited by the great ‘bill-of-rights’ provisions in the Constitution of the United States----the bill-of-rights’ provisions which lie at the foundation of all our Anglo-Saxon liberty”.158

At the root of Machen’s outrage was the displacement of power from the hands of the common people. He was shocked by the arbitrary quality of the Amendment: “It might well be within the power of Congress if this amendment is adopted to take any child away from its parents and see to it that its ‘labor’ in connection with education or otherwise, is in accordance with the provision of whatever law might be passed”.159 The use of alarmist language was already a commonplace after World War I among fundamentalists; images of sudden and violent displays of federal bullying loomed on the horizon, it seemed, with every such innovation in law. Would the rights of the parents to oversee “the most intimate details of family life” fall “into the hands of the army of government agents?”160

What was a proposed law designed to prohibit work by those under eighteen was read by Machen as “the most sinister attack upon American institutions and the sanctity of the American home that has been made for half a century…a heartless cruelty masquerading under the guise of philanthropy”.161 Here Machen stood on common ground with many Catholics, who Dumenil

157 Ibid.


159 Ibid.

160 Ibid., p. 7.

161 Ibid., p. 6.
notes likewise opposed the amendment because they feared “state intervention in the family, which by inference would impede the influence of the church and faith.”\footnote{Dumenil, “The Insatiable Maw of Bureaucracy”, p. 516.}

Finally, Machen once again warned of adulteration that brought about resemblance to the “other,” namely trends abroad: “If this amendment is passed, nothing in the world stands between the American home and a tyranny like that of bureaucratic Russia, except the will of Congress.”\footnote{Machen, “The So-Called Child Labor Amendment,” The Presbyterian, p. 6.} By the 1920s, the notion that America could absorb any moral good from continental Europe was out of the question from the Reformed vantage point. Dumenil comments that the Red Scare of 1919 increased “widespread anxiety about bolshevism and socialism” should nationalizing efforts touching the family succeed.\footnote{Dumenil, “The Insatiable Maw of Bureaucracy”, p. 521. See also p. 514.} Secularizing Europe was bearing the fruits of its atheism (such as tyranny) as the counterpoint to the godly ways of American Protestants. Related to the child labor issue was the larger question of whether a department of education should be established, and Machen’s response would be much the same.

**Education: Differentiation as Good, Uniformity as Evil**

The professionalization of American science and the university system occurred in the nineteenth century in imitation of European models, according to George Marsden and Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, Michal M. Sokal, and Bruce V. Lewenstein.\footnote{See George Marsden, The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) ; Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, Michal M. Sokal, and Bruce V. Lewenstein, The Establishment of Science in America: 150 Years of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Piscataway, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1999).} The boom in secondary education occurred somewhat later, even as the Scopes controversy captured the national imagination in 1925. The Progressive movement’s exaltation of efficiency, centralization, and scientific approaches naturally shaped educational policymakers. The school as an institution
was undergoing a transformation from the days of rote memorization using the Protestant-tinged morality of *McGuffey’s Reader* in a one-room schoolhouse. By the 1920s, the new vision of a public school was a modern laboratory-like world in which the relatively new notion of adolescence combined with the national need for a scientifically literate, inquiry-oriented generation to meet the challenges of an unpredictable future. The pressure to standardize education that inevitably attended these events threatened Machen’s view of the relation of state to federal governments once again, and his participation in the national debate over the value of creating a Department of Education in 1926 was an important harbinger of the later Reformed protest over teaching evolution.

Machen received an opportunity to participate in congressional hearings in February of 1926, and the argument he made reflected elements of his other social positions. But the sweeping influence of the proposed Department of Education motivated him to present one of his most systematic polemics to date. Supporters of the new concept coded uniformity as unity, as patriotism, and as adaptation to provide a competitive edge in a changing world. Machen coded uniformity as the denigration of the human psyche into a mechanistic mold. In his words, the bill was “intended to accomplish...an evil purpose”.  

Machen’s worldview did not allow for the centralization of governmental agencies beyond the state level, and viewed the parents’ jurisdiction over their children’s lives being supreme over all others. The parents formed the basic governmental unit, out of which state and federal power were emergent phenomena that existed only at the pleasure of the parents. Such freedoms required the preservation of diversity as parents differed—and so children grew

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differentiated from one another----rather than the creation of uniformity for the service of the State. This process ensured the separation of powers. The transitions in sovereignty in this power arrangement implied by the proposed department of education were impossible for Machen to consider. “The department of education, according to that bill, is to promote uniformity in education. That uniformity in education under central control it seems to me is the worst fate into which any country can fall.”

To Machen, any student of Western civilization would have known better. A few weeks earlier he had declared to the conservative organization Sentinels of the Republic that this misguided attitude has been “one of the chief enemies of human liberty for several thousand years---the principle, namely, that education is an affair essentially of the State, that education must be standardized for the welfare of the whole people and put under the control of government, [and] that personal idiosyncrasies should be avoided.” Machen’s vision was that the State eliminated differences among people to satisfy its own purposes; they were merely subservient to its whims. “[The assumptions to be challenged are that] children belong to the State, [and] that their education must be provided for by the State in a way that makes for the State’s welfare.” Machen expected that government would not interfere in the education of the young.

Essentially, he read any effort toward forging uniformity in education as based upon a horrific presupposition, namely, that human nature was little more than mechanism, akin to one

\[167\text{ Ibid.}\]

\[168\text{ J. Gresham Machen, “Shall We Have a Department of Education?” , An Address Delivered by J. Gresham Machen, Assistant Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis in Princeton Theological Seminary, Before the Sentinels of the Republic, Washington, D.C., January 12, 1926, p. 2.}\]

\[169\text{ Ibid.}\]
of countless automobiles rolling off the Ford assembly line.\textsuperscript{170} How could the equivalence be made between a machine’s construction and a person’s development? Certainly, to Machen, individuality was more important than the national good. In his nightmare vision, the State could employ its ideology of efficiency to expunge novelties and differences among children through a common indoctrination process. The result would be “men reduced to the level of beasts with all the higher elements of human life [being] destroyed”, and “slavery”.\textsuperscript{171}

Machen was not alone in his protests to preserve parental power. According to Lynn Dumenil, warnings about tyranny resonated in Catholic circles. Regarding the department of education proposal, Dumenil refers to a Jesuit leader, Paul L. Blakely, who “repeatedly warned that the department of education would bring autocracy, followed by thought control.”\textsuperscript{172} Machen’s use of the assembly line image was likewise “a metaphor often used in the debate”; Dumenil cites the Reverend John O’ Brien for using the Ford illustration.\textsuperscript{173}

Machen had also established a place in a substantial conservative network—two of the audiences to which Machen communicated about education and child labor had a strong lean to the right. Dumenil describes the Sentinels of the Republic as “a group composed of well-respected representatives of social elites” and the Woman Patriots as “more fanatical, less respectable [and] antifeminist”; a general opposition to big government pervaded:

The latter two groups…appeared at the education bill hearings and linked their opposition to Prohibition with opposition to a wide-ranging list of welfare legislation endorsed by the so-called woman’s lobby [in favor of suffrage], including the child labor amendment, the Sheppard-Towner Act [funding for

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., [unmarked last page, p. 4].

\textsuperscript{172} Dumenil, “‘The Insatiable Maw of Bureaucracy’”, p. 514.

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., p.515.
maternity and child care], and the education bill, criticizing them not merely as violations of states’ rights, but also as precursors of socialism and bolshevism.¹⁷⁴

Machen was in reality part of large cohort of disillusioned Americans unwilling to allow regulation to expand the powers of the federal government regardless of the assumed need. The education bill drew the fire not only of Catholics but also from Republican politicians and members of the business community whose interests were threatened. Dumenil comments that the common theme was “deep-seated anxieties over the fate of individual autonomy in the emerging ‘organized’ society.”¹⁷⁵ That anxiety reached a high point with the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

**The Final Battle: Roosevelt’s New Deal as the Negation of Etiquette and Due Process**

As Americans saw their economic dreams shattered with the stock market crash of 1929, it became quickly clear that many pinned their hopes on Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s election in 1932. However, with the expansion of federal power that accompanied Roosevelt’s administration and the creation of numerous bureaucracies to assist the country in unprecedented ways to ameliorate hardship, for J. Gresham Machen a familiar tyranny was rearing its head in a different form.

In 1933 Machen directed his sense of betrayal at the National Recovery Administration’s chief organizer, Hugh Johnson, who demonstrated the “psychology of dictators” in threatening to destroy the financial standing of anyone he suspected of misusing the Blue Eagle stamp, which


signified that a company’s products met the standards of the National Industrial Recovery Act.\footnote{176}

Machen’s frustration reflected a sense that the rules of fair play had fallen to the wayside:

> How will that man’s livelihood be taken from him? Will it be by due process of law? Will the man have a day in open court to defend himself against the attack upon his good name and his property? Not at all. His livelihood will be taken from him because General Johnson alleges that he has cheated and then uses the full resources of the Federal government’s propaganda organization to raise a popular hue and cry against him.”\footnote{177}

In evaluating this situation, finding a sinister motive and a web of conspiracy was part of Machen’s conclusion. Since “such boycotting or blacklisting….is quite inseparable from the N.R.A. consumers’ drive”, hence “the drive itself….should be opposed by all real believers in American liberty”.\footnote{178} The nature of the drive and the silencing of dissent encouraged yet another inevitable comparison to the European scene. “It is at bottom a boycott against those who favor the American rather than the Bolshevist notion of the relation of the individual to the state.”\footnote{179} A transformative process was underway; under claims of a national emergency, social engineers distant from Machen’s value system were making America unrecognizable to the lovers of liberty.

Machen confronted the master engineer himself, the President, in a polemical letter dated September 28, 1935, specifically to voice opposition to the Social Security proposal. “I am opposed to these things because they are inimical (1) to liberty and (2) to honesty.”\footnote{180} What


\footnote{177} Ibid.

\footnote{178} Ibid.

\footnote{179} Ibid.

\footnote{180} J. Gresham Machen, Letter to the \textit{New York Herald Tribune}, “The President’s Program: Machen Calls It Inimical to Liberty and to Honesty,” October 1, 1935.
Machen means by these two terms was most revealing about how his worldview shaped his political vocabulary:

In the first place, they are inimical to liberty. We are living in a time of great distress. Instead of simply relieving that distress, as humanity dictated, you have used the distress of the people in order to sell them into slavery by placing them under a permanent system of government supervision and control.\textsuperscript{181}

The chief justification for Machen’s anger was a sense of violation of the principle that “the distinction will never be obliterated between the man who has saved and toiled and the man who has not.”\textsuperscript{182} The New Deal was subverting the Protestant work ethic and the balance of justice, rewarding the unworthy by penalizing the hardworking through the redistribution of his wealth.

Still, Machen was not altogether against special assistance for the needy: “Government support must, indeed, in emergencies, be given to the destitute---community support or state support far better than support from a remote and centralized bureaucracy.”\textsuperscript{183} However, the gradual slide into total dependence upon the federal government was to be avoided, just as with the matter of too much federal aid to the states for education:

But at the very heart of any healthy condition of society is the deep-seated conviction, in the minds of the people, that the receiving of such government support is a thing to be avoided with might and main. In the long run, such support means slavery. By forcing it upon us, in your system of compulsory government insurance, you are making paupers of our whole people.\textsuperscript{184}

If these charges were not enough, Machen then accused Roosevelt of destroying America’s reputation for “honesty” through the administration’s reshuffling of debts, a plan that

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.\
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.\
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid.\
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.
“has broken down the sanctity of contracts public and private”.\(^{185}\) This claim concluded with a direct assault:

The repudiation of the debts of the United States government which is involved in your monetary policy is not like an honest bankruptcy, where the debtor frankly acknowledges the debt but confesses himself unable to pay; but is rather a very ruthless application of the principle that might makes right. In thus depriving our country of its reputation for honesty, you have done it a far greater injury even than has been done by your reckless waste of its material resources.\(^ {186}\)

Machen pulled no punches. In the midst of the national agony, the experiments of America’s political savior appeared as omens of doom to the evangelical leader: “The great central objection to your program, after all, is the low moral plane on which it stands.”\(^ {187}\)

Machen had exaggerated the overthrow of checks and balances in the American system, however. According to Jerome Himmelstein, the revolution of Roosevelt never took on a full head of steam: “The New Deal never created the comprehensive welfare state or the forms of economic planning characteristic of many European capitalist countries.”\(^ {188}\)

However, Himmelstein is quick to point out that, compared to previous levels of activity, the extent of federal involvement in the average citizen’s life greatly broadened during the New Deal.\(^ {189}\) Thus Machen’s reaction was part of a larger current of backlash. And although Senator Huey Long and Father Charles Coughlin’s responses may have been among the most extreme, Alan Brinkley’s characterization of the motives behind their polemics could be applied to Machen and to many others: “Long and Coughlin were not the leaders of irrational, anti-

\(^{185}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{186}\) *Ibid.*


democratic uprisings…Instead they were manifestations of one of the most powerful impulses of
the Great Depression, and of many decades of American life before it: the urge to defend the
autonomy of the individual and the independence of the community against encroachments from
the modern industrial state.”190 Characterizing the thirties as an era of uncertainty and high
anxiety, Leo Ribuffo acknowledges that Roosevelt’s approach “speeded political
polarization.”191 Machen’s libertarian views would resonate in his own lifetime and with
Reformed leaders of the future. However, his intensity in these matters was not echoed in his
scientific views, which demonstrated a more measured approach than was typical of
fundamentalists of his period.

**Machen’s Scientific Views**

Although he was a contemporary of William Jennings Bryan and an intellectual for the
fundamentalist cause, Machen was not willing to cross disciplinary boundaries when called upon
by Bryan for the Scopes trial in 1925. “His decision not to testify at Dayton indicated that
despite his commitment to historic Christianity he was still attached to the world of the
university.”192 But within the university world, Machen expected that integration under a
Christian banner rather than disciplinary separation would rule. A more revealing statement
came a year later as Machen responded to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President E.
Y. Mullins’ *Christianity at the Cross Roads*.

Machen sifted Mullins’ work carefully in developing a precise critique. Rejoicing in
Mullins’ defense of the miraculous elements of Christianity, Machen nonetheless had enough

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191 Leo Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War*

concerns to refer to his own position as an “argument with a true friend.” In separating hard scientific facts from religious doctrines, Mullins had created a slippery slope, in Machen’s eyes. Disciplinary autonomy of science from religion was next: “The central point with regard to which we disagree with Dr. Mullins is found in his sharp separation between the spheres of science and philosophy and religion.” But the chief example Machen chose for rebuttal was not found in the book of Genesis but the New Testament: the question of the historicity of Christ’s resurrection. As a scholar of the New Testament, Machen remained within his area of specialty. In debating Mullins, Machen maintained his academic sense of etiquette.

Still, Machen desired for religion and science to overlap:

Theology, we think, is just as scientific as chemistry; and if we fail to recognize its scientific character we are in danger of delivering ourselves over to that anti-intellectualism which is now attacking the Christian religion at its roots…Dr. Mullins shares our conviction that Christianity is based upon truth; and it is in the interests of that conviction that we ask him to give up the separation between religion and science.

Machen understood the temptation to shield religion from the skepticism of scientists by declaring the disconnect of the two fields. While Bryan became a laughingstock at the hands of Clarence Darrow for being unable to defend biblical claims, Machen likewise denied himself the comfort of sequestering religion from scrutiny:

At any rate, we for our part cannot with safety go one step upon this anti-intellectual path…When scientists are attacking Christianity in the name of science and philosophers are attacking it in the name of philosophy, it seems to be such an

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194 Ibid., p. 41.
195 Ibid., p. 45.
196 Ibid., p. 47.
197 Ibid., p. 51.
easy escape from the battle to say that religion has its own credentials which it alone can judge; it seems so easy to withdraw thus into a place that shall be free from all possible attack. 198

The way Machen used the term “anti-intellectual” therefore referred to this act of retreat, a pulling back from engagement. In this regard, Bryan and Machen had a common cause in matters of science and religion, but Machen as an academic insider knew which limited contests had a higher chance of victory, whereas Bryan felt competent to answer as a political expert in both theology and science. The two men represented the breadth of the fundamentalist cause, and ideological descendants of both would later emerge.

In making his argument for a point of contact between religion and science, Machen revealed the extent to which Common Sense philosophy had shaped his views. In What is Faith? first published in 1925, Machen revealed his unwillingness to move beyond a Common Sense orientation:

I am not altogether unaware of the difficulties that beset what may be called the common-sense view of truth; epistemology presents many interesting problems and some puzzling antinomies. But the antinomies of epistemology are like other antinomies which puzzle the human mind; they indicate the limitations of our intellect, but they do not prove that the intellect is not reliable so far as it goes. I for my part at least am not ready to give up the struggle; I am not ready to rest in a pragmatic skepticism; I am not ready to say that truth can never be attained. 199

Baptist and Presbyterian denominational cultures differed substantially enough in the 1920s that Mullins and Machen disagreed about the nature of religious truth. Hart states that Mullins “worked out of a theological tradition that pointed to the transforming power of religious

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198 Ibid., pp. 65-66.

experience as evidence of Christianity’s truth” in contrast to Machen’s focus upon doctrines. Marsden concurs: “Such emphasis on the personal, the dynamic, and the experiential gave conservative Baptists something in common with their liberal brethren who carried these principles to more controversial conclusions.” Marsden adds that Mullins “based the proof of Christianity almost exclusively on the experiential and the practical” balancing the requirements of the historic faith with the “new philosophy [of pragmatism].” Mullins avoided conflict by making the apprehension of truth a private matter, but Machen argued for broad-based agreement about obvious facts.

As Marsden notes, Machen in refuting Mullins stood against the concept of ideas standing in between events in the outside world and the act of interpretation, claiming in the Common Sense tradition “that what we know about in history is not the idea of the event…but the event itself.” In this regard, by giving access to ultimate realities to all, Machen reinforced the democratic aspect of Common Sense thinking and stood in the anti-elitist tradition of Common Sense thinker Thomas Reid. Common Sense thinking would continue to be an important part of the small movement of conservative Presbyterians Machen would lead out of Princeton and a vital part of the creationist movement to come. In holding Common Sense views, Machen the intellectual was able to balance the demands of rigorous academic life with the traditions of Calvinism in a way uncommon among fundamentalists in his age.

200 Hart, Defending the Faith, p. 95.
201 Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 108.
202 Ibid., p. 122.
203 Ibid., p. 216.
204 Ibid., p. 14. Furthermore, on page 217, footnote 20, Marsden claims that “Baconianism pervades Machen’s thought.” Bacon’s cataloguing of facts became the scientific method of Common Sense (see Marsden, page 15).
As a final note, Machen’s expressed views on evolution are sparse, but one particular letter from 1926 provides the most lucid statement of his position:

“Creative evolution” is, I think, a contradiction in terms. Evolution is God’s way of working in certain spheres at least through nature, while creation means creation out of nothing. Evolution, by its very idea, cannot explain the origin of the world, and the origin of the world, with those creative acts of God that we call miracles, alone is produced by creation. Nothing is more absolutely fundamental to Christianity I think, than this sharp distinction between God’s works of providence and his work of creation, for upon that sharp distinction the uniqueness of redemption in Christianity rests.  

This argument thus formed more of a passive resistance to evolution based upon the matter of ultimate origins; however, Machen did make space for some limited form of theistic evolution. Hence his willingness to tolerate ambiguity demonstrated that he was not likely to move from the academic sphere to the militant position of William Jennings Bryan.

The story of antievolutionism cannot be told properly without noting that beyond the tension between secularists such as Darrow and fundamentalists like Bryan and Machen there was a third party---liberal Christians, epitomized by leaders such as Fosdick. The Fundamentalist-Modernist battle was simultaneously occurring with the Anti-Evolution movement of the 1920s. Only by appreciating the nature of the first situation can Machen’s difficult position amidst the double turmoil be understood. In theological matters, Machen was willing to adopt new tools to defend tradition, which marked him as unique among fundamentalists. His use of higher critical methods in his discussions of Paul and the virgin birth demonstrated a sense of scholarly etiquette balanced with the heart of Calvinist.

In the field of social issues, Machen showed his fiercest side, in defense of liberty. Most interestingly, Machen read reform movements as limits to freedom and as European ideas

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invading these shores. His disciples Carl McIntire and Francis Schaeffer will in later chapters mirror his attitudes but in radically new contexts. In the case of science, Machen expressed himself in the most philosophical terms, avoiding being cornered like Bryan was by Darrow on the matter of specifics. Regardless, Machen was loosely defined a creationist. His case illustrates again why this period is better defined by the expression “antievolution” rather than by the narrow term “creationist” because the establishment of a competing paradigm was not the critical matter. The next chapter will show still more diversity among two of Machen’s contemporaries, Harry Rimmer and George McCready Price. The lack of coherence among the antievolutionists was in one way a strength given that a broad alliance could be created; in another, it prevented a concerted effort with a simple focus.
Staging the episodes of opposition to Darwinism among evangelicals in the twentieth century presents a divide. “Antievolutionism” is a more suitable term than “creationism” in the cases of William Jennings Bryan and Harry Rimmer, two of the three most prominent thinkers of the 1920s and 1930s who took a stand against evolution as apostasy. But these leaders were primarily satirists and debunkers. George McCready Price, as the third, was one of the first true “creationists” in the Kuhnian sense of offering a new paradigm. Nonetheless, the three represented a unified force that is best understood if their differences stand in the background of the symphonic chord that holds them together.

What can easily be exaggerated is the degree and intensity of that unity. There are significant challenges for those who would argue that a continuous line of anti-intellectual bigotry links Bryan and his contemporaries to Henry Morris. First, the diversity of church cultures and differences of personality preclude treating the fundamentalist movement as a monolith. Theological differences produced sharp distinctions among groups. For example, the Adventist movement represented by Price was unacceptable to a dispensational premillenialist like the Presbyterian Rimmer, who awaited Christ’s return as the result of episodic shifts in history. In Ernest Sandeen’s words, “[t]hey [millenarians] sought to escape being associated with the traditions of William Miller’s adventism [including the offshoot Seventh Day Adventists] and protested against being pictured as a band of fanatics ready to don ascension robes.”¹ Ferenc Szasz also downplays the centralization of the fundamentalist cause around the

World Christian Fundamentals Association, which became the media symbol of the movement during the Scopes trial: “The strength, egos, and geographical location of the various Fundamentalist leaders also precluded close cooperation or federation.”

Secondly, there were sizable differences of opinion over the age of the earth among these earlier antievolutionists even though the differences were masked by a mysterious lack of public debate. This silence was in part because that issue threatened inter-denominational cooperation, which was still a valued activity in what was understood by the fundamentalists in the 1920s to be a Christian nation.

Thirdly, the target of those opposed to evolution was moving. Darwinism itself was still under attack from skeptics in the scientific community who could use Mendelian genetics to question selection. Theodosius Dobzhansky’s *Genetics and the Origin of Species* came twelve years after the Scopes trial and was only the beginning of what came to be known as Neo-Darwinian synthesis. In other words, in the Scopes era, for Bryan and the others, there would have been more urgency to question Darwinism rather than to try to replace it, as would be done by later creationists.

Evangelical hostility toward evolution in the 1920s may not have been unified, but it did reflect the larger spirit of the age. Willard Gatewood describes the anti-evolution movement as in synch with the general attacks on subversive elements that supposedly characterized the twenties: “Groups and individuals in search of normalcy and the return of certitude often

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employed the tactic of excluding both ideas and practices which they held responsible for the breakdown of traditional codes and the destruction of eternal verities.”

The major issue that unified Bryan, Rimmer, and Price was apostasy. They sensed a moral drift and intellectual movement away from the certainties given in their interpretation of the Bible. Evolution was more than just a biological matter to the anti-evolutionists; it was a metaphor of dangerous political and social change. Bryan imagined the Nietzschean militarism of Germany in World War I coming to these shores through the schools. Like Bryan, Rimmer’s first concern was the Bible and how the young were influenced by agnostic professors. Rimmer went one additional step by putting himself forward as a credible counter-scientist. Price was the most scientifically grounded of the three, although he had little in the way of actual, formal training. His work was a blow-by-blow assault on Darwinism, using Mendel and other means to show the limits of nature standing in the way of transmutation. Gatewood makes a powerful argument why antievolutionary activity became a cause for fundamentalists generally anxious about the advance of modernism and secularism—evolution provided “a concrete target” against which all related hostility could be aimed.

Together the trio of Bryan, Rimmer, and Price was of one mind regarding the demonic power of Darwinism to destroy the covenantal community of America’s Christians. But while Bryan depended upon other fundamentalists when building his view of science, Rimmer and Price, the subjects of this chapter, claimed they had experience wrangling with scientific ideas in their purest form. The points of agreement and disagreement between Rimmer and Price outline

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the diversity of antievolutionist ideas in this early stage and likewise the absence of certain pressures to simplify that diversity.

**Harry Rimmer (1890-1952): Self-Styled Researcher**

If the story of creationism had an intermediate species of leader, caught between the ascendency of science’s reputation in the 1930s and the fundamentalist need to save the young from secularization, that leader would have been Harry Rimmer. Historian Edward B. Davis comments:

> Of all the antievolutionists between the World Wars, none was more visible than Harry Rimmer, an itinerant evangelist and pastor who spoke at several thousand churches, schools, auditoriums, Bible conferences, youth camps, labor camps, and military bases across the nation for almost forty years until his death at the age of sixty-one in 1952.⁶

Rimmer’s role was a blend of the old, the traveling evangelist, and the new, an apologist for Biblical miracles in an age of science. Ever since the Great Awakening catapulted George Whitfield to trans-Atlantic fame, evangelicalism had a long history in America of making celebrities of itinerant speakers. The itinerant provided a means of maintaining the religious community’s cohesion and adaptation through periods of national transition. But Rimmer had to do more than evangelize; he had to ensure church control over the jurisdiction of science, which threatened, with Darwinism’s spreading influence, to overthrow the narrative of faith that upheld the fundamentalist community. To conservative Christians such a prospect was an assault upon the Word of God.

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From his birth in San Francisco in 1890, the first twenty-three years of Rimmer’s life were marked by extreme hardship and uncertainty, including family violence. The turning point of Rimmer’s life was his conversion to Christianity in 1913 at a street meeting while a student at the Hahnemann Medical College in San Francisco, a homeopathic school that Davis tells us “required no college training for admission”. Rimmer, a boxer, was on his way home from a bout. His confidence in the ring, cultivated after a brief Army stint, foreshadowed his aggressive warring for the cause of fundamentalism. Hahnemann provided an important exposure to the language of science for the sporadically educated Rimmer; in fact, Rimmer himself wanted to make clear that his scientific mind was not fundamentally altered by his conversion. Debunking evolution could be defended solely on scientific grounds. Roger Schultz reflects that the psychology of boxing would later color Rimmer’s approach to intellectual questions: “Debates were often described in martial terms.”

However, Rimmer could not be simply categorized as a young-earth creationist, despite Henry Morris’ later attempts to claim him. On the one hand, his absorption of premillenial dispensationalism put him in good stead with many future creationists, but he was far more tolerant than they of geology. He adhered to C.I. Scofield’s suggestion that a pre-Edenic world had existed and included unknown eons of time before the creation of Adam and Eve, the so-

7 Ibid., p. ix.
8 Ibid., p. x.
9 Ibid., p. x.
11 Ibid., p. 8.
12 Ibid., p. 112.
13 Ibid., pp. 27-28.
called “gap theory”.\textsuperscript{14} Ronald Numbers demonstrates how the insertion of an immense span of time between the first two verses of Genesis enabled Scofield to argue for two creations separated by a cataclysm and avoid the strictures of a young-earth approach.\textsuperscript{15} This notion provided a means of avoiding a huge public fight among early fundamentalists over the evidence of geology—thus minimizing the focal point of the attack against biology in the age of Bryan. Why later fundamentalists in the 1960s became so adamant that geology also posed a threat reveals a basic discontinuity between antievolutionism in the 1930s and creationism in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{16}

After conversion, Rimmer began a journey to national fame. Marriage in 1915 would bring three children, but home life in Los Angeles was not to be Rimmer’s first concern, as he began work for the YMCA as a traveling evangelist.\textsuperscript{17} In 1920, Rimmer embraced the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as controversy in that denomination continued to build. Davis notes, however, that it was in the period between 1920 and 1925 when Rimmer realized that young people were leaving the church fold because of scientific questions.\textsuperscript{18} Numbers corroborates this conclusion with a comment about Rimmer’s creation of a small laboratory inside his garage at this time.\textsuperscript{19}

To bolster his defense of the Bible through evidence and the sale of publications, Rimmer founded the Research Science Bureau in 1921. Its vision was “TO ENCOURAGE AND

\textsuperscript{14} Davis, \textit{Antievolution Pamphlets}, pp. x, xxii (see Davis’s footnote 47). The “gap” theory, promoted a huge space of time intervening between the first two verses of Genesis and also known as the “ruin-and-restoration” theory.

\textsuperscript{15} Ronald Numbers, \textit{Creationists}, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 7-8.

\textsuperscript{17} Davis, \textit{Antievolution Pamphlets}, pp. x-xi; Schultz, “All Things,” pp. 16-73.

\textsuperscript{18} Davis, \textit{Antievolution Pamphlets}, p. xi.

\textsuperscript{19} Numbers, \textit{Creationists}, p. 77.
PROMOTE RESEARCH IN SUCH SCIENCES AS HAVE DIRECT BEARING ON THE
QUESTION OF THE INSPIRATION AND INFALLIBLE NATURE OF THE HOLY BIBLE;
to disseminate [sic] by means of public lectures, printed literature, and other methods, facts and
information concerning the harmony of true Science and the Word of God.”

Despite its grandiose missions statement, Numbers contends that "the bureau existed, primarily, if not exclusively, to underwrite Rimmer's ministry and occasional field trips." Nonetheless, decades later its significance would not be missed by Henry Morris, who called it the “first attempt to develop an explicitly creationist organization”.

Rimmer craved respectability as a scientist. However, he had locked himself into Baconian rules of interpretation via observation and description and avoided hypotheses and theorizing about patterns. Therefore, criticism aimed at Rimmer tended toward the sarcastic both for his using science to prove predetermined conclusions and his claims to be a member of the scientific community. Still, the very fact that Rimmer enjoyed success demonstrated that scientific credentials were still a vague notion for the subset of the public he courted. By the 1940s the Research Science Bureau would boast an international membership, and book sales,—

20 Ibid., p. 78. The capitalization is Rimmer’s. The source he lists as “a brochure describing the Research Science Bureau, Inc., ca. 1940”.

21 Ibid.


24 Numbers, Creationists, p. 80.
Rimmer boasted,—hit the two million mark. All of this rested upon Rimmer’s account of having done long hours of field research as a substitute for a traditional degree program.

The pamphlets Rimmer produced were sold at his various speaking engagements, and Davis notes that Rimmer boasted sales into the hundreds of thousands. Schultz comments at length upon the “missing link” analysis of skulls Rimmer undertook and thereafter published as his famous 1925 *Monkeyshines* pamphlet. Drawing upon an amassed collection of his own, Rimmer sought to reveal scientific fraud: “He used the same slide show and skulls from his ‘private museum’ during his city-wide crusades to show the “absolute dissimilarities” between human and simian craniums and the ‘gross fabrications’ of pseudo-science’s missing links.”

Seeking to make elite science offensive to the common person, Rimmer employed democratic commonsense as an offensive weapon against specialist theorizing. In an era of populist religion and anxiety about the spiritual fate of the young, Rimmer’s argument had immense appeal, but it depended upon the lack of public agreement about the importance of formal training in science.

Rimmer’s résumé contained some other noteworthy features. On the one hand he proved to be an ally of George McCready Price, giving Price’s *The New Geology* high praise. On the other hand he misunderstood Price’s ideas. Secondly, as if to punctuate his position as a gap theorist, Rimmer debated WCFA founder William Bell Riley. Neither man agreed with Price about the age of the earth——since Riley held the Genesis days to be ages (day-age) and


28 Schultz, “All Things,” p. 124. See also Numbers, *Creationists*, p. 79.

29 Schultz, “All Things,” p. 116; Numbers, *Creationists*, p. 117. Numbers points out, for example, that Rimmer believed Price’s understanding of thrust faults as a geological phenomenon was that older rocks were placed on top of younger during the Noachian deluge; however, Price actually argued that all of the rock layers were created in the flood simultaneously.
Rimmer’s gap concept required only the creation of life to occur within seven 24-hour periods.\textsuperscript{30} Finally, Rimmer credited William Jennings Bryan, Riley’s co-belligerent at the Scopes trial, with providing a rationale to attack evolution to save the young, motivating Rimmer to make the topic a focal point in his speaking from 1925 onward.\textsuperscript{31} But clearly, Rimmer illustrated how different antievolutionism was from the narrow definition of creationism much later.

Like Bryan, Rimmer came into a gradual awareness that something was going wrong with the education of young people. Schooling itself was exhibiting a more secular trajectory. The age of the overt Protestant value system in education was passing away. Rimmer saw his calling not only as a fighter for the Gospel, but to train the defenseless young Christians overwhelmed by a tsunami of modernity and its attendant agnosticism. Leaving without a degree from BIOLA (the Bible Institute of Los Angeles), one of the most well-known fundamentalist schools on the West Coast, Rimmer’s attention turned to battling Darwinism as he traveled in the early 1920s. As he spoke to Christian young people he confronted for the first time the academic world and its skepticism of the old-time religion.\textsuperscript{32} For fundamentalists like Rimmer, not to challenge European scholarship was akin to perpetuating a spiritual genocide on an entire future generation of Christian leaders.

But evolution was not the first target in the battle for Rimmer. Davis notes that the “primary impulse…came from his conviction that modern methods of biblical criticism presented contemporary youth with challenges to the Christian faith.”\textsuperscript{33} The new biblical scholarship that in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century had come into the classrooms of American colleges and

\textsuperscript{30} Numbers, \textit{Creationists}, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{31} Schultz, “All Things,” p. 179-192.
\textsuperscript{32} Davis, \textit{Antievolution Pamphlets}, p. xi.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}
universities from abroad had “devastating results” upon traditional evangelicalism’s previous hold upon the young mind.\textsuperscript{34} Science had attacked the Bible through the vehicle of higher criticism first, and evolution second. Fighting the outcome drove Rimmer against biological evolution while leaving geology mostly untouched. Gatewood points to an irreversible cultural transformation of the goals of education: whereas earlier the target had been the transmission of parents’ morality and worldview, by the 1920s the young were being empowered to question and improve upon their parents’ way of life. The threat to faith became immediate: “The success they [parents] desired for their children required an ever-increasing amount of formal education which would almost certainly expose these ‘impressionable minds’ to all the intellectual trends symbolized by evolution.”\textsuperscript{35} Rimmer saw his task in part as defining science’s jurisdiction to be smaller than the mainstream view but large enough to allow the young Christian participation in the mass culture.

Five principles characterized Rimmer’s understanding of the relationship between the Bible and science. Firstly, the prestige of science had begun to overshadow both the Bible and Rimmer’s definition of “true science” as harmonious with scripture. Secondly, part of Rimmer’s true science implied a rejection of “historical” or speculative science in the realm of biology. Third, Rimmer’s science did not imply a lack of biblical toleration for an old earth. The fourth and fifth principles involved warnings about relying on intellectual abilities and the impact that would have upon Christian civilization. The net impact of these concepts was a far milder version of antievolutionism than that George McCready Price and other later creationists called for. As Bryan and others likewise had views of the earth at odds with Price, the foci Rimmer

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{35} Willard Gatewood, \textit{Controversy in the Twenties}, p. 27.
chose in his arguments revealed that antievolutionism in its earliest form was in actuality more liberal than Morris might have later wanted to admit. Nonetheless, the spiritual fate of young people remained at the center of Rimmer’s concern.

**Defending Supernatural Inspiration: Anticipating Science in a Pre-Scientific Age**

From Rimmer’s pamphlets emerged a consistent series of convictions about what was going wrong in America because of a biological science untamed by the Bible. But there was also a consistent hesitation about making highly conservative claims about geology. Rimmer was the historical intermediate between William Jennings Bryan in the 1920s and Henry Morris in the 1960s, flourishing in the time between Bryan’s death after the Scopes Trial of 1925 and the Second World War. The fundamentalist public readily accepted him as its foremost “scientist” in these decades. But it promoted him as far more—as its agent for combat in debate halls.

Rimmer’s central motivation was to attack the displacement of the Bible as an authority for the young student. Rimmer argued that the proof of the Bible’s supernatural origin was that its writers, in spite of lacking in education and scientific training, were nevertheless accurate about natural phenomena in such a way as to regulate the formulas and theorems behind modern results. In making the case that the Bible spoke correctly on matters of science, Rimmer argued that the Bible possessed a supernatural quality that set it apart from all other literature. This statement was an outgrowth of the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, a commonplace among dispensationalists. George Marsden points out that B.B. Warfield and A.A. Hodge of Princeton Theological Seminary provided an articulation of the concept in 1881: the words of the Bible themselves were divinely given and therefore precise.

This notion, Marsden adds, was linked to the idea of man’s direct access to knowledge implied by Scottish Common Sense philosophy, discussed briefly in Chapter 1 and to be treated
further below.\textsuperscript{36} Furthermore, he notes that having confidence in the straightforward meaning of the words was essential to dispensationalism’s prophetic statements.\textsuperscript{37} Consequently, Rimmer took the Bible at its face value when natural phenomena were mentioned. Schultz comments on the unilateral quality of Rimmer’s belief system: the Bible was error-free and could comment on science, but not the other way around.\textsuperscript{38}

He referred to infidelity and modernism as “the Siamese twins of Satan’s spawning.” Rimmer’s agenda in \textit{Modern Science and the First Day of Creation} was to prove the Bible’s merit as a science textbook—with its prescience leaving no question as to its author:

Is it a literal truth that science is at variance with Moses? Indeed it is not; rather the contrary is true: there is such a magnificent and complete agreement between the established facts of physical science and the first chapter of Genesis that no human explanation of this strange phenomenon is possible. How is it to be explained on any natural basis? Here is a chapter of a book written in the seventeenth century before Christ, in a day of ignorance and superstition. Yet when we examine that book in the light of modern scientific discoveries, it contains the most recent facts of physics, botany, and astronomy; and has maintained this marvelous harmony with scientific truth for ages before these sciences were born.\textsuperscript{39}

In the subsequent pamphlet, he reaffirmed how “the Mosaic account of creation contains many amazing scientific truths, which Moses could not possibly have known from personal observation…So if we reject the theory of inspiration, what other reasonable explanation of this perplexing fact have we?”\textsuperscript{40} Rimmer suggested that to Americans science had already displaced the Bible as a cultural resource. But by re-situating the Bible as a source of good science its contribution to humanity could be restored.

\textsuperscript{36} Marsden, \textit{Fundamentalism}, p. 113.
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{38} Schultz, “All Things,” p. 250.
\textsuperscript{39} Harry Rimmer, \textit{Modern Science and the First Day of Creation}, in Davis, \textit{Antievolution Pamphlets}, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 147.
In 1927, in a pamphlet called *The Harmony of Science and the Scriptures*, Rimmer elaborated the extent of the Bible’s accuracy by claiming it had dodged ancient errors made by pagan sciences, predicted errors of the future, and foresaw new discoveries. “How many times in just the past twelve months have we read of some marvelous discovery of science that was announced in screaming headlines in the morning of excitement as disproving the old things of Christian faith!” Rimmer made an important distinction between a realm called “science,” upon which Christians and atheists agreed, and another realm he labeled “opinion”—which contained the entirety of evolutionary theory as idle speculation:

> So I say while scientific opinion is constantly changing, we do not have to attempt a harmony of truth and opinion. We make a mistake when we attempt to test Bible truth by science: the reverse should be the process. Test science by the Bible! If the two agree, the science is true; if not, wait. In a varying space of time men will move on again from the wrong theory, and you will not have to change your faith. How often have we laughed at folk who knew so little they gave up their Bible for a scientific theory the scientists themselves gave up in less than one year. Scientific opinion changes. The Book endures!  

In arguing that the “reverse should be the process”, Rimmer was making a multifaceted case. First, the Bible was beyond the reach of criticism as it stood outside of historical time. Its teachings had a living quality that allowed unilateral and infallible comment upon historical events, like scientific debates. But at the same time, the Bible played by scientific rules. By extension, Rimmer coded the religious community he represented as both beyond the touch of historical change and simultaneously appreciative of “good” and “real” science. This fence-straddling position allowed him to maintain the internal integrity of the fundamentalist world while acknowledging its continuing relevance to an outside realm increasingly benefiting from

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the creativity of science. The test of any claim to be “scientific” would then be its fit with a biblical worldview, which always met the rigor of scientific rules without itself ever being judged by those rules. Instead, the decision-making processes that grounded Rimmer’s “true” science were intrinsically democratic and by consensus. They were marked by what is now visible, repeatable, and universally replicable beyond the touch of ideology or even religion. In other words, any legitimate consensus among people concerned things occurring in the present. Therefore, applied sciences were “true” science but historical sciences were “opinion” and speculation. This matter of democracy should not be overlooked—being an antievolutionist was a matter of rights as well as intelligence, for Rimmer and the creationists who later claimed him.

Rimmer’s most audacious claim involved prophecy, that the “Bible and science walk hand in hand, for THE WORD OF GOD ANTICIPATES MANY MODERN SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES”. This did not imply that the Bible could be examined as the result of a historical process, but reinforced the idea of its supernatural origin through its veiled statements that were oblique to prescientific readers yet meaningful at their proper time during the growth of science centuries later. Rimmer exulted in the ease with which dominant theories appeared to match an exegesis of the Hebrew:

The most recent theory of the earth’s production is this: “A NEBULOUS MASS OF PLASTIC MATTER ‘SOMEHOW’ HAD MOTION IMPARTED, which caused it to rotate more and more rapidly, until the fluid mass condensed into a globular form.” I agree with this as the most scientific and highest possible explanation science can make. There was a FLUID MASS. Genesis 1:2—“And the earth was waste and void, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the (fluid) waters.” (Revised Version). Please note carefully here the word “moved”. In the Hebrew language, the word here translated “moved” has very exact significance….The word is RACHAPH, and always means “TO IMPART MOTION.” Now see the harmony here: Science says: “There was a fluid mass,
and SOMEHOW motion was imparted.” God’s Word says: “There was a fluid mass, and THE HOLY SPIRIT imparted motion to it.”

In other words, the phrase “moved upon the face” unfolded its meanings over time. To the ancients aware only of the personhood of God in creation, the meaning was limited to the presence of the spiritual superintending the ordering of the physical. Rimmer matched the scientific expression to the biblical expression to demonstrate the continued relevance of the Bible in a scientific age. To Rimmer, what was previously considered a natural event (the motion of the earth) now had a point of contact with the supernatural. This matching activity was a critical facet of antievolutionism in that there was a tacit admission that science in the twentieth century was winning over the very public the fundamentalists were alienating—and Rimmer was attempting to recapture.

This delicate balancing act reflected the tension between the internal community and contact with the external. On the one hand, there was the matter of the separation of the covenantal community that maintained the supremacy of the Bible as an arbiter of “real science”. But on the other, there was evangelism, to a new world led by science, not by an antiquated revivalist tradition. The new world was led by Darwin and Dewey, not Whitfield and Edwards. Fundamentalists seeking to maintain public attention had to give a measured acknowledgment of the growing persuasive power of scientific advances unencumbered by the provincial concerns of conservative Protestants. The means of dealing Christianity back into a game played with secular rules was to argue for harmony at as many points as possible in the 1920s, including geology. Rimmer was not alone in this struggle to maintain Christianity’s place in American life. As an illustration of how important a broader network of contacts were to Rimmer’s cause,

he had significant contact with the WCFA as well as far right-wing activist Gerald B. Winrod, whose periodical the Defender published Rimmer’s newsletters propounding to defend real science. According to Leo P. Ribuffo, Winrod harshly critiqued evolution and looked to the Bible for predictions of scientific discovery. For Winrod, “[t]he Bible not only accepted the discoveries of science; it predicted in advance such innovations as genetics and the radio.” Moreover, Winrod made a linkage between America’s moral disarray and the advance of Darwinism. Clearly, Rimmer stood with co-belligerents of varied backgrounds unified by the specter of Christian young people led astray.

Limiting the Scope of Science’s Jurisdiction: Historical Sciences as Unprovable Speculation

While he attempted to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the Bible was an otherworldly science textbook, Rimmer had to respond immediately to charges that he was leading an anti-intellectual struggle himself. He made a critical distinction by dividing knowledge into two realms.

There is a difference between science and scientific opinion, and it is the latter that is often meant when we say “modern” science. A science is a correlated body of absolute knowledge. When knowledge on a subject has been refined and is absolute, the knowledge of those facts becomes the science of that subject. But “modern” science is the opinion of current thought on many subjects, and has not yet been tested or proved.

At the start of this section, he called the academic agreement about evolution a form of “intrenched bigotry”, “a strange philosophy which really has become a religion”. This separation allowed for enthusiasm for American ingenuity in the universities without sacrificing

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45 Numbers, Creationists, pp. 79 and 78.
47 Harry Rimmer, Modern Science and the Youth of Today., in Davis, Antievolution Pamphlets, p. 461.
48 Ibid.
the social and eternal benefits of the historic faith that were becoming the casualties of that embrace.

Two features of this body of “scientific opinion” that Rimmer highlighted actually seemed to contradict each other. First, modern science was fraught with disputes. “More bitter by far than any conflict of church sects is the armed battle between various camps of ‘modern’ science!” But simultaneously these speculations were dogmatically asserted, “unproved theories as proved fact” that had never been subjected to the “storms of critical inquiry for centuries of time” that church teaching had endured. However, Rimmer did not go as far as others would much later.

His primary goal was to prevent the displacement of the Bible from its central location in America and it was to that end he armed for battle against evolution. But in contrast, he showed an impressive tolerance for an old earth, even though he did not choose to extend the length of the six “days” of Genesis. His unwillingness to be dogmatic about a recent creation demonstrated that the most famous antievolutionist of the 1930s still desired to maintain a dialogical, evangelistic stance that reached out to a wider culture. But in biology, Rimmer pushed for an instantaneous creation of species.

**Corollary: The Democratizing Stratagem of the “Fossil Shuffle”**

The Christian public posed a sizable problem for Rimmer, as the realities of educational advances and urbanization required all Americans to acknowledge the powers of science to reshape their civilization for the twentieth century, no matter what religious training might have dictated on grandmother’s knee. The apparent declarations of the fossil record that there was a

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familial connection between man and animal demanded the most immediate answer, and
Rimmer devised a means for the writer of Genesis to save face.

Put simply, he dismissed the indices used to prioritize certain morphological
characteristics over others, thereby flattening the evolutionary tree and lateraling all species to
nearly the same time. This tactic was highly significant because it essentially removed long
spans of time from biological history. By making organisms simultaneous, Rimmer also made
them separate. The basic approach was to maximize confusion and minimize certainty about
attempted to dismantle common descent as a principle.

There is a resemblance between the Ape and the Man, but resemblance does not
mean relationship. The battleship looks like the row-boat structurally; but we see in
that only the fact of design. When the man found a plan that would make a boat
float, he built all his boats on that plan.

A church looks like a hen house….Does that mean the church evolved by internal
resident force from the simpler hen-house? Of course not; it simply means that
when the man found a working plan for a building he kept that plan with certain
modifications, and used it for all buildings.51

These and other parallelisms served to illustrate one simple fact: “they were designed on
the same plan by the same designer.”52 Hence the deity was not a distant impersonal force but
a divine engineer, creating chimpanzee and human being on the same body plan separately
without a common ancestor. This solution to the fossil conundrum demonstrated Rimmer’s
appreciation of scientific observation while exhibiting his disdain for Darwinian speculation
about lineage. True science was about observation available to all. Like America and the
Reformation gospel, it was quintessentially *democratic*.

Pamphlets of Harry Rimmer*, p. 398.

52 Ibid., p. 399.
Rimmer’s strategy to put science into the hands of the people demonstrated an important aspect of fundamentalist reasoning, shaped by Scottish Common Sense philosophy. Marsden makes note of the dominance of Common Sense thinking as part of establishing the American democratic order. He sets Common Sense, with its direct access to knowledge open to all, in juxtaposition to the Lockean concept that ideas were best handled by elites. Furthermore, Common Sense thinker Thomas Reid pointed to the non-speculative Francis Bacon as the best guide to organizing scientific thought. Lastly, Marsden claims that by the 1870s Common Sense fell by the wayside in halls of learning in favor of specialization. Assuming that this statement is true, Rimmer in the 1920s was speaking to a generation caught between old and new patterns in tension. Rimmer’s biology was immediate and obvious, appealing in its elevation of common sense reasoning in the face of the tyrannical “speculations” of Europeans, whom he consistently identified as invaders.

Rimmer tried to amplify the debate first by painting scientific speculation as a sectarian game. Geologists support the connection of dinosaurs to birds because of the presence of a gizzard in both. Reading normal scientific debate as a winner-take-all contest, Rimmer identified a University of Colorado paleontologist who questioned the entire premise of relatedness. Rimmer likewise rejoiced at the enormous skepticism of the anthropologist Ales Hrdlicka about the claims of geologists in Florida, “who upon no real evidence gleefully announce the finding of human relics several million years old!...This noted authority says it is not so: we have no American relics anywhere in the United States much older than three

54 Ibid.
thousand years!” 6 From this statement, it is evident that Rimmer’s support for the long and indefinite “gap” in gap theory did not involve human life.

In an anti-elitist vein, the central tyranny to be overcome regarding human antiquity thus emanated from geologists who dared to argue that “ONLY THE GEOLOGIST CAN SPEAK ON A QUESTION OF TIME”. 57 Archaeologist W.H. Holmes came to the rescue of antievolutionism, in what Rimmer called “one of the most scientific articles on archeological procedure to appear in twenty years.” 58 Rimmer’s rejection of ancient humans—a potential link to the apes—was clearly based upon a belief that human-related deposits could only have appeared very recently and without precedent as the result of gradualism. Congratulating Holmes, Rimmer drew up a final clash:

Then he refers to an article published in the American Journal of Science by F.B. Loomis, who thinks he has proved the Pleistocene ancestry of man! After a remarkable analysis…Dr. Holmes lays out the geologists in these words: “GEOLOGISTS ARE SLOW TO RECOGNIZE THE FACT THAT HUMAN RELICS BELONGING ON OR NEAR THE SURFACE ARE LIABLE TO INTRUSION BY VARIOUS MEANS INTO OLDER, UNDERLYING DEPOSITS, AND THAT TO CONSIDERABLE DEPTHS.” Dr. Holmes concludes by saying such procedure is dangerous to the cause of science. 59

This statement comes remarkably close to the George McCready Price’s concept, to be discussed later, known as the law of conformable stratigraphic sequences, by which geological samples were shuffled and made simultaneous, as Rimmer did with fossils. But that Rimmer was unwilling to defend a young earth demonstrated the accommodating spirit of an evangelistic style that would fall into eclipse after World War II.

56 Ibid., p. 465.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid. The article Rimmer mentions was taken from Science, September 18, 1925, Volume 62, Number 1603 and entitled “The Antiquity Phantom In American Archaeology.” No page numbers are given.
59 Ibid., p. 466.
Where scientists claimed proof of evolutionary descent, Rimmer sought to create ambiguity by attacking the idea of the ancient emergence of morphological characters. He did so on the grounds that a species must be fully human or not; thus he sought to maintain certainty when defending the separation of species and the limits of mutation’s power. Intermediate species were the road to apostasy, and to the godless seduction of the young. Any claim that even hinted at the legitimacy of a gradual transformation of a population over eons of time was essentially coded by Rimmer as anti-God. The walls separating *Homo sapiens* from other species had to be maintained along with special creation.

For the antievolutionist Rimmer and so many creationists who followed his lead, biology itself announced the limits inherent in life, a fact that seemed to them to destroy the possibility of transmutation. The relatedness of species, if true, meant that life needed no miraculous intervention from the supernatural realm, thus rendering that realm superfluous. Autonomy from God was therefore expressed through the claim that intermediate species existed as those species made miracles unnecessary. Common descent was in the end a rebellion against dependence upon God.

For Rimmer, saving the young meant that the *imago dei* had to refer only to humans in the Genesis narrative and not some product of change over time. Rimmer’s attack of “opinion” and “speculation” revealed again the divide between the Common Sense Baconian approach and that of the university world. According to Marsden, Bacon’s democratic vision was set against the speculation and interpretive process of Kant, “In America between 1860 and 1925 something like the general acceptance of a new [Kantian] perceptual model took place in both the scientific and theological communities.”

60 Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 215.
clung to the old ideals of Common Sense, but, as Numbers comments, Rimmer’s limitation of all science to only what could be directly observed wiped out the possibility of grand theorizing.⁶¹ Rimmer’s apparent liberality about the age of the earth revealed at the same time the limited scope of his aims.

**No Perceived Threat: Rimmer’s Tolerance for Continued Debate Over the Age of the Earth**

The matter of the age of the earth reveals an important transition from a period of a fundamentalist diversity of opinion in the 1920s to one of apparent unity in the 1970s around a highly conservative option and requires explanation. Three alternatives emerged from the 1920s and all three had their champions, but the lack of urgency to resolve the inherent conflict among them was telling. Day-age Theory, held by William Jennings Bryan and by William Bell Riley of the WCFA and the Scopes Trial, interpreted the days of Genesis as subsequent eras of time. C.I. Scofield and Harry Rimmer advocated gap theory, in which they interpreted the days as twenty-four hour periods in a regular week but assumed a prior creation, cataclysm, and renewal. Flood geology, the view of George McCready Price, assumed the most extreme scenario—an earth thousands of years old created within seven days of normal length. According to Edward Larson, the confusion of the prosecution led by Bryan during the Scopes trial was illustrated by Bryan’s own admission on the stand to a day-age position when questioned by defense attorney Clarence Darrow about the length of one day in Genesis.⁶² Numbers observes, moreover, that Bryan named Price as a scientific expert, only to receive Darrow’s sarcasm.⁶³

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⁶¹ Numbers, *Creationists*, p. 81.
⁶³ Numbers, *Creationists*, p. 89.
The actual differences in view about geology served to illustrate what David Livingstone calls the “plural origins” of the antievolution movement that led to the trial. Livingstone contrasts Price’s scientific concerns with Bryan’s political ones.\(^\text{64}\) He also describes the “general failure of the fundamentalists to assemble a coherent strategy for assaulting the menace of Darwinism.”\(^\text{65}\) The trial represented the coming together of diverse parties with differing agendas, even within the fundamentalist side.

Numbers’ research reveals the absence of concern about an old earth among evangelical elites and academics in the nineteenth century, who often chose either a day-age or gap explanation. But he is careful to add the following clarification: “No doubt many Christians, perhaps most, remained unpersuaded by the geological evidence of the earth’s great age and continued to believe in a recent creation in six literal days, but these people rarely expressed their views in books and journals.”\(^\text{66}\) Price’s name used at the Scopes Trial represented a subset of this very populist religion coming against secular learning, but with a very distinct geological perspective.

Therefore three distinct stages are apparent in the history of young-earth creationism. The first might be called “non-debate” or “separated debate” in the nineteenth century, as the elites and populist evangelicals felt no compunction to resolve their differences. The second is “forced association”, when fundamentalists of the Scopes era merged all three perspectives together in the common cause of saving youth. Price, Rimmer, and Bryan in the 1920s rose as advocates of the cause. In this time period, even intellectuals like J. Gresham Machen meshed with populist

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\(^{65}\) Ibid., p. 159.

\(^{66}\) Numbers, *Creationists*, p. 30.
voices to fight modernism. The issue of the age of the earth remained unresolved among
fundamentalists. The last stage involved a new and strengthened populism after World War II.
It elevated Price’s simplicity above intellectual speculation. Oddly enough, public perception
of science had so radically changed by the third stage that even the most doctrinaire creationist
had to take on the task of appearing to do good science worthy of publication.

Rimmer used biblical exegesis of Hebrew as a justification for defending an old earth. In
beginning his discourse on the first day of creation, he addressed the central issue first.

There is one question that we are certain to meet in every such discussion as this,
and that question is, ARE THE DAYS OF GENESIS LITERAL DAYS OF
TWENTY-FOUR HOURS EACH, OR ARE THEY PERIODS OF TIME?

To that question we can only reply, “we do not know” and then set forth the
evidence that shows also why we CANNOT KNOW.

Rimmer’s exegesis allowed for the unknown here.

This word “DAY” is one of the mysteries of Scripture. There is no scholar living
so erudite that he can be dogmatic here…To show how complicated the case here
is, we will state that this word “yom” appears in the Hebrew text of the Old
Testament one thousand and four hundred and eighty different times! and is
translated into the English in our Bible by no less than fifty-four different words.

He gave a representative sample:

The word “yom” is translated in the Authorized English edition of the Bible

1181 times as day (this covering several meanings)

67 times as time.

30 times as today.

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67 Larson, Summer for the Gods, p. 232. Larson puts Rimmer and Price on a similar level of influence until after the war.


69 Ibid., pp. 115-116. Emphasis is Rimmer’s.
18 times as for ever.
10 times as continually.
6 times as age.
4 times as life.
2 times as perpetually.\(^{70}\)

Rimmer could not see this matter of the age of the earth as pivotal to the task of rescuing youth, and so he gave liberty. He did understand the reality of a slippery slope leading to evolution—but even that possible danger was not in his view enough to close the door on debate:

Finally, there is no reason to *demand* an extensive time-period in the days of creation in Genesis, except the desire to be in conformity with the contentions and demands of the evolutionary school of geology…Now it seems necessary to many to acknowledge that the days of Genesis are geological ages, but the fact is, it is only necessary if the evolutionists are right! And in view of the fact that they are uniformly WRONG on all their other points, why must we make the Bible conform to their age-factor at the cost of reason, and at the price of straining the text?

For these reasons, then…we are inclined to accept the days of Genesis as solar days, as we believe Moses intended them to be understood. *At the same time we dare not be dogmatic; and wish to emphasize once more the philological fact, that the word used is susceptible of other meanings…*\(^{71}\)

Rimmer’s generation was not willing to wage war over the idea of an old earth. What had changed between the 1930s and the 1970s was not therefore a matter of more science or new religious ideas. It was “something” that would not emerge until after the Second World War, in the moment of Rimmer’s waning influence. Rimmer flourished between William Jennings Bryan and Henry Morris. His was an age when geology could still be interpreted liberally without consequence.


But there is the great oddity—that the unschooled popularizer Rimmer would be more amenable to discourse with geologists than the university-trained Morris four decades later. Rimmer answered the question “WAS THE DELUGE UNIVERSAL IN EXTENT?” with: “[T]here is absolutely no evidence that will admit of an unqualified, dogmatic answer either way,” adding that an analysis of the Hebrew words referring to earth and land was not illuminating on this point.72 “It is enough to know the flood was as widespread as the race of Man.”73 For Rimmer whenever the author of Genesis spoke to a scientific matter, he supernaturally matched modern standards of the laboratory. But anywhere the Bible maintained ambiguity or silence there had to space for a tolerance and diversity of opinion. No moral harm would result, and no automatic descent into social disaster would follow. The Hebrew was the secret to Rimmer’s relaxed approach.

To meet the charge that “Moses is scientifically wrong in putting light on the first day, and the sun is not created until the fourth day,” Rimmer revealed an important distinction between terms:

Even at the risk of possible repetition, we must deal here with this objection, and point out clearly that Moses does not state that these heavenly bodies are created on this fourth day of which he now writes. He does not use the Hebrew word “bara” (to create) in this entire passage, but uses instead the alternate expression “asah” (to release from restraint). Up to this day the earth, emerging as a rehabilitated place prepared for the reception and life of strange and new orders of living things, has been shrouded in a vaporous blanket…74

This idea of releasing was not far from the embryological metaphor of unfolding—matter with a teleological trajectory. Nonetheless, this notion was a form of developmental thinking that

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73 Ibid., p. 373.

avoided the randomization inherent in evolutionary worldview but embraced change over time. Unlike Morris, who later eliminated even the vestiges of cosmological time, Rimmer made an effort to meet modern science halfway.

The Bible itself offered a means to escape a prolonged conflict about geological time, according to C.I. Scofield, whose version had deeply affected Rimmer as a young convert. The so-called “ruin-restoration” or “gap” model inserted a lost world of unknown time length between the first two verses of Genesis, thus making the Edenic creation not an original event at all. Rimmer noted again the significance of the rare use of the word “bara” (implying original creation *ex nihilo*):

The first appearance of this word “bara” in the Hebrew text is in the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis. “In the beginning God created (bara) the heavens and the earth.” This is a simple statement of the primal creation, and ascribes to God the original creation, the primary construction of every physical thing… *This verse and this work of ORIGINATION are not to be confused with the work of the First Week…..We are dealing in the first chapter of Genesis with two stupendous events, and we must not confuse them, or chaos will result in our thinking.*

The use of “bara” was limited to the first verse and later sections about “animal life”, including the “creation of man”. But the word “asah” meant “to assemble” in the fashion of a carpenter: “In the case of the carpenter it would not be proper to say he had ‘created’ a table: he merely manufactured the article out of materials which were already in existence.” “Asah” was the characteristic term used in the days of the creation week. It implied not original creation but only “the releasing from restraint of certain materials that were under bondage”. It was the

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term covering “the production of everything except the original creation in the first verse and the creation of sentient life.”⁷⁹

Rimmer did not present a novel argument in suggesting there were two creations in Genesis Chapter 1. More precisely, he argued there was a creation (verse 1), a ruin of that creation (verse 2), and a restoration that involved the “releasing from restraint” of pre-existent matter as well the novel creation of life. Scofield’s argument for a “gap” between the verses was already known. Rimmer merely resurrected the case for a broad audience including the young:

It is apparent…that the first verse of Genesis refers to a work of origination which antedates the Creative Week with which Moses deals. Indeed, the Scripture carefully states that originally the creation was far different from that described in the first chapter of Genesis, in that suggestive second verse, “And the earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters.”⁸⁰

Rimmer referred to later Old Testament writers—in keeping with the idea that scripture interpreted scripture—as a basis for claiming a ruin, a fall that predated the fall of Adam and Eve. Using the Hebrew, he argued that there had to be a chronological space in the history of the universe for the fall of Lucifer, an event condensed in one key phrase:

Let us see what a careful word-study of this second verse will yield.

In the Authorized Version [the King James] the text begins: “AND the earth was…” This word in the Hebrew text is also translated “but,” or “moreover”. Thus in the Septuagint version of the Scripture the text begins: “BUT the earth had become…” and this is the sense of the Vulgate as well. The second word to be noted is the one translated in the English Bible “was”. The Hebrew language lacks a word for “became,” so the word “was” is always used to carry the sense of “became”. The Hebrew language also has no pluperfect tense, so the past tense is

⁷⁹ Ibid.
⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 125.
always used to convey the pluperfect tense. The phrase then literally reads, “BUT THE EARTH HAD BECOME …” “TAHU VABOHU!”81

The Hebrew term if translated “waste and void” was not fertile enough for the creativity of Rimmer who sought to attach its significance to a grand but hidden story—he preferred the Aramaic coloring: “‘desolation succeeding previous life.’”82

Who or what was this previous life? Three prophets provided the answer and thereby a means to extend the earth’s age by eons without suggesting that time was linked to human evolution. The gap theory therefore provided an escape hatch for fundamentalists temporarily with regard to geology. The gap contained a lost episode of incredible conflict in the cosmos, a ruin and a restoration:

Putting together the suggestive references of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, then, we arrive at the reason for the sudden chaos that swept the earth which God created…The answer [to the earth becoming desolate and uninhabited after Genesis 1:1] is in Ezekiel’s stern charge, “Thou wast perfect from the day thou wast created, until iniquity was found in thee!” Here is the answer; sin! Lucifer, a being of wondrous beauty and wisdom, rebelled against God, his Creator, and sought to establish himself as the Creator’s equal…For this sin of rebellion he was hurled from his high place… and the earth… “became waste and chaotic,” with the Eternal Spirit of God brooding over the scene of Lucifer’s failure.83

Rimmer was quick to point out that he was hardly the originator of this solution, since “[m]any eminent Bible teachers hold this view.”84

81 Ibid., pp. 125-126.
82 Ibid., p. 126.
83 Ibid., p. 127.
84 Ibid.
geology was a peaceful coexistence: “Only God knows how many ages rolled by before the ruin wrought by Lucifer fell upon the earth, but it may have been an incalculable span of time.”85

The result for the young student and the Christian entering the university was that the real battle in Rimmer’s field of view was limited to biology. The separation of human life from the pre-existent material was the only essential conflict with science. In other words, Rimmer was making every possible harmonization with science he could in every discipline that did not directly assault the central belief of humanity created uniquely among all species in God’s image. “But let us clearly recognize in these studies, that Moses, in the record of the First Week of Creation, is telling the story of God’s reconstruction; rather than the story of an original creation.”86 The gap theory represented a sincere attempt among evangelicals to avoid conflict with the domains of science; Rimmer’s understanding of the Hebrew provided a relief from controversy about the earth.

**Autonomy as a Mark of the Devil**

Nonetheless, Rimmer imagined dire consequences for walking the evolutionary path. His placement of the fall of Lucifer within the “gap” was a cautionary tale for the reader. Knowing one’s place was part of the divine order, and Satan was to Rimmer the first exponent of enlightenment to claim autonomy from God. While evolutionists imagined a majestic rising of man from the animal, Rimmer drew exactly the inverse conclusion—that this independent act led not to heaven but to hell.87 Citing Isaiah 14, Rimmer made the defiance of Lucifer the warning to the Christian student: “Oh man, greater than God, bow down and worship—YOURSELF!

85 Ibid. Emphasis mine.
86 Ibid.
...When I remember that the students of America are fed this soul-blasting and Satanic doctrine day after day, my heart fails me because of the danger to the entire nation” 88

Rimmer understood the situation to be a recent calamity resulting from contamination of the minds of teachers and their charges who had given up their old-fashioned faith for the new infidelity. Basic doctrines of Christianity had come under attack, as illustrated by a professor who “sneered at the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ”. 89 Unknowing youth would leave the safe haven of faith, the family home, to enter a seductive universe, “college, where reputable men of outstanding and scientific authority testified to them that their Christian faith was simply a myth”. 90 Rimmer reflected a widespread concern among fundamentalists in voicing this anxiety about the impact of higher learning. Edward Larson has noted the impact of James Leuba’s *The Belief in God and Immortality* (1916) on the motivation of William Jennings Bryan to participate in the Scopes prosecution. The book documented a direct relationship between extent of university exposure and the loss of faith among students, as well as a similar impact among academics. 91

Unlike his hesitations about the age of the earth, for Rimmer evolution was autonomy-generating evil. As evolution forged humanity independent of the supernatural, so now humanity had rationalized its existence to be independent from God. The notion of rights was closely linked to the concept of autonomy here as both defied established power structures in heaven (as in Lucifer’s case) and on earth. The very notion of rights to self-determination—for

man or for devil—was linked to the notion of evolution. Evolution led to the autonomous creation of rights, apart from God, and that would lead to the destruction of the nation. This final conclusion reflected deeply Rimmer’s Reformed heritage, with its Calvinist ordering of the universe.

Rimmer understood the teaching of evolution as far more than a matter of philosophical skepticism—it caused the destruction of families by conspiratorial forces represented by professors. In his 1925 pamphlet *Modern Science and the Youth of Today*, Rimmer claimed that “the so-called scholarly classes are becoming infidel to the ancient and traditional faith of America” and thereby led students to their own doom Pied Piper-style:

Students in many cases laugh at the church and sneer at Christian faith because it is “not scientific” and turn their backs on godly living and holiness of conduct, to make shipwreck of their lives as they drift away from every mooring that would hold in times of stress. Without faith what can science do for the soul? The answer startled the world a few years gone by, when two prize students in a famous University killed a lad with brutality and violence, as a scientific experiment! and were defended by an avowed and rank atheist. *This was only logical, for atheism and violence always go hand in hand.*

Evolution would lead to the nation’s implosion through violence on the streets. Again, Rimmer was not alone in making the connection. After reading biologist Vernon Kellogg’s testimony in *Headquarters Nights*, William Jennings Bryan likewise believed that evolutionary teaching lay at the heart of German militarism in World War I. In Rimmer’s thinking, the outcome of defeat by the secularizing forces in the classroom would “ROB YOUTH OF ITS FAITH AND HOPE AND SECURITY”.* Evolution represented a destabilizing force in Judeo-Christian civilization.

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Just as he was schooled in physical combat, so Rimmer was precise in his ideological battles as well. As a Presbyterian and a dispensationalist, he was a product of Reformed culture and a defender of biblical inerrancy. The Reformed creeds, after all, began with the immutability of a sovereign God. God could not therefore evolve, and His words would not evolve either. Nor would nature, the glory of His handiwork. In defending the Bible as the word of God, Rimmer saw antievolutionism as an extension of that project because it prevented a rearrangement of the divine order. In this regard, Rimmer found a broad zone of agreement with other fundamentalists. But in his openness to old earth he was unwilling to extend the battle to geology, unlike his contemporary George McCready Price.

**George McCready Price (1870-1963): Instantaneity in Geology and Biology**

Born in 1870 in New Brunswick, Canada, George Edward Price saw his mother widowed when he was still a child.\(^95\) His mother then brought the family into the spiritual fold of the Seventh-Day Adventist church, which would have a profound effect on George’s life. Ronald Numbers describes the church as “a small apocalyptic sect that traced its origins back to the Millerite enthusiasm of the 1840s”.\(^96\) William Miller was a New York product of the Second Great Awakening in America and had thrown himself into a mastery of biblical prophecy. Mustering a sizable number of followers, he led those awaiting the imminent return of Christ to believe 1844 would be the moment in which their deepest hopes would be realized.\(^97\) The letdown that followed led to what became known as “The Great Disappointment”.\(^98\)

\(^95\) According to Ronald Numbers, Price changed his middle name to McCready as an adult. See *Creationists*, p. 89.

\(^96\) *Ibid.*


\(^98\) *Ibid.*
In 1845, however, one successful splinter group, later known as the “Seventh-Day” Adventists because of their belief that worship on Saturday rather than Sunday was true faithfulness to Scripture, was led by a female prophetess, Ellen White (1827-1915), whose visions laid the foundation of much of the church’s distinctive teaching.\(^9\) Godfrey T. Anderson describes the acknowledgment of White’s “spiritual gifts” as intrinsic to the survival of the group, beginning with a vision of hope that the chosen were not forgotten by Christ.\(^10\) Numbers sets White respectively alongside Joseph Smith of the Mormons and Mary Baker Eddy of Christian Science in importance to her sect: “Her disciples accepted her ‘testimonies’ as genuine revelations from God, and, with her encouragement, accorded her a status equal to the biblical prophets.”\(^11\)

Strict rules of diet and drink were part of the Adventist lifestyle, and as a natural extension of this emphasis on the body, hospitals and related philanthropies became a hallmark of the group. There was a direct correspondence between White’s visions and the practical life of the church, seen, for example, in an 1863 revelation that White regarded as a divine command to avoid alcohol, meat, and tobacco and “drug-dispensing doctors.”\(^12\)

Furthermore, her visions touched upon various aspects of science. Of interest to us is her concept of a worldwide flood since it was absorbed by the father of flood geology, George McCready Price. According to Numbers, White’s understanding reduced earth history to a few thousand years and eliminated day-age or gap theories from consideration.\(^13\) “Because of their

\(^9\) Ibid., s.v. “Seventh-Day Adventist.”.


\(^12\) Ibid., p. x.

\(^13\) Numbers, Creationists, p. 90.
distinctive Sabbath doctrine, Adventists adamantly opposed any scientific theory that proposed interpreting the days of creation symbolically.”

Initially, however, Price’s trajectory was the secondary school. On an assignment in a remote village on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Price made an important contact with a local physician that propelled him into an exposure with secular geology. The end result was Price’s first book, *Outlines of Modern Christianity and Modern Science*, published in 1902. This work revealed Price’s chief target in all his future activity—geological time. Numbers observes that to Price “the fossil record revealed not a temporal succession of life but simply a sorting out of contemporaneous antediluvian life forms,” Or, as Harold Clark puts it, Price’s argument that the “arrangement of the fossils in the rocks is merely a taxonomic, or classification series, a cross section…of life of the antediluvian world.” Through this act of time compression Price flattened the evolutionary tree—much like Rimmer did—and would take one step further in his next book.

After a series of moves and vocational failures, Price found his way to a teaching post in Southern California. There in 1906 he published a second book, *Illogical Geology: The Weakest Point in the Evolution Theory*, in which he claimed to prove a complete overthrow of the field of geology. Using evidence from the Canadian Geological Survey and other sources, he stated that so-called “older” fossils had been deposited above the younger, thus demonstrating that the date of neither layer was obvious. Numbers describes the result: “His case thus apparently proved,

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104 Ibid.
105 Ibid., p. 91.
106 Ibid., p. 93.
Price announced a new geological principle, the *Law of Conformable Stratigraphical Sequence*: ‘ANY KIND OF FOSSILIFEROUS ROCK MAY OCCUR CONFORMABLY ON ANY OTHER KIND OF FOSSILIFEROUS ROCK, OLD OR YOUNG.” 108 Rimmer argued that fossils were deposited simultaneously regardless of their apparent evolutionary order; Price argued that the very rock layers themselves had been deposited at once. Clark comments that Price concluded geological dating was “theoretical and arbitrary” and thus could be challenged legitimately. 109 Thus began a framing of evolution as worldview. “Price…pointed out that the succession of life is the product of subjective imagination and can be proved only by assuming uniformity [of geological processes]. It is, he declared, an act of philosophic faith.” 110 He went on to publish a textbook in 1923, *The New Geology*, which put forward the concept of a catastrophism to describe not as a cycle, but a single event—the worldwide Flood. 111

Though Price had exerted so much energy dealing with geology, he was interested to grapple with biological questions as well. In 1917 and 1924, Price published *Q.E.D. or New Light on the Doctrine of Creation* and *The Phantom of Organic Evolution* respectively. These two works were similar in their tone in that they were designed to use recent scientific findings to question the certainty of established evolutionary assumptions. The stated goal of *Q.E.D.* was to demonstrate that the evolutionary notion of uniform processes continuously at work was inherently false. Creation thinking was radically different: "Forces and powers were brought into


110 Ibid., p. 27.

exercise and results were accomplished that have not since been exercised or accomplished." Price went on to discuss matter, energy, and life, focusing upon the limitations inherent in nature. He noted that the Law of the Conservation of Energy, the disproval of spontaneous generation theories, and the revelation of genetic limits in Mendelian breeding all pointed to a confirmation of the testimony of Genesis.113

The purpose of The Phantom of Organic Evolution was to attack the established dogmas of evolution by questioning its defenders and their awareness of the negative scientific and social impacts of their theory. Here Price reiterated his confidence about geological layers being laid down simultaneously and the impact of this realization upon biology: "[W]hat sort of chance would there be left for a theory of organic evolution under such circumstances?"114 Price repeated many of the arguments from Q.E.D. and earlier works here but added new notes of skepticism and concern. "It is the standpatters in science who are complaining about these new lines of discovery, that each of these new revelations ... is not contributing in any way to the further development of the evolution theory."115 This tactic of using new science to subvert the old at least superficially made Price stand apart from the antievolutionists typified by William Jennings Bryan, who were content to make generalized attacks. As an example, Clark recounts Price’s attendance at William Bateson’s address to the American Association for the

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115 Ibid., p. 325.
Advancement of Science in December 1921, in which the geneticist questioned the confidence of scientists regarding understanding the means for the origin of species.\textsuperscript{116}

In \textit{Phantom of Organic Evolution}, Price added three assaults, attacking the concept of homology as proof of phylogeny, exposing fraud in the use of embryos to prove evolutionary relationships, and examining the Nietzschean political impact of natural selection.\textsuperscript{117} Price’s conclusion was that modern science actually reinforced the twin ideas underpinning his worldview: simultaneous existence of “\textit{all these great ancestral types}” and “\textit{the great world cataclysm}” that decimated them.\textsuperscript{118} Price added some details about the origin of race that revealed a deep sense of degeneration away from an Edenic ideal. Inherent in this argument was a commitment to order that coded racial mixing as chaos.

For his efforts Price achieved brief fame. Numbers comments that William Jennings Bryan “invited Price to assist the prosecution as an expert witness” at the Scopes Trial, only to be warned by an already-committed Price to avoid the matter of scientific debates altogether.\textsuperscript{119} Like Rimmer, Price wanted to keep the rehabilitation of the Bible’s reputation in a scientific world at the core of his project to redefine science. However, as an Adventist removed not only from secular audiences but also from mainstream evangelicals, the bookish Price was more a precise researcher than the brash popularizer Rimmer. Price defended Ellen White’s vision of the deluge from his survey of the latest research. While Rimmer was far better known, Price, by arguing for a young earth and recently created life together, was more grandiose in his purpose. Price’s version of true science dismissed evolution by excluding the time scale necessary for

\textsuperscript{116}Clark, \textit{Crusader for Creation}, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{117}Price, \textit{Phantom}, pp. 383, 413, and 419.

\textsuperscript{118}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 445. Emphasis is Price’s.

\textsuperscript{119}Numbers, \textit{Selected Works of George McCready Price}, p. xiii.
common descent from the realm of proper inquiry. In addition, his facility with scientific vocabulary—despite a limited education—gave the impression that he appreciated the practice of discourse, when in reality he rejected ongoing debate.

His own denomination did not remain free from controversy either. Already in her lifetime Price’s mentor, Ellen White, had come under attack when criticism of her so-called “divine” inspiration compelled a stunning response from the Seventh Day Adventist leadership. Gary Land recounts that criticism of White seemed to be equated to higher criticism of the Bible in the eyes of church leaders, and although they fought against this implication to some degree, nonetheless, their response moved toward “regarding the statements of the Bible and those of Ellen White as of equal force.”

For George McCready Price in the 1920s however, White’s words were a guiding light and a call to stop the flow of evolutionary time. According to Clark, Price left a lasting impression from the 1940s onward upon the leading young-earth creationist of the future, Henry M. Morris, who absorbed and appreciated Price’s work: “He felt that God had used him [Price] in a strategic way in the critical years of the first half of the century.”

**Stopping Geological Time**

The basis of all of Price’s attacks upon evolutionary science was his belief that modern geology rested upon a fundamental falsehood. Hence came his most important contribution—the “law of conformable stratigraphic sequences”. If proven, his law would completely overthrow the entire discipline of geology, based as it was on a dating process that Price sought to

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120 Gary Land, “Shaping the Modern Church, 1906-1930,” in *Adventism in America*, p.158. In the 1970s, Ronald Numbers charged that White had plagiarized and had demonstrated less than “divine” insight. See Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, pp. . According to Land, the church essentially acquiesced in this latter instance and “had by the end of the decade moved toward accepting the general points that the entire body of research has established.” See Gary Land, “Coping with Change, 1961-1980,” in *Adventism in America*, p. 223.

121 Clark, *Crusader for Creation*, p. 67.
repudiate. Ronald Numbers has identified the first statement of this theory in Price’s 1906 book

*Illogical Geology: The Weakest Point in Evolution Theory.* It was written well before even

Bryan took up the antievolution crusade in the aftermath of the 1914 war:

That year [1906] he published a slim volume…in which he confidently offered a $1,000 reward to “any one who will, in the face of the facts here presented, show me how to prove that one kind of fossil is older than another.” He argued that Darwinism rested “logically and historically on the succession of life idea as taught by geology” and that “if this succession of life is not an actual scientific fact, then Darwinism … is a most gigantic hoax.” Throughout his life, Price saved his sharpest barbs for so-called uniformitarian geology, because, in his opinion, “the modern theory of evolution is about 95% due to the geology of Lyell and only about 5% to the biology of Darwin.”¹²²

Simultaneity was therefore the single most important concept in geology and in biology for Price. Convinced that “there is no geological epoch whose sedimentary deposits have been wholly safeguarded from metamorphic changes”, Price was ready to destroy Lyell’s uniformitarianism, the pillar that upheld Darwinism.¹²³ The dating process was suspect: “Where can we now go to find those kinds of fossils which we can prove, by independent arguments, to be absolutely older than all others?”¹²⁴ The geological column was thus flattened and made ambiguous and uncertain:

Or to state the matter in another way, since the life succession theory rests logically and historically on Werner’s notion that only certain kinds of rocks (fossils) are to be found at the “bottom” or next to the Archaean, and it is now acknowledged everywhere that any kind of rocks whatever may be thus situated, it is as clear as sunlight that the life succession theory rests logically and historically on a myth,, and that there is no way of proving what kind of fossil was buried first.¹²⁵

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¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

¹²⁵ Ibid. The boldface is Price’s.
Numbers notes that regardless of Price’s zeal in 1906, it would be over a decade—after the First World War—before Price’s writings would catch the interest of the antievolution movement’s leaders. \(^{126}\) *The New Geology*, Price’s most important work, would appear two years before the Scopes’ confrontation and add to his growing fame among fundamentalists.

**The New Geology**

Price’s definitive work, a textbook entitled *The New Geology*, appeared in 1923, at the height of anti-evolution frenzy. The writer proposed nothing less than an overthrow of modern geological method to make room for the possibility of a single catastrophe, a worldwide flood, as the cause for the sedimentation of the earth’s layers and the resultant fossilization of life.

Price’s defiance of the status quo began in his preface as he claimed recent discoveries defended his cause, stating that “the strictly definite order of successive groups of plants and animals…is to-day treated as the most firmly established dogma of the whole science [of geology].”\(^{127}\) This teaching would be the central target of his polemic, set up as a battle between competing theories:

Why should any apology be needed here for bringing in the hypothesis of a great world catastrophe to account for some (an indefinite amount) of the geological changes? Its rival, the theory of uniformity, has so long been in vogue that we are all inclined to forget that it also is *only a theory*; and that if this ancient alternative, a great world catastrophe, will more satisfactorily explain some of the phenomena, a true scientific induction ought not to have any settled prejudice against it which would continue everlastingly to rule it out of court.\(^{128}\)

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\(^{128}\) Ibid., p. 7.
Price then begins a nearly six hundred page survey of natural and geological history that is largely descriptive in nature; theorizing was reserved approximately for the last hundred pages, and it is that section to which the present study will confine itself.

Price depicted himself as a persecuted genius ahead of his time: “Geology has developed much more slowly than some of the other sciences, and has not yet escaped from the period of a priori methods and metaphysical speculation.”

Central to Price’s worldview, on the one hand, was a limited willingness to speculate about the details of origins—science could only point the way but never answer questions of ultimate cause. Speculation through hypothesis had potential to enslave when improperly utilized:

That is, a theory put to work is a hypothesis. And hypotheses are always dangerous things. We put our intellectual freedom at stake whenever we adopt a hypothesis. We can make absolutely no progress in any line of science without using them; yet they are more dangerous to use than dynamite. And the more we use a hypothesis, and the more plausible it appears…the more surely do we become its slaves and the more hopeless becomes our intellectual slavery, if this hypothesis happens to be really wrong; for a cherished hypothesis blinds the eyes of the observer to new facts, just as a gift has been said to blind the eyes of a judge in court.

In his approach to science, Price stood in between the purest Baconians, who valued description only, and those who would employ hypotheses on a regular basis.

Price saw both continuity among living species and discontinuity among historical forces at work. He argued against uniformitarianism in geology and biology by making a case that the past processes were inherently different from the present:

Certain it is that modern biology, and geology also, for that matter, have simply developed a complete negative demonstration against the easy assumptions of the earlier scientists that plants and animals probably originated by a gradual

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129 Ibid., p. 587.
130 Ibid., p. 608.
131 Ibid., p. 661.
progression from the lower to the higher types by processes similar to those which are now going on…\(^{132}\)

He concluded that “creation must have been something \textit{different}, essentially and \textit{radically different}, from anything now going on in our world.”\(^{133}\) Without belaboring the point by discussing the miraculous, Price left the door open. But while he would argue for abrupt changes in processes, he also made a case for the simultaneous existence of extinct and living species as part of a flood narrative. Price commented that, in setting extinct species into a distant past, “\textit{a sort of fairy world of the long ago}”, geologists had ignored “the true Baconian method” by overlooking how extant species “\textit{held the key to all the rest}.”\(^{134}\)

Nonetheless, \textit{The New Geology} would show a theoretical side beyond mere Baconian “facts” by elaborating how nearly simultaneous deposition of rock layers could have come about. He sought out anomalies and made these proof of a sudden cataclysm first; then he extrapolated to a general principle. He was quick to pounce on “\textit{deceptive conformities}”, geological formations in which presumably young and old layers lacked intervening rock masses of intermediate ages. These cases were “\textit{an obvious proof that these strata followed one another in quick succession with no great time interval in between}.”\(^{135}\) A more extreme case was the thrust fault, in which the older layer had a position above the younger. Examining this case caused Price ultimately to conclude the geological column was a fabrication as a whole given that ultimately “\textit{every order of serial relationship}” was possible, and that simultaneity of deposition


\(^{133}\) Ibid., p. 606.

\(^{134}\) Ibid., p. 599. Emphasis is Price’s.

\(^{135}\) Ibid., pp. 620 and 626. Emphasis is Price’s.
was a more logical conclusion; from this data, he declared once again his “law of conformable stratigraphic sequence.”

In the above case, Price utilized two instances problematic for geologists and turned the data to his advantage; however, his actual theory of a worldwide flood expressed his more creative side while attempting to remain “scientific.” He concluded that the earth’s tilt in its axis must have been the direct cause, sounding oddly speculative:

On the other hand, we know that the earth’s axis of rotation is not perpendicular to the plane of its orbit, but is inclined 23 ½ [degrees] from the perpendicular….The astronomical reason for the establishment of this position is not well understood…[and] we can not easily conceive of any cause which could change this astronomical habit. To bring about any such change would require an external force, and a force of large magnitude. But if we may suppose such a change possible—that is, if the earth’s axis had been formerly perpendicular to the plane of its orbit, and some external force had changed the earth to its present inclined position and changed it suddenly—there would be forces let loose on the earth’s surface sufficient to do an inconceivable amount of geological work.

Price imagined colossal tidal waves capable of reshaping the earth’s surface, exacting matching the biblical documents in their severity. This represented the climax of The New Geology, which added a small section of human evolution seemingly as an afterthought. He demonstrated the desire to be taken seriously as a scientist, but he also wanted to redefine the entire discipline of geology in one fell swoop, using biblical narrative as a guide and the story of the Noachian flood as a means to his end. He was scrupulous throughout most of the book to use scientific and not theological language, acknowledging the public prestige of science. At the same time, he separated historical science as being opinion and speculation apart from the rest of science, lambasting figures such as Buffon, Lyell, and Darwin.

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137 Ibid., pp. 684-685.
138 Ibid., pp. 587-603.
Ronald Numbers points out that Price’s “new” catastrophism differed from the traditional use of the term in that Price’s view held to one single event as opposed to a cyclical series. Numbers also notes that the reception of The New Geology was quite diverse. Price was charged with photographic plagiarism by a Yale geologist, Charles Schuchert, for using Schuchert’s textbook illustrations without permission. On the other hand Price was praised by antievolutionist leaders including Rimmer and Bryan, who invited him to testify at the Scopes Trial. The latter fact demonstrated that despite the differences among them regarding the age of the earth, co-belligerence ruled as a theme. Finally, Price would be attacked by a former Adventist disciple, Harold Clark, but much later admired by the Baptist Henry Morris, whose 1961 Genesis Flood resembled Price’s book.

Geology and Genetics: Limiting Time

Price’s later assaults dealt with the biological conclusions of evolutionists and their root in simple prejudice.

But in view of this purely artificial character of the geological series, what a strange sight is presented by the usual methods employed to “prove” the exact order in which evolution has taken place, such for instance as the use made of the graded series of fossil “horses,” to illustrate some particular theory of just how organic development has occurred. One might just as well arrange the modern dogs from the little spaniel to the St. Bernard, for the geological series is just as artificial as would be this of the dogs.

Offering a truly alternate paradigm, and thus earning the title “creationist”, Price stood apart in the Scopes era.

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139 Numbers, Creationists, p. 99.
140 Ibid., p. 109.
141 Ibid., pp. 115-116.
142 Ibid., pp. 145, 219 and 227. Morris will be dealt with in Chapter Seven below.
143 Price, Q.E.D., p. 216.
The secular idea of catastrophism he employed enthusiastically for spiritual purposes. It contrasted to uniformitarianism as Mendel did to Darwin in biology. Just as catastrophism had a quality of suddenness, genetics showed species capable of rapid but limited change. Price sought to demonstrate that Mendelism prohibited the gradual transformation of one species into another because of the internal structure of Mendel’s theory, which had been verified experimentally. Mendel, whom Price refers to as “a patient obscure investigator [who] had already solved most of the puzzles of variation and heredity some thirty-five years before [prior to 1900]”, had discovered that living things contained a limited number of transmissible characters—such as color and shape—that manifested in offspring in predictable ratios.144

Frederick Gregory notes that in the debate over Darwinism in the decades surrounding 1900, during which one of the key questions hinged on whether evolution involved only gradual variation over time or could be seen to make occasional “jumps” (sudden bursts of large-scale change), Mendelism supported the idea of jumps. The Dutch plant physiologist Hugo de Vries emphasized discontinuous variation as a facet of Mendelism, which showed the possibility of “creation of new variations as occurred in evolution;” these novel variations de Vries dubbed “mutations”.145 While discussing artificial breeding, Price comments that in his belief mutants were not something truly new, however:

The kinds so produced are termed mutants, and at first they were hailed by enthusiastic scientists as “elementary species.” De Vries in particular gave much publicity to this idea; for he thought he had really produced a new kind comparable in every respect to a true species as produced by nature among wild plants. But the enthusiasm with which this applied result of Mendel’s Law [of ratios of offspring with certain traits] was at first hailed by biologists has gradually subsided; for it has been found that though these new forms will breed true under certain conditions, they are nevertheless cross-fertile with the original forms and thus the circle can be

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144 Ibid., p. 178.

completed back again by a return to the parent form, from which the new “species”
can again be produced at will with the same mathematical exactness as before.  

Price comes to a conservative conclusion: “These experiments merely indicate that the
parent form possesses more potential characters than it can give expression to in a single
individual form, some of them being necessarily latent or hidden, and that when these latent ones
show themselves they must do so at the expense of others which become latent or hidden in their
turn.”  

Price cited the champion of Mendelism, William Bateson, on this point, claiming that
the parental generations always contained the fullest range of genetic possibility in their cells.  

Thus no true novelty could erupt in nature. To Price, Mendel seemed to deny to natural selection
the infinite variation upon which time could act. Furthermore, Price therefore at least
superficially wanted to appear to employ actual science to support the Bible’s idea of the sudden
appearance of living things.

In addition to using Mendelism and geology to attack evolution, Price, like Rimmer,
declared human bias to be at the root of the discipline of morphology. Seeking to “reshuffle” the
fossils, Price claimed that any family tree constructed via homologous organs was bogus, going
to an extreme unusual even for a fundamentalist of the day. Price virtually compressed the entire
geological column into an instant: “Because there is no adequate evidence …which will prove
that the invertebrates existed before the vertebrates, that the fishes lived before the reptiles…Or
to be specific, there is no adequate evidence that the dinosaurs lived before the elephants, or that

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146 Price, Q.E.D., p. 89-90. Emphasis is Price’s.
147 Ibid., p. 90. Emphasis is Price’s.
148 Ibid., p. 92.
the trilobites lived before the ammonites or the dinosaurs.”\textsuperscript{149} The result made a farce of evolutionist’s certainties displayed in the tree of life:

Thus it would appear that any particular type of animal…may have had its most essential characters often duplicated by other animals which are not at all related to it by descent. Or, if we should follow out all the lines of descent suggested by all the various structures of any particular animal, we should find that this animal has had far too many possible ancestors; he literally has ancestors among the mollusks, or among the reptiles, or among the fishes; and this multiplication of possible lines of genetic descent seems to me one of the most serious objections to the whole scheme of organic evolution as commonly understood.\textsuperscript{150}

The importance of time in Price’s creationism cannot be overestimated. Price felt that the story gleaned from geological evidence denied evolution over time.

Finally, Harold Clark points out that Price displayed no willingness to accept the compromises other evangelicals had entertained with regard to the age of the earth. He resisted both the gap theory and the day-age approach. “He pointed out that God brought the world into existence by a different method than He is using to operate it, and therefore man cannot interpret creation by any studies on the present operation.”\textsuperscript{151} Price’s chief assumption that creation was an inscrutable event essentially shut down the ability of scientists to evaluate it.

**Stopping Biological Time**

Resetting the geological clock gave Price his basis for attacking the assumptions of biology. At the center of these certainties he endorsed stood the physical sciences and their laws. Here was the model for all credible investigation in the biological world. Chemistry in particular


\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., pp. 357-358.

\textsuperscript{151} Clark, *Crusader for Creation*, pp. 57 and 60.
drew his attention for its regularity, controlled variety, and immediate observability. He saw a parallel between the recipe-like mindset of Mendelian genetics and chemical activity:

Mutations can be made according to Mendel’s Law; but when we have made them once we can always be sure of producing the very same mutants again in the very same way, as surely as we produce a definite chemical compound; and when we have made it we can always resolve it at will back into its original form, just as we can a chemical compound. And so, where is the evolution? or how do these facts throw any light on the problem of the origin of species, any more than chemical compounds throw light on the origin of the elements? Obviously in biology as in chemistry we are only working in a circle, merely marking time.\footnote{George McCready Price, \textit{Q.E.D.}; pp. 184-185.}

In other words, there can be no true innovation; rather, due to Mendel, in biology one saw an extension of “the general law of the Conservation of Energy, which says that energy can be neither manufactured nor destroyed, but merely transformed and directed.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 125.} Given that he spoke in the decades between the Scopes Trial of 1925 and the public success of the Neo-Darwinian synthesis joining natural selection to Mendelism, Price’s challenge shaped his public recognition as “the principal scientific authority of the Fundamentalists”.\footnote{Numbers, \textit{Selected Works of George McCready Price}, p. ix. Numbers is citing \textit{Science} 63 (1926): p. 259.} He limited the species of the tree of life by removing transitional forms. He also denied that transmutation could result from the possibility of genetic novelty.

This notion of constancy emerged from Price’s sense of nature’s law set by its Creator. In 1917, he declared that “in heredity” transmission occurred “with all the precision of natural law”.\footnote{Price, \textit{Q.E.D.}, p. 188.} This belief rejected sudden innovation: “Nor is there any other method known to modern science by means of which new factors can be originated which were not potentially latent in the

\footnote{George McCready Price, \textit{Q.E.D.}; pp. 184-185.}
\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 125.}
\footnote{Price, \textit{Q.E.D.}, p. 188.}
ancestry”.156 The conclusion struck at the heart of Darwinism. “And now Mendelism destroys the other supposed foundation for biological evolution, by showing that small variations cannot be accumulated into large differences equal in value to a unit character or a new species.”157 The retrievability of original forms had erased for Price the possibility of common descent, and the evidence appeared to come from the most up-to-date science. In 1924, Price exulted in identifying the fundamentalist worldview with the Mendelian camp, in contrast to evolutionists like Vernon Kellogg and Henry Fairfield Osborn, who stood in the way of “progress” as “reactionaries”:

And it is surely an interesting phenomenon to note that the friends of the Bible, who have been accused of having a “static” religion, are nevertheless progressives in their attitude toward modern science; while the so-called “Modernists” are as static or reactionary in their science as they are “progressive” in their religion.158

In other words, Price read the latest information from genetics to mean that a shrinkage of evolutionary time was called for.

The model for good science, physical science, was constant and repetitive. “No combination of diverse factors can originate anything really new”.159 The limits for change were set by the Creator in the beginning, and only a momentary wandering from an ancestral center would be allowed before the original characters would re-emerge: “And all the analogies from the origin of matter, of energy, of life, and from the laws of the reproduction of cells, indicate that we have at last found rock bottom truth… So far as science can observe and record, each

156 Ibid., p. 189.
159 Price, Q.E.D., p. 189.
living thing on earth, in air, in water, reproduces [only] ‘after its kind.’”\textsuperscript{160} The very notion of unlimited biological creativity and spontaneity was profoundly offensive to Price:

One of the assumptions made by Charles Darwin in building up his theory of organic evolution, was that plants and animals naturally tend to vary in all directions and to an unlimited degree. He recognized no law in connection with variation, for in his day no such law was known. But Mendelism is now showing us quite definitely how plants and animals vary. Just as definitely the new science of heredity is showing us the precise limits of these variations, and the limits of the possibilities in the way of the hereditary transmission of characters.\textsuperscript{161}

Limitation to variation was directly connected to the interpretation of evolutionary relatedness; Price was setting up another roadblock to common descent, using Mendel.

To bound nature’s creativity, Price also had to redefine the significance of variations not yet discovered:

The other difficulty with which we are confronted by Mendelism is even more serious, when we attempt to use these facts regarding heredity to explain the origin of genera, families, orders, classes, and phyla. For we soon find that there are very definite limits to the kinds which we can produce in this fashion. We find that we are merely working around within a limited circle; for by back-crossing we can always work back to the original forms with which we started, just as the chemist can always work backwards and get the original compounds with which he began his experiments. And just as the chemist finds that he can never get out of his retorts and test tubes any new element which was not already contained in the compounds with which he has been working, so does the Mendelian find that, no matter how wide a variety of types he may succeed in producing, he is still within the charmed circle of the original type of life, beyond which it seems impossible to carry any organic changes by either natural or artificial methods.\textsuperscript{162}

Therefore the created order could never be transmuted or truly go extinct, only be rearranged.

The sense that creation depended on this maintenance of order as evidence of God’s existence loomed large in Price’s worldview. His idea of creation was specific. There was “one act of

\textsuperscript{160}Ibid., p. 192.


\textsuperscript{162}Ibid., pp. 270-271. Emphasis mine.
creation, which may easily be supposed to have included all of those ancestral types from which our modern varieties of plants and animals have been derived.”

As evidence that this approach was realistic, Price employed Thomas Hunt Morgan’s fly research in which “mutants have not been produced by a gradual process…but by one bound.”

But Price was also able to capitalize upon biology’s inconsistencies in his moment of history. In using Mendelism to counter gradual evolution, Price benefited from a crisis and failed to see how that crisis fit within the advance of science. Darwin’s proposal of the mechanism of natural selection as the primary engine of change came under heavy fire at the end of the nineteenth century. Peter Bowler notes that Julian Huxley “coined the term ‘eclipse of Darwinism’ to describe the situation…when many biologists had turned their backs on selection.”

Mendelism, mutationism, and neo-Lamarckism were just some of the challengers. Bowler takes other historians to task for not recognizing the seriousness of this moment, stating that “the confused situation during the eclipse of Darwinism seems to resemble the crisis state before the consolidation of a new paradigm.”

The possibility of a reconciliation between Darwinism and Mendelism was temporarily hindered in part by the state of isolation of biological disciplines until the 1920s, when Price was actively attacking evolution. The modern synthesis of genetics and natural selection was still years away. In Bowler’s words, “the exclusive Mendelian concern for laboratory work isolated them from the problems of traditional natural history, allowing them to oversimplify the complex


questions of adaptation and speciation.”167 Therefore, what Price imagined as a permanent warfare between Mendel and Darwin was actually merely part of the completion of what Thomas Kuhn termed a “scientific revolution,” as a new paradigm (Neo-Darwinian evolution) emerged to supplant the old (special creation).168 In essence, Price capitalized on the momentary lack of interdisciplinary communication within biological fields.

Certainly the intellectual work required to arrange these works was no small feat, particularly since George McCready Price was essentially self-taught. As a result Price saw himself as a “progressive” compared to the “standpatters”, the evolutionists.169 As Bryan and others did, Price coded evolution as the symbol of chaos and of an indifferent deity. Nietzsche was the bridge between Darwinian nature and the European political sphere, since he was “one of the most outspoken in his bald glorification of the bloody ladder of natural selection as the only means of progress.”170 But there was one realm, race, where Price’s sense of divine order subordinated humans to other humans in a caste-like and nearly evolutionary sense. This final point bears special mention since it lurked in the background during this period. As the later ideological descendants of Price, Machen, Bryan, and Rimmer in Reformation churches saw, their concept of America as a covenantal nation was crumbling. The Anglo-Saxon facet of creationism reared its head with renewed force.

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Price’s desire to maintain order in creation extended to human relations. The chaotic universe Darwinism created had a parallel in the mixing of races in Price’s view, which utilized the biblical story of the Fall to defend separation as God-ordained. The Fall accounted for the existence of a degenerative force that created races who did not measure up to the Edenic ideal. After the Fall, the white race was presumed to be closer to the original Adam than other races, whose distance put them closer to other primates. Price argued that Darwinism actually celebrated what moral people ought to abhor:

The merest tyro in the study of organic evolution can see that the doctrine of survival of the fittest…makes some of the most morally objectionable characteristics manifested by animals and men the ladder by which all true progress has been attained. In other words, those qualities among the lower races of men…which we rightly regard as objectionable and blameworthy…have been made by Darwin and his followers the chief factor in their scheme of organic evolution.\(^{171}\)

Price went further, identifying the force responsible for apes and nonwhites as simultaneously degenerative and creative:

Many arguments have been adduced to prove that man is a developed ape; yet not a single one of these arguments but would just as logically prove that the apes are degenerate or hybrid men. There are no clear and positive evidences from paleontology which would prove that the existing anthropoid apes existed before the great world cataclysm, or the Deluge. These present-day anthropoid apes may be just as much a product of modern conditions as are the negroid or the Mongolian types of mankind.\(^{172}\)

And there could be no question that the movement from the order of Eden to the decadence of the present had nonetheless left vestiges of past glory in certain parts of the earth:


Similarly when we compare the best of the modern races of men *physically* with the Cro-Magnards of the deposits of Western Europe, we also see a degeneracy, although we cannot be sure that these Cro-Magnard men, the finest race the world has ever seen….were really antediluvian.\textsuperscript{173}

The conclusion was obvious. “*Man was originally created on a higher plane structurally and anatomically than he is at present.*”\textsuperscript{174} Thus the moral descent brought physical changes to certain members of Homo sapiens. By this means the races of men came to be, with moral content hidden inside their visible differences.

Using the story of the Tower of Babel, Price believed a long-term separation had been legislated by God to prevent autonomy from God:

The believer in the Bible will also point out a moral and social reason for the differentiation of mankind into distinct races. He reads in the early record of the post-diluvian world that all of mankind were of one speech and one race; but that designing men started to make capital out of this fact, and attempted to consolidate all under one rule and one system of worship, which evidently was an apostate system. The record is that God again interfered, and broke up the scheme, scattering the fragments of the race abroad upon the face of the earth.\textsuperscript{175}

Price referred here to the claim that a diversity of languages was the divine means for the “breaking up” of the races. But the Adventist apologist wanted to extend the story’s significance:

And just as artificial barriers of language were interposed to keep them from again blending into one world-embracing despotism, so we may well suppose that the barriers of race and colour were also interposed at this same time, these racial barriers assisting in segregating the people of the world into self-contained groups, thus most effectually preventing them from ever again uniting. And there is no doubt that if human beings had always been as true to natural instincts as are the species among the higher animals, there never would have been amalgamation

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., p. 446.

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., p. 447. Emphasis is Price’s.

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., p. 342.
among these races which had thus been set apart from one another by a special intervention of Providence. 176

Therefore, if moral depravity were especially understood to be part of the nonwhite races, and God Himself separated the world into races, it stood to reason that the white race descended from the “Cro-Magnards” of Europe. It would only participate in the moral depravity leading to Darwinian evolution if it “amalgamated” in any way with the worldview or peoples of these degenerate groups.

Living and writing in the early decades of the twentieth century, Price was no doubt aware of racial tensions in the United States and global attempts to increase cross-cultural communication. Price believed that the Bible provided the answer to maintaining order—segregation. For Price, America, as the city on a hill and a light to the nations, had to preserve its Reformational, Anglo-Saxon, and covenantal identity if it was to retain its leadership role.

For both Rimmer and Price, evolutionary time had to be stopped in the field of biology. But the fact that Rimmer could tolerate an old earth demonstrated the lack of urgency among antievolutionists trying to re-orient themselves to science and the public in the years between Bryan’s death and the Second World War. George McCready Price was too extreme for his historical moment but prophetic of what was to come. It could be said he was America’s first creationist writing at a time when antievolutionism as a broad and nondescript movement was fading away.

The two men offered two different approaches to fighting Darwinism. Where Rimmer’s gregariousness caused him to see a diversity of opinions daily, the bookish and insulated Price organized his assaults from the security of isolation and with people who already agreed with

176 Ibid.
him. On the one hand, Price’s scholarly approach foreshadowed the later creation science movement. On the other, Rimmer followed in the tradition of the itinerant evangelist. Theirs was a period where antievolutionism came first, and young-earth views had not yet become the pre-eminent concern. Both men were concerned about the philosophical implications of Darwinism, but Price followed his conclusions to the point of advocating a separation of the races. The tumultuous state of America after the Second World War would give both men an opportunity to leave an enduring mark—Price with the methodical analysis illustrated in *The New Geology*, and Rimmer with his modeling of an antievolutionist institution in the Research Science Bureau.

The future of antievolutionist protest, embodied in the engineer Henry Morris, would take lessons from both Rimmer and Price. However, the external context—the receptive audience—was something that neither Rimmer, Price, nor Morris could of themselves create. Evolution, as previously mentioned, was a tangible entity vulnerable to attack when fundamentalists were generally distressed about the trajectory the country was taking. A subset of the Northern Presbyterians Machen and Rimmer represented will, in the next chapter, set the stage for the success of Morris’ resurrection of Price’s flood geology as a war with the religious and political left became entangled with the interests of antievolutionists.
CHAPTER 4
CARL MCINTIRE AND THE CHRISTIAN BEACON—APOSTASY IN CHURCH AND STATE

The death of Machen in 1937 and the end of the Great Depression marked a significant
decline in the social status of evangelicalism because of two events. First, evangelicalism was
not yet distinct from its militant cousin, fundamentalism, which scarred both movements with an
anti-intellectual label. According to George Marsden, the myth that attended the Scopes trial had
popularized a divide between two forces:

The central theme was, inescapably, the clash of two worlds, the rural and the
urban. In the popular imagination, there were on the one side the small town, the
backwoods, half-educated yokels, obscurantism, crackpot hawkers of religion,
fundamentalism, the South, and the personification of the agrarian myth himself,
William Jennings Bryan. Opposed to these were the city, the clique of New York-
Chicago lawyers, intellectuals, journalists, wits, sophisticates, modernists, and the
cynical agnostic Clarence Darrow.¹

Media and academic elites would use the trial as a reference point for extremism in religion that
paralleled extremism in politics. Marsden comments that the Scopes scenario “stamped the entire
[fundamentalist] movement with an indelible image”.² The second event was the engagement of
liberal churches with the immediate social problems and a concomitant turn away from the
controversial theology fundamentalism embodied.

Furthermore, by the 1960s even the legal traces of the Scopes era were vanishing. The
laws of Arkansas, Tennessee, and Mississippi banning evolution had gone the way of the dodo,
with the Mississippi statute falling last in 1970. The South was entering the modern age at last,

¹ George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 185.
or so it appeared. Edward Larson comments that the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Epperson* decision of 1968, which overturned the Arkansas law, revisited the legacy of the Scopes trial.³

With such rejections by clergy and intellectuals alike, the fading of evangelicals and fundamentalists seemed a foregone conclusion. For this reason, the sudden eruption of “born again” Christians on the national scene in the 1970s defied easy explanation and revealed the reality of two Americas. William Martin notes that with Jimmy Carter’s announcement of his “born again” identity as a presidential candidate, the chasm in understanding was profound:

Within days, news media that seldom paid serious attention to religion were abuzz with questions: What precisely, did it mean to claim that one had been “born again”? The terminology, while perhaps alien to many journalists and others outside religious circles, could hardly have been more familiar or less controversial to evangelical Christians…⁴

In addition, antievolutionism was on the rebound in a form that even William Jennings Bryan and Harry Rimmer would not have espoused. Ronald Numbers has proposed that in the 1970s a surprising constriction had taken place:

During the early decades of the twentieth century, few creationists, even among hard-shell fundamentalists, insisted on a young earth or a fossil-producing flood…By applying the unquestionably orthodox day-age and gap theories to Genesis 1, even the staunchest defenders of biblical inerrancy could accommodate the claims of historical geology. But by the end of the century, through the efforts of men such as George McCready Price, John C. Whitcomb, Jr., and Henry M. Morris, the very word creationism had come to signify the recent appearance of life on earth and a geologically significant deluge.⁵

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How was it possible that an earlier liberalism among fundamentalists about “historical geology” during the height of the anti-evolution movement evaporated so much later, and what did that late disappearance signify? Numbers asserts that Morris and a small host of allies singlehandedly persuaded fundamentalists and evangelicals to refute not only biological evolution, but to go much further than the earlier generation had by refuting the concept of an old earth as anti-God, anti-Bible and anti-American. Still, it is puzzling that Morris’ constriction of what it meant to be a good creationist occurred in a period where the prestige of science among Americans had grown tremendously. Edward Larson points out that in the 1920s during the height of anti-evolution frenzy scientists had neither the numbers nor the financial clout to overwhelm William Jennings Bryan’s forces. The public then was not yet motivated to defend the progress of science. “This disregard for scientific opinion changed somewhat as the American scientific community gained size and public support during the thirty-five years following Scopes.”6 Henry Morris confronted a different society willing to give scientists the cultural microphone. Larson states that firstly the number of scientists had increased to the hundreds of thousands by 1960, and that secondly funding for science had ballooned from tens of millions of dollars to “seven and a half billion dollars annually”.7 “Government financial support for science mounted steadily during the Depression and exploded during World War Two and the ensuing Cold War.”8 The reason for the turnaround was that William Jennings Bryan did not confront an America shocked by Soviet technological superiority: “Soviet development of an atomic bomb in 1949 and the first hydrogen bomb in 1954 created this fear,


7 Ibid., p. 90.

8 Ibid.
but the real shock came in 1957, when the Soviet Union launched the first satellite [Sputnik, four years before Morris and Whitcomb’s publication of *The Genesis Flood*]."9 Changing geopolitical power arrangements on the large scale had elevated the social position of science relative to Anglo-Saxon Protestant theology in America.

Thus, Numbers’ assertion regarding Morris’ persuasive power is useful but it fails to provide a sufficient explanation of the rise of creationism. While he notes engineer Henry Morris’s and theologian John Whitcomb’s success in repackaging the sectarian ideas of an Adventist, George McCready Price, for a wider fundamentalist audience in *The Genesis Flood*, he mentions that the Morris-Whitcomb arrangement fit neatly with a broader battle over the inerrancy of Scripture that had peaked in the 1970s. Now even Rimmer’s use of the Scofield Bible was too liberal a move: “For believers in the verbal inerrancy of the Bible, flood geology [or creation science, to use Morris’ term] required no assumptions of days that really meant ages or of temporal gaps that went unmentioned [such as Rimmer’s gap theory]”. These accommodations to geology were now part of an undesirable “biblical gymnastics” that demanded too much speculation and interpretation by the reader.10

But why would such tolerance for interpretation be present among even fundamentalists in the 1930s but not forty years later? The larger context pressing fundamentalists requires elucidation. This larger context---one of national emergency---provides a rationale for the evaporation of compromise options like old-earth ideas of “gaps” or ages.

Of four groups to emerge in the 1930s, one became the spearhead for the future creationist cause and eventually to what became the Religious Right. First there were the liberal

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churches of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ (later the National Council of Churches), which, with the World Council of Churches, worked for social justice using ecumenical means and political alliances particularly in years after 1945. These foci were abhorrent to the second group, separatist fundamentalists, who came from many diverse denominations but possessed a common commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture and of the U.S. Constitution. This second group provides the focus of this chapter. For the present study the Presbyterian fundamentalists led by Carl McIntire will take center stage. The third group was made up of evangelical moderates, or accommodating fundamentalists, who, although they hailed from the same lineage as the separatists, sought to shed stereotypes inherited from the Scopes era by engaging liberals and modernists thoughtfully. The Billy Graham New York Crusade of 1957 served as a dividing line between these moderates, who approved of Graham’s efforts in New York, and their separatist comrades, who did not. The last group, Southern isolationists, demonstrated far more militancy in the 1970s than they did in the 1930s. Largely conservative, many white Southerners shrank from the controversialism of the Northern Presbyterians like McIntire initially. However, in 1979 the Southern Baptist conservatives rose up to wage a war on behalf of the inerrancy doctrine and joined hands with Presbyterians such as Francis Schaeffer, a former McIntire ally.

It is the second group---the separatists---that attacked court interference with family life and public education, and therefore it is this group that serves to illustrate why the urgent need to eliminate “biblical gymnastics” arose. Carl McIntire’s role in providing leadership to the separatists arose from deep convictions he had nourished while J. Gresham Machen’s student, and McIntire’s place as a religious and political figure in the history of fundamentalism provides important insight into the development of a rights-oriented mentality among conservative Protestants.
Carl McIntire (1906-2002): Separatist Pastor and Rights Advocate

Carl McIntire was born in Ypsilanti, Michigan in 1906 and grew up in Oklahoma in a strict Presbyterian environment. He received a bachelor’s degree from Park College, Missouri, and decided to pursue ministerial studies at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1927. There he would become involved in the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy and come to side with J. Gresham Machen against the liberal faction.11

The allegiance to Machen would cost McIntire dearly. When the PC-USA leadership decided, in Shelley Baranowski’s words, “to reduce conflict [at Princeton Seminary] through conciliation,” their chosen method was an administrative rearrangement that left Machen’s conservative faction in a marginal position.12 Longfield notes that a climate of division grew at the Seminary within the first two decades of the twentieth century as those leaders who valued practical ministry began to clash with other faculty, such as Machen, who esteemed doctrine first. Machen assumed that tolerance for liberal thinking contributed to the demotion of doctrine.13 Tensions at the school reached such a fever pitch that the General Assembly of the PC-USA in 1926 asked “whether Princeton would teach Old School scholasticism alone [Calvinist doctrine in the tradition of Hodge and Warfield] or tolerate divergent theological views.”14 Longfield adds that a committee assigned to investigate the state of the seminary reported that “strife within the seminary would be eliminated not by addressing questions of doctrine but by administrative reconstruction.”15 Hart comments that ultimately the

12 Ibid., p. 257.
14 Ibid., p. 163.
15 Ibid., p. 168.
denomination prized order over debate, choosing bureaucracy as a means to regulate conflict “by implementing administrative reforms that encouraged greater centralization and at the same time throttled dissent.”¹⁶ One of the casualties of the new press for conformity would be academics’ freedom to question the trajectory the school was taking theologically.¹⁷

Rather than accept this outcome, Machen left with a number of faculty and students, including two future leaders of note, Carl McIntire and Harold Ockenga (later of the National Association of Evangelicals), to found Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia in 1929.¹⁸ Robert J. Mulholland notes McIntire, who graduated from Westminster in 1931, chose to be ordained in the PC-USA denomination. He served as pastor at an Atlantic City church for three years before accepting a call to the church at which he would remain for decades, Collingswood Presbyterian Church in Collingswood, New Jersey.¹⁹

Machen sought an additional level of purity in his denomination by attacking modernism’s advance on the mission field. This fateful battle resulted in a series of splits between conservatives and liberals and among conservatives. To stem the tide of modernism, Machen helped organize the Independent Board of Foreign Missions, free of denominational control. According to Baranowski, this choice was “an act of rebellion that…resulted in Machen’s and McIntire’s ouster from the [PC-USA] church.”²⁰ Machen then led the effort to

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¹⁶ Hart, *Defending the Faith*, p. 126.
¹⁸ Russell, *Voices of Fundamentalism*, p. 156.
found the Presbyterian Church of America (later known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church) in 1936.

However, Machen had led two groups of separatists out of Princeton, and irreconcilable differences about the use of alcohol, premillenialism, and church government drove these two factions apart. After Machen’s death in 1937, McIntire became the leader of the Bible Presbyterians, who opposed the use of alcohol and held strongly to pre-millennialism. From this base he built a small empire that included a new seminary, Faith Theological, two colleges, a radio ministry, and a weekly newspaper, the *Christian Beacon*. Gary Clabaugh comments that the *Beacon* utilized a rhetorical device known as “documented appraisal”: “This involves reprinting articles from various sources, frequently without permission, and then subjecting them to comment or rebuke. But even the casual reader would not interpret this style as an attempt at objectivity.”

McIntire’s worldview emerged through his popular books. Three priorities became clear. First of all, he held the common fundamentalist view that the Bible was not only divine revelation but the basis of the U.S. Constitution. Secondly, he was opposed to collectivist ideas such as ecumenism and Communism. Thirdly, and linked to the other two, he staunchly defended free enterprise as biblically based.

McIntire’s perspective was defined as much by what he opposed as by what he endorsed. Chief among his oppositions was a strong animosity for the ecumenical movement. Baranowski observes that for McIntire “the ecumenical movement smacked not only of socialist internationalism but also of modernist inclusivism of the sort that could only dilute the historic

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creeds on which all Protestant denominations were based.”

Imagining the threat of one-world church, McIntire took denominational diversity among Protestants to be a sign of strength. In *Twentieth Century Reformation* (1944), he set up an antithesis between the ecumenical organization known as the Federal Council of Churches of Christ and his own American Council of Christian Churches (founded in 1941). “This program [ecumenism] of the enemies of the Gospel, which has robbed us of our terminology, is actually endeavoring to rob us of our denominations.”

For McIntire, church life was healthiest when it possessed a free-market aspect. Erling Jorstad referred to *Twentieth Century Reformation* as the “first extended discussion of ultrafundamentalist political thought” which argued against a Communist economic system as it hindered the advance of the Gospel. McIntire considered ecumenism and Communism to be co-conspirators in the attack of orthodoxy.

In a 1949 work, McIntire used the image of the Tower of Babel to suggest the degree of confusion liberal churches had created through a policy of inclusion of diverse views; he denied that synthesis of contradictory positions was possible. He pondered, “Is the twentieth century task of the Spirit to harmonize contradictions and opposites, truth and error, belief and unbelief, righteousness and sin, as ‘sources of strength for a single body’?” This concept of maintaining antithesis was a cornerstone of the fundamentalism McIntire and later Presbyterians represented. By 1955, McIntire was arguing for the direct Communist infiltration of the ecumenical movement.

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Instead of uniting denominations for social ends, McIntire uplifted a common theological creed, what he termed “essential doctrines of the Christian faith”, such as the divine inspiration of the Bible and the deity of Christ. Creedalism was naturally anathema to the ecumenically minded, who permitted doctrinal diversity so as to facilitate common cause for social issues. This concept McIntire found profoundly offensive. He attacked the Federal Council for promoting social revolution on the level of the church. For him orthodox doctrine and social action were inversely proportional to each other in church life. McIntire condemned the liberal Presbyterians who created the 1924 Auburn Affirmation document for endorsing a statement of unity while simultaneously denying doctrinal agreement as a necessity.

McIntire’s understanding of orthodox theology had an organic extension into the field of economics, which touched upon one’s relationship to God and to others. These connections enabled McIntire to conclude America was under theological and economic danger simultaneously. His 1945 book, *The Rise of the Tyrant: Controlled Economy vs. Private Enterprise*, posed the question, “Is the idea of atheistic communism being subtly presented to America?” McIntire sought to prove the case:

> The problems that face us in America today---the enjoyment of our democracy, the maintenance of private enterprise, the preservation of a free economy, and the security of our liberties---are, at bottom, religious issues. *These realities came out of the abiding faith of our forefathers who believed certain things about God, about man, about the Bible.* Because they believed these things they gave us the land in which we dwell, a land of liberty.

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A controlled economy of any kind McIntire understood as the fruit of a godless worldview. In chapter entitled “The Reason for Tyranny” he pinpointed unbelief by liberal churches as a key cause of the present threat.\(^{34}\) The result was a clash of the authentic faith with a counterfeit one: “The reason for tyranny is the rejection of God’s Word…The Christian religion is one system---a deposit, the oracles of God; the Marxist ideology garbed in Christian terminology is another.”\(^{35}\)

He also attacked language about the universal Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man as products of a collectivist worldview instead of a biblical one.\(^{36}\) He imagined a related catastrophe to be the recent ecumenical emphasis on the ability of the state to cure all ills rather than the true church:

> What is actually happening, so far as the Federal Council is concerned, is that when it sees exploitation and similar sins of society, it turns to the State to remove this condition by controlling the whole of society, instead of emphasizing more vigorously the preaching of the Gospel and the fundamental principles of society.\(^{37}\)

The end result was that the nation’s leading ecumenical force gave encouragement to America’s enemies: “The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America…is actually aiding and abetting the whole communistic propaganda throughout the world.”\(^{38}\) McIntire’s solution was to bind American history and free enterprise to the Bible. He was clear that the urgency of the situation be understood: “The clear-cut presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which gave us

\(^{34}\) Ibid., p. 199.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., p. 201.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 205.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 211.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 215.
our free economy and liberty” was the only protection from the tyranny of a controlled economy.\textsuperscript{39}

In \textit{Author of Liberty} (1946), McIntire demanded recognition of the fact that traditional liberties and a controlled economy were contradictory.\textsuperscript{40} Baranowski comments that McIntire directly tied the concept of free enterprise to the teachings of Jesus “to keep America from succumbing to the demonic influences of creeping socialism and social engineering [that had overtaken the Russian nation].”\textsuperscript{41} Historically unprecedented events were not part of his conception; rather, he treated freedom as a mathematical result requiring only a return to divinely ordained principles: “Freedom is like a formula; certain ingredients are absolutely necessary.”\textsuperscript{42} Here McIntire revealed the biblical basis for his view of private property:

\begin{quote}
The eighth commandment, of course, is the one that concerns us pre-eminently in this particular study because it has to do with the right of property---“Thou shalt not steal.”…This is the command that establishes upon divine authority the right of private enterprise. A man is entitled, according to God, to hold property, to use that property to get gain…We also call it capitalism.\textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}

The redistribution of wealth McIntire assumed was an overthrow of this commandment, in effect “to create an immoral and disobedient society.”\textsuperscript{44} Concluding that capital accumulation could happen in an unjust environment was impossible for McIntire because the method of accumulation was understood to be divinely constructed. These beliefs would later form the basis of McIntire’s opposition to civil rights. Finally, William Martin observes that McIntire’s

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 249.
\textsuperscript{40} Carl McIntire, \textit{Author of Liberty} (Collingswood, NJ: Christian Beacon Press, 1946), p. xiii.
\textsuperscript{41} Baranowski, “Carl McIntire,” p. 259.
\textsuperscript{42} McIntire, \textit{Author of Liberty}, p. xv.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p. 101.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 102.
\end{quote}
consistency as an anticomunist, including a strike-first policy with the Soviet Union, emerged from his books, namely, *Twentieth Century Reformation, Rise of the Tyrant*, and *Author of Liberty*, and from his *Beacon* articles.\(^{45}\)

Beyond the printed word, McIntire’s most important use of mass media was his radio ministry, and in this realm he actually marked himself as a crusader for certain rights of expression. McIntire treated radio as a sphere in which the principles of democracy ruled. By the middle 1930s, on WPEN Philadelphia, he had, using perceived rights of free speech, already offended members of the Christian Science church by criticizing the group’s teachings.\(^{46}\)

Later in 1945, when faced with WPEN’s cancellation of his broadcast, McIntire led the formation of Philadelphia Gospel Broadcasters to protest the elimination of the opportunity to purchase time for religious ends. Robert Mulholland comments that “McIntire believed in free enterprise, and if there was a demand from the public for certain religious programs then the clergymen sponsoring these shows should be allowed to buy time. He considered this a right.”\(^{47}\) Mulholland adds that to deny clergy access to the airwaves was in McIntire’s estimation an act of discrimination. McIntire would soon discover that recourse to the legal system, even to the U.S. Supreme Court, revealed quite a different conception of radio: the courts ruled that the broadcasters had no legal obligation to sell airtime to the religious community.\(^{48}\)

McIntire continued to attempt to hinder the advance of other religious bodies. Using WCAM, a Camden, New Jersey station, he angered Catholics when he attacked the New Jersey Parochial School Bus Law. Mulholland documents McIntire’s unsuccessful 1948 campaign to


\(^{46}\) Mulholland, “Carl McIntire,” p. 32.


repeal the law, which “provided that school districts must give free transport to parochial and public school students.” Though his opponents saw the issue as an assault upon their faith, McIntire understood it as a violation of the separation of church and state.

McIntire also battled against what he considered to be the misuse of Christian language. He called for equal time on the air to respond to the rhetoric behind Brotherhood Week, a celebration of ecumenical and cultural unity in America. Responding to Reverend Clayton Williams’s grant of airtime to endorse the event in 1949, McIntire with other pastors called for the presentation of an opposing point of view:

McIntire protested at this use of radio time and asked for equal time for his organization to present its views on brotherhood as, “one and only one view of brotherhood was presented by Mr. Williams on this program.” “In view of this obvious discrimination and unfairness,” WCAM was requested to grant equal time on the next Sunday broadcast so that McIntire’s group could present their arguments, including, “a varied program, offering what (they) believed to be the true basis of brotherhood.” McIntire’s group did not believe in the brotherhood of all men, but that rather only those saved in the Fundamental sense were brothers.

Eventually, due to the furor he created, McIntire was forced off the air at WCAM. His controversialist ways, however, would not be curbed by this and other discouragements.

McIntire essentially expected freedom over the air as if radio were an open microphone in a public debate. Mulholland comments on the free-speech position of the American Council of Christian Churches, the interdenominational fundamentalist organization McIntire founded in 1941 to serve as a counterpoint to the Federal Council of Churches: “They believed that when

49 Ibid., p. 74.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., p. 86. Mulholland cites a letter written by McIntire and four other pastors to the manager of WCAM and dates the letter as 1941---however this is likely misdated as the rest of the narrative follows a 1949 timeline. The full citation reads, “Reverends; Charles Bauer, N.C. Conant, J.B. Milby, H.W. Kieffer and Carl McIntire to Schriver, February 21, 1941.”
time for religion was sold [by broadcasters], that no restrictions should be imposed by networks or stations in its use. They granted that there may be some abuses, but believed that the greater evil was in the restrictions.”52 One of the greatest hurdles McIntire faced was the fact that broadcasters tended to parcel out time using mathematical proportions—-the size of a religious group’s support base determined the extent of access the group received. But McIntire expected equal access to the airwaves regardless of proportions.53 With CBS radio, McIntire tried unsuccessfully to count all the small denominations of the International Council of Christian Churches, founded in 1948 to counter the World Council of Churches, and the American Council as one denomination.54 Mulholland claims that those biased against him, such as members of the Federal Council, were making equally potent countermoves to silence him when he campaigned for time for the American Council on an NBC station.55 Power relationships mattered in the new world of radio. Well before the “Twentieth-Century Reformation Hour” broadcast debuted in 1955 and made McIntire well-known as a right-wing radio personality, he had established himself as a controversial fundamentalist willing consistently to talk about extra-religious topics over the air.56

Heather Hendershot documents an important transition in McIntire’s perception of the use of radio. Initially, McIntire had to participate in a competitive environment to gain access to a radio audience, but with the 1965 purchase of his own station for the broadcast of the “Twentieth Century Reformation Hour” McIntire was free to voice his opinions about national

52 Ibid., p. 103.
54 Ibid., pp. 205-206.
55 Ibid., p. 242.
56 Ibid., pp. 243-244.
issues without any check to his extremism. That is, he was free until 1973, when the Federal Communications Commission application of the Fairness Doctrine challenged his freedom.

Hendershot explains:

To prevent abuse of the airwaves, in 1949 the FCC created the Fairness Doctrine, which stated that to operate in the public interest, broadcasters were expected to provide commentary on controversial issues of public importance. If one perspective was given on a controversial issue, time would also be given, free of charge, to the opposing point of view.

Ultimately McIntire lost his license. Hendershot notes that a major force of opposition to McIntire’s sectarian approach was ecumenism in a Cold War environment—the notion that religious unity among Protestant, Catholics, and Jews was part of national survival. “Ecumenism was the word of the day, and the liberal cold war understanding was that America was a Judeo-Christian nation, where denominational differences should be minimized. In principle, the goal of religious programming was to inform and inspire, not proselytize.” Such an attitude created a foil to which McIntire’s broadcasts would respond. Hendershot concludes by saying that, by being politically engaged as a religious conservative, McIntire predated the Moral Majority by decades but ultimately served as a cautionary tale because his extremism made him politically unviable.

While radio represented McIntire’s views to society in small, concentrated doses, the Christian Beacon newspaper presented the most thorough account of the development of his worldview from the 1930s onward. McIntire and the fundamentalists who were his allies saw their role in American life challenged and transformed by the 1960s. As their self-concept

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58 Ibid., p. 376.

59 Ibid., p. 383.

60 Ibid., pp. 384 and 388.
changed, so did their understanding of their own rights. The *Christian Beacon* recorded the forces that brought about the greater marginalization of fundamentalism, with ecumenism and neo-evangelicalism pre-eminent among those forces. With that push to the periphery and the rise of the civil rights movement, fundamentalists would confront the rights revolutions in their own way.

**Backdrop: The Ecumenical Movement, Neo-Evangelicals, and the Worldview of The Christian Beacon Newspaper**

The ecumenism McIntire despised---cross-denominational cooperation with tolerance for doctrinal diversity---was an outgrowth of a major event: the rise of the Social Gospel, a strongly this-worldly-oriented application of Christianity’s humanitarian aspects. William Martin notes the success among the ecumenically-minded of a modernist focus upon unity compared to the fundamentalist emphasis upon declaration of the Gospel during the twentieth century.\(^61\) Fundamentalists tended to call for salvation first and social action second. George Marsden terms the first decades of the twentieth century a “great reversal” in fundamentalists’ attitudes toward social action, which became associated with theological liberalism:

> The factor crucial to understanding the “Great Reversal,” and especially in explaining its timing and exact shape, is the fundamentalist reaction to the liberal Social Gospel after 1900. Until about 1920 the rise of the Social Gospel and the decline of revivalist social concerns correlate very closely. By the time of World War I, “social Christianity” was becoming thoroughly identified with liberalism and was viewed with great suspicion by many conservative evangelicals.\(^62\)

In the United States the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, created in 1908, had a direct connection to the Social Gospel emphasis.\(^63\) On an international scale, the

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\(^{62}\) Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p.91.

Edinburgh World Missions Conference of 1910 was a pivotal moment for the beginning of an inter-denominational dialogue. Martin comments that the conference represented a turning point: “A majority of the 1,206 participants felt uncomfortable with making the kinds of claims to exclusive truth that had given birth and purpose to the missionary movement.”64 As a result fundamentalist groups rejected ecumenism, and by 1921, Martin notes, modernism’s victory in the ecumenical movement was nearly total: “Soul-winning evangelism had all but disappeared from the ecumenical agenda.”65 Theology and practical service were the two facets of partnership that would take decades to hammer out, with success achieved in 1948 at the Amsterdam founding of the World Council of Churches (WCC), one of the emphases of which would be social justice.66

Increasingly from a fundamentalist point of view, however, “social justice” would be coded language for “collectivism”. Theological purity would not be a prerequisite of membership in the WCC, and for this reason fundamentalists, according to George Marsden, took to “describing it as the latest part of a satanic-Marxist conspiracy to form one church and one world under [the] Antichrist.”67 The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ would later merge with a plethora of other organizations to form the National Council of the Churches of Christ (NCC) in the United States of America in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1950. Eventually the NCC would confront the civil rights problem directly. But first the Council would seem to fulfill fundamentalists’ predictions regarding its modernist tendencies by producing the Revised

64 Martin, A Prophet With Honor, p. 326.

65 Ibid.


Standard Version of the Bible. Marsden notes McIntire’s angry response upon discovering the RSV’s downplaying of the virginity of Mary.\(^{68}\)

However, the perceived threats to fundamentalist separatism came not only from without, but from within the ranks. The parties that represented American evangelicalism in the twentieth century struggled with an interminable tension between separation from mainstream culture for the purpose of purity and engagement for the purpose of outreach. In the Scopes era, caricatures of the fundamentalist preacher abounded in the popular press, fueled by images of Billy Sunday and William Jennings Bryan and others, as the epitome of anti-intellectualism. But even then, Marsden notes, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and its crown jewel, Princeton Theological Seminary, maintained a respect for worldly wisdom.\(^{69}\)

When McIntire and Harold Ockenga joined J. Gresham Machen in his departure in 1929 from a liberalizing Princeton to found Westminster Seminary, they followed quite different trajectories. Ockenga became president of the National Association of Evangelicals and of Fuller Seminary, both oriented toward re-engagement with American culture. He coined the term “new evangelical” and became a strong ally of Billy Graham.\(^{70}\) McIntire became a champion of separatism and a vocal opponent of Billy Graham, particularly in 1957 when Graham decided to work alongside modernists for an evangelistic crusade.

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was founded in 1942 and was modeled on the highly successful, cross-denominational New England Fellowship.\(^{71}\) According to William Martin, the term “new evangelical”

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\(^{68}\) Ibid., pp. 136-137.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., p. 31.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., p. 167.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., p. 48. For example, two prominent fundamentalists, John Rice and Bob Jones, were NAE members.
signified a form of conservative Christianity that consciously marked itself off from old-line Fundamentalism in several crucial respects. Its adherents clung loyally to such basic tenets of Fundamentalism as the inspired and fully reliable nature of Scripture, the Virgin Birth, the sinfulness of humanity, the substitutionary atonement, the Resurrection, and the Second Coming, but tended to be tolerant of minor theological differences among themselves...If an Evangelical believer chose to remain affiliated with a mainline denomination...that was acceptable, perhaps even desirable, since they might counteract tendencies toward liberalism in those bodies.72

He adds that neo-evangelicalism took a softer stance on the matter of evolution as well: “It might ultimately reject evolution, but it would address the same evidence secular scientists considered and not simply declare that evolution could not be true because it differed from the Genesis account of creation.”73

The NAE sought to dispel popular notions of the angry, bigoted fundamentalist that had saturated the media.74 Confusion was rampant, for at this point, in Marsden’s words, “There was not a practical distinction between fundamentalist and evangelical: the words were inter-changeable.”75 Nonetheless, storm clouds were already on the horizon. McIntire had already formed a competing body, the American Council of Churches, in 1941. Also, several members of the NAE maintained links to the Federal Council of Churches.76

The lack of differentiation between fundamentalists and evangelicals came to an end as social issues with theological implications drove a wedge between the parties. As we will see below, the ministry of Billy Graham became a decisive issue. John Rice and Bob Jones were two particularly important figures with ties to Graham. According to David Beale, John Rice

74 William Martin, *With God on Our Side*, p. 23.
was known for his evangelistic conferences and his paper, *The Sword of the Lord*. Marsden estimates *The Sword* had “a circulation in the hundreds of thousands” making Rice “the most influential fundamentalist publicist of the era.” Bob Jones was known as an evangelist and institution-builder. Beale describes the goal behind the 1927 founding of Bob Jones College “to promote high academic standards and to emphasize both culture and a practical Christian philosophy.” (By 1947 the college would expand into a university in its present location in Greenville, South Carolina.) Together Rice and Jones added their voices to the NAE chorus, at least initially, before Billy Graham’s actions and other forces reminiscent of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy alienated fundamentalists generally.

Graham stood at the interface between past and present. Educated in the fundamentalist world of Bob Jones College and Wheaton College, he became known for his worldwide crusades, including a sensationally successful Los Angeles revival in 1949, under the auspices of Youth for Christ. But his later organization, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, along with the National Association of Evangelicals, Fuller Seminary, and the periodical *Christianity Today*, served as the four pillars on which the success of the “new” evangelicals was built, creating a non-belligerent contrast with their fundamentalist forefathers.

The backlash from the fundamentalist camp was inevitable. Nonetheless, the *Christian Beacon*’s attacks were more numerous and more consistent against ecumenical agencies like the

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78 Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, p. 159.


81 Though the focus of *Reforming Fundamentalism* is the seminary, the convergence of all four and the symbiotic nature of the arrangement comes clear. Each serves as part of a movement to “reform” (rehabilitate) conservative Protestantism after the excesses of the Scopes era.
WCC. Graham and the neo-evangelicals found themselves characterized as prodigal offspring and betrayers. The *Beacon* served literally as a warning that apostasy loomed and that its forms threatened to be numerous and multiplying in an uncertain age. McIntire’s paper aspired to connect the dots for unaware Christians. For the writers and McIntire himself, Communism, modernism disguised as ecumenism, “rights” language, and now ecumenism disguised as “neo-evangelicalism” threatened to corrode the twin pillars of the American way of life, fundamentalist religion and free enterprise.

The perspective of the Calvinists McIntire led in the Bible Presbyterian Church had a daily interpretive impact relative to national and world events. This fact found its most practical manifestation in the *Christian Beacon* newspaper. The worldview of the *Christian Beacon* was all inclusive---it touched upon every facet of life, from the individual to the nation. Secondly it was about revelation’s superiority to revolution; at the core were two revealed and unchanging texts, the Bible and the Constitution, the latter emergent from the former via the bridge of the Reformation. Third, the *Beacon* judged civilization if it wandered away from the biblical law. There were two choices---to be divinely restored through repentance or to leave the orbit of the covenantal system and drift away on a tangent, i.e., to become “apostate”. This concept of apostasy was deeply rooted in the Old Testament stories of nations’ orientation to the God of the Jews. Even Israel had over time become apostate, leaving only a faithful remnant. Finally, McIntire’s Calvinism proclaimed a revealed political order, at the heart of which stood the individual as sovereign while the state legislature as a vehicle of popular representation was the proper realm for enacting change. Just as each individual was accountable in the matter of salvation, so the people were accountable for the civilization they created. Nonetheless, in matters of national import America was the faithful remnant culture compared to an apostate
Europe. Both the Old and New Testaments had relevance in *The Christian Beacon*. Compromise with the godless was morally adulterous and led to apostasy; a people of a revealed book need have no dealings with theological or other innovations.

At each point in this universe of beliefs---revealed text, the covenantal view of history, and the revealed political order---a changing America would challenge fundamentalist presuppositions after World War II. Ecumenism and modernist readings of the Bible called for a “living” text instead of a static revelation. Communism overthrew the sovereignty of the individual; civil rights with its supposed redistribution of wealth presumed to accomplish the same. With contributors not only from McIntire’s Presbyterian circles but other leading fundamentalist groups, *The Christian Beacon* was poised to give an answer to its opponents by providing a fascinating record of the worldview of these groups. As fundamentalism’s promise of security contrasted with a chaotic world, this universe of meanings provided the context in which a conception of fundamentalist rights would emerge.

**Containing Revolutions On Many Fronts: The Beacon’s First Battles**

The first issue of the *Christian Beacon* of February 13, 1936 promised to maintain a traditional message of fundamentalist separatism within a turbulent society. But the themes that came to define the paper’s chief concerns had not yet materialized. The *Beacon* was in a transitional state after the WCFA’s focused crusade against European Enlightenment ideas, a state that affords a valuable opportunity to retrace the development of new themes that spurred the political involvement of a previously detached community in the decades surrounding the Second World War. As the 1930s transformed into 1960s, certain topics dominated, in a unified narrative of “apostasy”. McIntire and his confederates aspired to bring separatist Protestantism into a new social location---holy and apart, yet engaged with political reality to redeem a drifting nation.
The *Beacon* appealed to fundamentalists to be a spiritually separated people, keepers of a revealed covenant and witnesses to a wayward humanity. Discourse with outsiders leading to internal transformation of the covenant community was understood to be antithetical to Scripture. Declaration not conversation was God’s way for his people to engage the outsider:

A Beacon is defined as “(1) a fire lighted on a hill …as a signal (2) a signal of warning or guidance…(3) figuratively, any guiding light.” All of these signify the purpose of this newspaper. A light set upon a hill, a signal warning and guiding men---broadcasting the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the Collingswood Presbyterian Church.  

The shadow of modernism threatened to destroy orthodox faith; the impact of the Fundamentalist-Modernist struggle continued into the 1930s. “The hands on the dial of church history are being turned back four hundred years…Indifference has chilled many churches…Doubt and perplexity have weakened the faith of many.”

But the apostasy of the church was only the beginning. The apostasy of the American state which had grown from the Reformation was, in the era of Roosevelt’s collectivist New Deal, threatening fundamentalist ideas about the individual’s economic power:

Our civil and religious liberties, written into the Constitution of the United States of America, come from the Bible to be the Word of God. Many of the things which go by the name of “Christian” today are not Christian at all in the Biblical and historical sense. Some of the proposed social reforms advocated in the name of the church today are not reforms at all, but in principle are simply a camouflaged Communism. We shall contend for these liberties.

This statement also illustrates a key assumption of the paper: the rejection of a pluralistic America. From these fundamentalists’ perspective, America was never a historical entity

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composed of equal groups, but an outflowing of a blueprint, the Bible, applied on a national
scale by a believing community born of the Reformation, without constructive input from the
Enlightenment.

The inaugural issue also displayed another assumption: that in the midst of human chaos,
one certainty would outlast every human effort to deny the sovereignty of God. Premillennialism,
with its accompanying rejection of contemporary culture, was the ultimate insurance policy
against doubt and fear. The Christian could take solace from the fact that present-day apostasy
would be judged on Christ’s return. The view was an extension into modernity’s future of
Calvinism’s certainties about the elect and the damned. McIntire drew on the promise in the
book of Revelation and other biblical sources that God, like a referee, would call his faithful
“winners” in the game of history. He saw the complex calculus of world affairs in the categories
of the Bible’s eschatological drama between God and Satan. In the mid-1930s premillennialism
was a word of reassurance that God had not lost control of human events:

The prophecies in the Bible concerning the end of this age…are most evidently
being fulfilled among us. The return of the Jew to Palestine, the conditions in
Russia, Germany, Italy, and the setting of the stage in Europe, point to the fulfilling
of God’s revealed purpose. The apostasy, the rejection of supernaturalism, is
bringing tyranny to man.85

Hence the Beacon promised to live up to its namesake, as a light to a lost world. The covenant-
keepers would make clear the meaning of occurrences such as ecumenism’s resurgence.

To apply an old Calvinism to sort out new problems was the Beacon’s central mission,
and its patron saint was J. Gresham Machen, who was eulogized in a subsequent issue.
However, in founding the Bible Presbyterians McIntire had actually separated from Machen’s
group. By glorifying Machen the Beacon was reclaiming the legitimacy of McIntire’s enterprise.

85 Ibid.
On his death in 1937, the newspaper editorial page affirmed that Machen was a guide in a time of spiritual darkness. “He bore the brunt of the terrific attack of unbelief and apostasy which gripped the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. He was not ashamed to stand alone for Jesus.”

Machen’s decision to participate in the formation of an independent missions board given the modernist leanings of many Presbyterian missionaries was part of an episode that to the *Beacon* was a simple antithesis of good versus evil. What the “arrogant and tyrannical General Council” and the Assembly of the denomination called a matter of violating “the Communion of Christ” (Machen’s creation of an independent missions board without denominational accountability), the *Beacon* referred to as “[e]cclesiastical persecution” (an attack on orthodoxy led by the denomination imposing the inclusion of modernist views on the unwilling). Theology came first above historical nuance, and this narrative-building style would be increasingly important to McIntire’s expanding community of supporters from multiple denominations as they sought to incorporate the legacies of leaders like Machen.

**Ecumenism as Spiritual Adultery/Apostasy**

The postwar world posed a very serious challenge to fundamentalists as international cooperation—understood as satanic in premillennialist thought—became commonplace. Among the *Beacon’s* most consistent targets were its liberal brethren’s unifying efforts in the name of social justice at the cost of doctrinal purity. The February 12, 1948 edition of the *Beacon* linked together modernism, Communism and President Truman’s Civil Rights bill into sinister whole:

> Senator Lee O’Daniel of Texas charged before the Senate on February 5, 1948, that the President’s Civil Rights Bill is sponsored by men with connections that “link them right back to Moscow in a straight, unbroken line,” and names the Federal

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Council [of Churches of Christ] as a sponsor of the bill along with other communist and “front” organizations.\textsuperscript{88}

This incident represented a moment of coding the concept of “civil rights” as anti-God. The \textit{Beacon} defiantly announced it was “opposed to the doctrine of the ‘brotherhood of man’” and that Truman’s bill was “a major attack on liberty in the United States”:

There is no doubt in our mind but that fundamental Christianity is the main obstacle to the accomplishment of this program. The purveyors of the brotherhood of man and the modernist leaders in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, as well as the communists, know that, so long as men believe that the Bible is God’s holy Word and that the fundamental doctrines of that Book must be preserved, they cannot put into effect their program because the people will not stand for it.\textsuperscript{89}

Modernism represented the synthesis of historical sciences with the Bible to create a new theology. Ecumenism represented the synthesis of churches for a common cause. Civil rights represented the synthesis of races. Communism represented the synthesis of economic classes. But Calvinism’s foundation was the divine establishment of difference, beginning with the elect and the lost. Hence separatism was an important element of the preservation of the faithful, and the \textit{Beacon} did not differentiate often between church and country. The inversion of the term “brotherhood” illustrates precisely how the \textit{Beacon} rejected synthetic language, no matter how affirming on its face.

The \textit{Beacon}’s vantage point blended ecclesiastical, political, social, and economic concerns. In 1948 important ideological statements defined the mentality. Written after competing conferences occurred in the Netherlands, an August piece delineated the major points of clash between McIntire’s International Council of Christian Churches and the ecumenical


colossus, the World Council of Churches. While acknowledging many conservative churches might be part of the conglomerate, the *Beacon* nonetheless painted a dark picture of the World Council which “in its official proposals, attitude, and doctrinal expressions, and ecclesiastical organizations, is anti-Biblical, anti-evangelical, and un-Protestant,” with staff that included “some of the most notorious and near-blasphemous unbelievers of the day.” At the root of the conflict were theological statements:

An organization which is led by men who call the doctrine of the deity of Christ “distilled nonsense”, who discredit the Old Testament, and ridicule many of the doctrines of the New Testament, especially the truth of the efficacy of Christ’s blood, cannot, in the Biblical and historical sense, truthfully be called Christian.

On the other hand, the International Council of Christian Churches exists to protest against the tenets of modernism and to proclaim the doctrines of the faith of the Reformation…

Furthermore, the WCC was attacked for extending the hand of fellowship to both the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches as well as “systems of totalitarianism and and

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90 The two organizations were virtually antithetical to one another, one celebrating unity and inclusiveness among Christians and the other separatism for the sake of doctrinal purity. A.J. Van Der Bent calls the WCC an “international organization of world ecumenical outreach and interfaith cooperation” that brought together “three streams of ecumenical life” over two decades: “Two of these—the Faith and Order movement born at the Edinburgh World Missions Conference (1910) and the Life and Work Committee formed by the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship in 1919—merged at the constituting assembly of WCC at Amsterdam (1948). The third stream, the missionary movement, organized in the International Missionary Council (IMC), was integrated into WCC at the assembly in New Delhi (1961).” [New 20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), s. vv. “World Council of Churches.”].

C. Gregg Singer states that Carl McIntire’s intention for founding the International Council of Christian Churches was “offsetting the liberalism of the World Council of Churches (WCC) which held its first postwar conference in the same year (1948)...(the ICCC also) has denounced WCC for its tolerance of the USSR and its communistic regime. It has also opposed the policies of the United Nations”. ([New 20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), s. vv. “International Council of Christian Churches.”]


92 Ibid.
authoritarianism”, presumably in the Communist world. Here again the ICCC stood in contrast as Reformation-inspired, linking the Old World and the New:

And here on the soil of the Netherlands, of glorious Protestant history, red with the blood of the martyrs, and in the very church building in which the Pilgrim Fathers worshiped when on the first lap of the journey of escape from Roman Catholic and reactionary tyranny, we highly resolve that we will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness….

The ICCC view was that the WCC’s actions and associations were both tainted by “tyrannical” motives. Seeking to maintain a stark antithesis, the Beacon held to a language of separation, quoting Scripture:

The International Council of Christian Churches, therefore, calls upon all Bible believers and true Protestants throughout the world to separate themselves from this congregation of religious negatives and conglomeration of ecclesiastical opposites known as the World Council of Churches, that they may receive the blessing of “the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly…But his delight is in the law of the Lord…”

In September 1948, somewhat reminiscent of Machen’s attacks upon F.D.R.’s New Deal and responding to a Princeton Seminary speaker who served with the Federal Council of Churches, McIntire prophesied a coming doom should new regulation of the economy ensue. Collectivism in church life would promote collectivism in economic life. Thus this oracle was a natural outflow of the fear of ecumenical power. “ ‘Managed’, ‘regulated’ are totalitarian words when they refer to the power of the State over all the wealth of the people.”

Reflecting on British experiment with socialism as a slippery slope, he allowed for no shades of grey:

93 Ibid., p. 8.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Carl McIntire, “How are the Mighty Fallen!” Christian Beacon, September 16, 1948, p. 2.
We shall point out…that the socialist joins with the communist in his desire to
destroy capitalism, and their methods and approach are practically synonymous.
The socialist thinks that he can combine individual freedom with the controls of the
economic order, but it is impossible. Freedom vanishes in the degree to which the
controls are put into operation…

One particular document and its rebuttal served to illustrate the antithesis of the fundamentalist
position yet again. A report from the World Council entitled, “Church and the Disorder of
Society” was reprinted in the Beacon and for its strong collectivist message became the target of
McIntire’s sharpest attack. Critiquing a section discussing economic systems, McIntire foresaw
nothing but the overthrow of capitalism:

“[Quoting from the WCC statement] Capitalism puts the emphasis upon freedom
and promises that justice will follow as a by-product of free enterprise. That too is
an ideology which has been proved false. It is the responsibility of Christians to
seek new creative solutions which never allow either justice or freedom to destroy
the other.” Here is the climax of the pattern for world revolution. It is world
socialism offered in the name of a message from God…It is a logical imposs-
sibility…It is impossible to combine freedom with Government control and have
freedom.

This position was central to McIntire’s worldview and would provide an important rationale for
resistance to ecumenical crusaders but also to civil rights activists, as both made arguments for
the redistribution of wealth. An argument coming from an economic conviction that essentially
free enterprise was God-ordained thus bypassed uncomfortable questions about race relations
and institutional evil long entrenched, by removing the historical element of the story altogether.

For McIntire, America was less a historical entity and more a set of principles---a covenant---to
be enacted, of which free enterprise was one. Thus any presupposition by the WCC that argued
economic injustice had a link to past capitalistic activity was absolutely incomprehensible.

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97 Ibid.

Turning the body of a nation’s individuals into a new collectivist mass was similarly horrific for this defender of the Reformation ideal, which held a person to be sovereign, created in God’s image.

Anticommunist sentiment was not of course the sole domain of McIntire and the Bible Presbyterians. Erling Jorstad discusses “the internal conspiracy thesis” as a common attitude after the Second World War, namely, the advance of Communism was understood to be in part the result of traitorous activity in the American government. “They [the conspiracy theorists] decided that most if not all American foreign policy making had been dominated for several years by highly skillful Soviet espionage agents and their willing dupes working within this nation.”

The entry point of Communism into the heart of the American system had already occurred when the nation was most vulnerable---during the Great Depression, during which an experimental approach subverted, in the theorists’ minds, the basis of the American economy. The theorists held that the New Deal of 1933 involved a “large number of experimental reform measures…[which] attracted many socialists and Communists to Washington.” The result would be McIntire’s worst nightmare and fuel for the Beacon’s editorialists:

This tampering [i.e. New Deal measures] created an atmosphere of pragmatism, flexibility, and indifference toward the traditional governmental duty of protecting the historic ideals of individualism, self-discipline, free enterprise, and isolation from global involvement. Since these qualities were expressions of a divinely inspired natural law, universally true for all men, then it must follow that the deviations since 1933 would explain accurately the failure of America to recognize what the liberals-socialists-Communists had accomplished within its government.

99 Erling Jorstad, Politics of Doomsday, p. 46.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
Jorstad situates McIntire within this conspiracy theorist framework and demonstrates the linkage between McIntire’s religion and his politics. The ecumenical movement was seen to be one of the “dupes” cooperating with the Communist cause.

Nonetheless, to face so many churches united under the World Council banner was a formidable problem for the much smaller International Council of Christian Churches. However, the former body had grown out of modernist movement. Far more shocking would be the turning of some trusted fundamentalists to a moderate position, embodied in the National Association of Evangelicals.

The Seduction of the Brethren, Part One: The NAE

The fundamentalist version of the Reformed worldview did not allow for the negotiation with culture that the NAE sought to foster. In 1948 McIntire was quick to pounce on compromise. A former NAE president, Harold Ockenga, “came forth with a strong denunciation of separation when he declared that Fuller Seminary, of which he is president, would repudiate the ‘come-outism movement.’ This was a direct slap at the American Council [of Churches, the domestic parallel to the ICCC].” 102 The separation McIntire demanded was a total divorce from the liberal and ecumenical parties embodied in the World Council. Another past president, R.L. Decker “attempted to gloss over and obscure the issue of separation from apostasy as it relates to the Federal Council and its larger denominations, and argued that it made no difference so far as co-operation was concerned.” 103 This was the very kind of ambivalent statement McIntire relished to assault. The NAE president at the publication of McIntire’s editorial, Stephen Paine,

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103 Ibid.
added fuel to the fundamentalist’s fire. McIntire’s examination of Paine’s statement came to a predictable conclusion:

Let us see the statement of Dr. Paine. It reads:

“With reference to separation, the NAE holds that the growing liberalism of denominations sometimes reaches that final apostasy when the only proper course for Evangelicals is to withdraw in loyalty to the Scriptures, but the NAE does not presume to decide when that point has been reached, recognizing at this point the responsibility of the individual conscience.”

There are two sections to this statement, set apart by a “but” which occurs between them. The first half cannot possibly be said to be a statement which supports the position of the maintenance in the visible church of purity of life and doctrine. 104

The rest of the editorial represented an inversion of what had previously been stated in the field of economics: in capitalism, freedom of the individual ruled according to McIntire’s earlier declarations, but in theology and ecclesiastical life, the conscience of the one submitted without question to the church leaders’ interpretation of Scripture. The evangelical moderate position, standing in between fundamentalism and modernism, would continue to be highly problematic for the Beacon. As we shall see below, tensions reached a high point with the Billy Graham New York Crusade of 1957. Many fundamentalists had earlier baptized Graham as their champion. In a Cold War world, dichotomies ruled, and the NAE’s third way could not easily find acceptance among conservatives.

The Battle Fully Joined: Codings and Antithesis in 1954

Revealing the language of subversion and trickery was quintessential in the Beacon’s mission in 1954. However, the year of the Brown v. Board of Education decision produced little comment among the newspaper’s editorialists, for whom later judicial activism was a prime target. It would be only in the 1960s that the Beacon would address civil rights matters as the

104 Ibid.
nation did; the Brown decision in its early impact was still too abstract to be worth the trouble. However, the vocabulary of brotherhood so popular among liberal religious leaders came under immediate assault in the Beacon as another form of compromise. February’s “Brotherhood Week”, an ongoing tradition initiated by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, was deemed too dangerous by the paper: “The brotherhood of man is not taught in the Scriptures, and neither is the [universal] Fatherhood of God.” The hidden agenda the Beacon assumed to be present was both theologically heretical and economically collectivist: “Though many people do not realize it, the kind of ‘brotherhood’ being offered by the National Conference of Christians and Jews is the kind the Marxists preach for all men in their ‘brotherhood’ society.” The Beacon served as a fundamentalist parallel to Senator Joseph McCarthy; i.e., it acted like a father figure decoding stealthily introduced language designed to lure away the unsuspecting. The key principle at work might be called “the deception of the middle steps”; fundamentalists could not risk becoming the frog in the kettle.

The Beacon also had ample opportunity to go on the attack in the Eisenhower years. The notion of diplomacy with a Communist superpower was utterly incomprehensible to the paper’s writers---the Soviets could only be confronted, never welcomed to dialogue. Billy James Hargis, an ICCC evangelist, chose aerial assault, literally. A March story detailed a follow-up launch of “Bible balloons”---Scripture sent behind the Iron Curtain---after an earlier success with ten thousand balloons stirred an awakening.

Furthermore, for the Beacon, the antithesis had to be total---every group on one side or the other in a Cold War frame. In one critical protest, Russian clergy invited by the World

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106 Ibid., p. 8.
Council of Churches were automatically coded as agents of the Kremlin. Thus, in the March 18 issue, the *Beacon* joined Chicago civic organizations in resisting the visit of such clergy:

Here are two questions: Should communist agents from Iron Curtain lands be admitted to the U.S.A. for the express purpose of preaching communism? The Legion in Chicago says, No. Should a council of churches that includes these communist agents in its fellowship and leadership have the confidence of Christians? The American Council of Christian Churches and the International Council of Christian Churches say, No.  

Furthermore, the World Council of Churches was complicit in the successful spread of Communism, according to the *Beacon*. In reporting the state of Baptist life in Czechoslovakia, “The leaders of the World Council of Churches in Geneva… suppressed any reference to the evidence that the church was under the control of the communist State,” with a bias toward presenting the culprits “in the most favorable light”. The editorialist assumed the reason was obvious. “That misrepresentation appears to be designed to make possible this communist contact with the West and the continuation of these communist leaders in acceptable church activities.” The *Beacon* portrayed the dissemination of Communist ideas as terrifying in both rapidity and scale by repeated front page stories detailing their spread around the world. In Hungary, a book published by the Hungarian Church Press was a warning of the “complete domination of the Hungarian Church by Communism”. McIntire’s paper was so doctrinaire that it would not flinch at holding other American Presbyterian missionaries suspect. James P. Alter of the PC-USA, whom McIntire documented as a WCC-affiliated individual, was taken to

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task for promoting a socialistic solution for India’s woes, a tactic labeled in the front-page headline as “Following [the] Communist Party Line in the Mission Field”.\footnote{112\textsuperscript{112} Carl McIntire, “‘Presbyterian Life’ Features Missionary’s Work in Promoting Social Revolution in India, and Following the Communist Party Line on Mission Field,” \textit{Christian Beacon}, April 29, 1954, p. 1.}

Ultimately, the worldview of the \textit{Beacon} held that the World Council of Churches walked hand in hand with Communism, and there could be no other choice but to fight back. A resolution issued at the ACCC spring convention was clear:

\begin{quote}
Since we expect our government to maintain a rigid barrier against all enemies who would invade our country; therefore we, the delegates of the American Council of Christian Churches, oppose the entrance of such in the name of religion or under the guise of World Council representation, to spread communistic propaganda and secure information that would be helpful to them in accomplishing their aim to destroy our democratic form of government and our freedom to preach and to practice the doctrines of our Christian faith.\footnote{113\textsuperscript{113} Unnamed author, “Resolutions Adopted by the American Council of Christian Churches,” \textit{Christian Beacon}, May 6, 1954, p. 5.}
\end{quote}

A July editorial, issued on the eve of the dreaded Chicago visit by “Communist” clergy, reinforced the vitriol. The deceptive qualities of “ecumenical” togetherness appear to resemble the collectivist view, in the \textit{Beacon} critique. Addressing the desire of the World Council of Churches to invite Josef L. Hromadka, a Czech who was labeled by the paper as “the No. 1 spokesman for the communist world among the clergy”, and his church into fellowship, the warning was direct.\footnote{114\textsuperscript{114} Unnamed author, “Communist Radio Announces Hromadka’s Coming to U.S.A.: Prague Station Reports Decoration by Communist Czech President,” \textit{Christian Beacon}, July 15, 1954, p. 1.} “It is a church which prates the communist line and is a puppet of communism, but they [the World Council] think it should be accorded every privilege, honor, and equality given to churches from other sections of the world.”\footnote{115\textsuperscript{115} Editorial, \textit{Christian Beacon}, July 15, 1954, p. 1.} It was the \textit{Beacon}’s mission to maintain a “rigid barrier” of difference; ecumenical thinking was modernist thinking, and it implied homogenization to this group of Reformed-minded Christians. To join with the WCC
implied joining to Communists, so total separation from the WCC was called for. However, the aspiration of the *Beacon* was not only to save the church but the country; hence, the Bible Presbyterians and their compatriots (such as Grace Theological Seminary and the General Association of Regular Baptists) were oddly theologically and socially separated but politically engaged.\footnote{The February 18th 1954 Beacon includes a Bible discussion offered by the President of Grace Theological Seminary; the April 22, 1954 edition of the Beacon promotes the GARBC cause.}

According to the *Beacon*, even President Eisenhower could be seduced into modernist tendencies. In the March 25 *Beacon* Carl McIntire dissected an article on the president’s religious background in “the modernist *Christian Century*” that was “designed…to promote the ecumenical movement and…the National Council of the Churches of Christ…” while attacking the ACCC for criticizing the President.\footnote{Carl McIntire, “President Eisenhower’s Religion,” *Christian Beacon*, March 25, 1954, p. 1.} The central issue was that the National Council leaders had greater access to shaping presidential opinions than McIntire’s people. The end result could only be some form of persecution of fundamentalists:

> We think he needs to set a good example to the country, and to practice faithfully what he believes to be right before God. But, when the leaders of the National Council, who have access to him, use him to promote their particular projects and their movement, and they praise him and he praises them, a situation is developing in the country which is most perilous for religious liberty and minority groups.\footnote{Ibid., p. 8.}

McIntire could not see any possibility of mutual benefit in the President’s negotiating attitude with the NCC. To be committed to separation, therefore, meant in some sense to claim to hold the purest tradition of America as part of one’s church tradition. Eisenhower’s gestures of friendship toward the NCC while ignoring the ACCC implied a degeneration from the conservative upbringing of his childhood.
The coming battles over civil rights had only the slightest foreshadowing in 1954, despite the *Brown v. Board* decision. One note was made of building cooperation between the World Council and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the race question: UNESCO’s use of WCC’s general secretary W.A. Visser ’t Hooft’s book recommending the role ecumenical groups could fruitfully play in future reconciliation. The ICCC itself presented itself a truly interracial body, as a scan of the schedule for the Third Plenary Congress in August attested; Asia, Africa, and South America were well-represented in the delegate count along with Western European countries. Furthermore, the *Beacon* later boasted of twelve more denominations joining the ICCC’s ranks, representing Africa, Asia, and South America, among others, and bringing the total number to fifty-four. The ironic result was that a multi-ethnic and somewhat ecumenical organization emerged, but with tight doctrinal controls. With Carl McIntire in charge of so much of the operations of the ICCC and the ACC (the August 19th *Beacon* records his election to another term as ICCC president by unanimous vote), the range of creative action was limited. The key issues to come would not only be race and wealth, but the type of change that rebalanced the scales of justice. In the thinking of McIntire and his allies, the only biblical form of change was legislative and according to the will of the majority.

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The *Beacon* offered several major statements to buttress this argument. In April a multi-week argument entitled “The Divine Origin of the Bible” began, a series of reprints from B.B. Warfield, to show that the Reformed position reflected authority from the vantage point of reverence for an unchanging text emanating from an unchanging God. From the Bible, Warfield assumed, stemmed the most humane governmental forms the world had ever seen:

It is another fact…that this book occupies a unique position in the world of civilized man…

The legislation of civilized nations is profoundly affected by its teaching; the social habits of cultured people are largely determined by its scheme of life; the governmental forms of powerful countries are built on its principles…

Still further, where it most dominates, there is most life. It is the great Protestant nations…which are the most prominent nations, the most full of abounding life and enterprising energy, the most impressive on the destinies of man.\(^{123}\)

A clear bias existed here to identify America and other “Protestant nations” with particular nationalities that came into contact with the Reformation most directly. In this sense, Warfield exhibited features of “ethnoreligious” nationalism, where the identity of a people was indivisibly bound to a religious tradition. Carl McIntire would build upon this foundation.

In an important series of essays beginning in June 1954 and titled “Author of Liberty”, McIntire elucidated the basis for fundamentalist political activism. These articles were a pivotal revelation by the leader of the Bible Presbyterians and the paragon of Northern fundamentalism. The concomitant growth of federal power appeared to McIntire to be an apocalyptic message. He began with a sense of shock about the deteriorating state of affairs in light of America’s inheritance. The central question was pointed: “Why did our founding fathers speak of God as

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\(^{123}\) Benjamin B. Warfield, “The Divine Origin of the Bible, the General Argument,” *Christian Beacon*, April 1, 1954, p. 2. A subtitle indicates the original printing: “Published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work in 1882 and Distributed at that Time in Pamphlet Form.”
the ‘Author of liberty’?”124 But a secondary issue was in actuality the major focus: “And what made our fathers believe that it was intolerable for the State to assume responsibility for the individual---his care, his material and economic welfare?”125 The fate of civil rights was coded as economically subversive to capitalism.

The purpose at the present moment was to frame the situation in theological terms. For McIntire, the simplest beginning was to find the moment in time “in the last fifty years” when a shift occurred that elevated anthrolopology at the expense of theology. It was this betrayal/seduction with the wisdom of man over God that “consumed the thinking of our most brilliant minds”.126 McIntire believed the shift had nationally catastrophic results:

The surest way in the world for man to lose his liberty is to quit thinking about God and focus his attention upon himself. There was a time when theology was called the queen of sciences; but it most assuredly has abdicated in favor of a satanic imposter. The Devil is the one who has always played with the pride of man.127

The difference in severity between J. Gresham Machen and his disciple McIntire was stark. Both showed disgust for collectivist approaches in national life. However, McIntire’s comment about the Devil and sense of a life-and-death struggle at hand found no echo in Machen’s social views, which tended to show a general libertarian bent on specific issues such as suffrage and alien registration. In the 1930s, the Cold War was still years away; by 1954, with a general national hysteria about atomic war and spies among average Americans, a message that linked collectivism to the plotting of the Devil was a seed likely to fall on fertile ground.

124 Carl McIntire, “‘Author of Liberty’---God the Father,” Christian Beacon, June 10, 1954, p. 3.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
“Apparently we have decided that the chief end of man is to glorify man.”\textsuperscript{128} McIntire for all practical purposes could neither see the full meaning of the separation of church and state nor the fact that growing religious and ethnic pluralism in the country demanded a shift away from the narrow concerns of conservative Protestants. The narrative he chose to write instead pitted the image of the “State” versus God in a dramatic competition for the individual’s allegiance. But he warned that “the universe is not big enough for two gods,” one of which he characterized as “a collectivistic totalitarian State”, “an idol before which men must bow down”\textsuperscript{129} This dichotomizing of the universe and its inhabitants allowed for simple calculation and labeling. McIntire concluded that “we are developing a way of government that fundamentally denies God”\textsuperscript{130}

The means by which this disaster unfolded were made abundantly clear to the reader living under a government purporting to protect freedom. “The collectivistic notion assumes that man has taken over the ordering of the world for his own material and social security, and in doing so it completely ignores the spiritual ordering and well-being of man.”\textsuperscript{131} The state had presumed to create controls over facets of American life where the Bible denies such controls can legitimately exist. The end result was horrific to contemplate: “The State must become supreme.” This development was being justified as necessary in order to foster security and material provision. But the improper elevation of the State paralleled the aspirations of Lucifer to be like God in the book of Isaiah.\textsuperscript{132} This endpoint and narrative context stood in stark contrast

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{129} Carl McIntire, “‘Author of Liberty’---God the Father,” \textit{Christian Beacon}, June 17, 1954, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{131} Carl McIntire, “‘Author of Liberty’---God’s World,” \textit{The Christian Beacon}, June 24, 1954, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{132} Carl McIntire, “‘Author of Liberty’---God the Father,” \textit{Christian Beacon}, June 17, 1954, p. 3.
to the image of the philanthropic Roosevelt and the beneficent New Deal. A controlled economy
and true freedom could not co-exist. McIntire feared that totalitarianism would win the debate in
America due to fear of the atomic bomb.  

In one of the later essays in the series, McIntire delineated the proper zone of control for
the State. It was right to restrain evils, like murder; it was wrong to legislate matters of choice, or
matters of the heart acting in freedom. He further pointed out that the Bible did provide for
the right of revolution when the State overstepped its bounds. Noting the Westminster
Confession of Faith, a primary Presbyterian and Reformed document second only to Calvin’s
works and Scripture, McIntire reiterated the true source of governmental authority---God
Himself. Nonetheless, as with the term “brotherhood”, vocabulary could be manipulated easily
as part of trickery: “The good in a free society is liberty; the good in the communist or
collectivist society is so-called security.” It was this clash---between liberty and security---that
drove McIntire to conclude the latter meant control that was unjustified. “To control man’s
economy [for the purpose of providing security], man’s life must be controlled; and to control
man’s life, his thought must be controlled---and this is tyranny.” The final essay contains
some harsh words for collectivism seen on a smaller scale---in the power of unions to silence
individual freedom. 

133 Ibid.
134 Carl McIntire, “Author of Liberty’---God’s State,” Christian Beacon, July 1, 1954, p. 3.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid., p. 6.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
139 McIntire, “Author of Liberty’---God’s State,” The Christian Beacon, July 8, 1954, p. 3. (A continuation of the
previous week.)
By depicting America in such stark, all-or-nothing terms, McIntire imagined an arena of nearly endless struggle for the soul of the country between the forces of the Reformation and of collectivism, with the shadow of international Communism in the background. The use of academic expertise had already advanced the cause of Satan and the growth of the State. Only an awareness of deceit---in vocabulary and in practice---could undo the organic evil McIntire believed already had brought the nation to its knees. In certain ways, much of this scenario was reminiscent of William Jennings Bryan’s warnings about the seduction of youth; however, in the 1950s the Cold War was a very real backdrop, spies were known to have infiltrated America, and the readers of the Beacon were likely part of a much more receptive and much broader audience than the Commoner enjoyed in the feel-good, Roaring Twenties. Just as Machen’s revulsion at F.D.R. had a limited impact, so Bryan’s attack on high school science lacked staying power. But this period of McIntire’s writing was ripe for a new form of creationism.

**A Moment in the Spotlight**

The times were right for those who propounded a simple good-versus-evil frame for world events. Anticommunist hysteria reached a high point with the investigations of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, who sought help from all quarters in rooting out Communists and who found himself as a Catholic receiving help from the Presbyterian McIntire and his allies. But anticommunism was not just a fundamentalist priority. In the 1950s, Carl McIntire was hardly alone in raising the alarm of a Communist threat, but he stood out for his willingness to accuse his fellow countrymen of compromise. The nation’s most prominent neo-evangelical, Billy Graham, warned publicly of the menace of Communism as early as 1947. In 1949, at a Los Angeles revival Graham had noted that the Russians had just acquired nuclear weapons and

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immediately proceeded to preach an apocalyptic scenario. He depicted the world situation simply as the clash of America’s Christian civilization with godless Communism. Martin notes that publishing giant William Randolph Hearst elevated Graham’s reputation nationally as a result of the Los Angeles meetings.\footnote{Martin, \textit{With God on Our Side}, p. 29.}

Furthermore, at the beginning of the Korean conflict Graham wired Truman urging a showdown to rescue the multitudes of South Korean Christians from slavery.\footnote{Martin, \textit{Prophet with Honor}, p. 131.} Graham would eventually meet Truman personally to express his concerns. Amidst these international events, Graham bore a resemblance to McIntire for praising “the God-blessed superiority of the free enterprise system.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 139.} The conflict of worldviews was comprehensive, in Graham’s view, touching every sector of life.

Graham was not beyond suspecting an infiltration as well, in the style of McCarthy. Martin comments that “Graham stirred fears of communists and communist sympathizers who had wormed their way into America’s key institutions and were, at that very moment, eating away at the nation’s vitals, ready to betray it into enemy hands at the first opportunity.”\footnote{Martin, \textit{With God on Our Side}, p. 34.} Among other areas, Graham pinpointed the spheres of education, entertainment, and religion as all at risk of contamination. Finally Graham went on the record as late as 1953, at the height of McCarthy’s influence, in support of the efforts of governmental watchdogs in protecting national interests.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 35.} In addition, two years earlier Graham had voiced a commonly heard objection to
organized protests in the name of civil rights: he was skeptical about such activities because he suspected Communists to be leaders of the revolt.\footnote{146 Martin, \textit{Prophet with Honor}, p. 169.}

But Graham’s broad pronouncements and activities lacked the direct and personally aggressive qualities of McCarthy’s and McIntire’s crusades against Communism. They were the living embodiment of Jorstad’s internal conspiracy thesis, which urged that America’s weakness was rooted in treasonous activity. Jorstad identifies also J.B. Mathews, who cooperated directly with McCarthy in attacking the reputations of liberal clergy and who “endeared himself to the budding anti-Communist movement by stating that some seven thousand Protestant clergymen in America served communism” in 1952.\footnote{147 Jorstad, \textit{Politics of Doomsday}, p. 48.} Along with McIntire, Mathews later attacked the loyalty of the newly constituted National Council of Churches (which incorporated the Federal Council) in a tract entitled \textit{How Red is the National Council of Churches}?\footnote{148 \textit{Ibid.}, p. 51.} In addition, McCarthy publicly gave thanks for the assistance of McIntire’s co-belligerent Billy James Hargis as well as for help from the International Council of Christian Churches.\footnote{149 \textit{Ibid.}, p. 52.} Clabaugh highlights the appeal McCarthy held for McIntire: by aiding both Senator McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee, “McIntire and his subordinates in the ACCC-ICCC achieved more respectability than they had ever had, while simultaneously gaining a nation-wide forum for their charges.”\footnote{150 Clabaugh, \textit{Thunder on the Right}, p. 85.} Finally, as a crowning achievement of short duration, Mathews was initially part of McCarthy’s investigative team, but resigned when criticism mounted.\footnote{151 Jorstad, \textit{Politics of Doomsday}, pp. 55-56.}
Events reached a high point with the investigation of Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, an instance of direct cooperation between a fundamentalist organization and a political witch hunt:

As was disclosed later, the ACCC [McIntire’s American Council of Christian Churches] in 1953 furnished the House Un-American Activities Committee with considerable information alleging that Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam was a “top Red clergyman” in America. An outspoken advocate of the church’s social responsibilities, a vigorous proponent of ecumenical cooperation, and a pungent critic of the work of Senator McCarthy and HUAC, Oxnam had come to personify the ideals McIntire found obnoxious in American church life. 152

Oxnam volunteered to submit to questioning by HUAC and ten hours later the charges were dismissed. Oxnam served as a powerful and effective counterpoint to McIntire in his ecclesiastical views, so much so that, as Jorstad observes, “public interest in ‘Red clergy’ declined quickly after the Oxnam hearings, and the ultrafundamentalists could not restore reader interest in the ensuing months.” 153

Nonetheless, for a brief time fundamentalists’ confidence surged. A symbiotic relationship had developed between right-wing politicians and right-wing pastors. Jorstad claims that politicians sought popularity with voters without risk and hence let the pastors do the witch-hunting since the pastors craved the immense publicity that followed their actions. 154 Jorstad’s main thesis of the “politics of doomsday” contained three major aspects that gave fundamentalists assurance:

Clearly the ultrafundamentalists were constructing a political ideology on the foundations of their theology. Verbal inerrancy informed them that only they understood God’s word for this age. Separationism taught them only they were pure enough to fight the satanic triad of liberalism-socialism-communism.

152 Ibid., p. 56.
153 Ibid., p. 56-57.
154 Ibid., p. 52-53.
Apocalyptic premillenialism assured them that their call for war with Russia was not really warmongering; since only God could destroy this planet and since that would not happen until after the Final Judgment, Americans need not fear any form of nuclear warfare.\(^{155}\)

Clabaugh adds that McIntire’s confidence about attacking Communism rested in a belief that he had articulated in the book *Author of Liberty* in 1946—Americans could not afford to forget that the nation’s initial economic system of laissez faire capitalism was God-ordained.\(^{156}\)

However, the fundamentalists’ moment in the national spotlight was short-lived. The public redemption of Oxnam’s reputation and the Senate’s censure of McCarthy in 1954 joined one final event that signaled the eclipse of fundamentalist fortunes on a nationwide scale. The American Council of Christian Churches attempted to use the State Department to prevent the entrance of suspected Communist clergy into the country for the August 1954 Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston, Illinois.\(^{157}\) (The *Christian Beacon* version of this episode, involving, among others, Josef L. Hromadka, was noted above.)\(^{158}\) Having successfully persuaded the Cook County, Illinois chapter of the American Legion to call for the State Department’s prohibition of the clergy, the final strategy of McIntire’s group was to leverage the opinion of the national executive committee of the American Legion. This crusade failed, and the fundamentalists were left only with the option of picketing the WCC assembly, which they did.\(^{159}\) According to Jorstad, the year 1954 marked the end of fundamentalists’ prestige as fighters of Communism for the time being.


\(^{156}\) Clabaugh, *Thunder on the Right*, p. 84.


\(^{158}\) See pages 34-36.

Nonetheless, all was not lost. The medium of radio was still a potent force among receptive audiences. Nancy Ammerman comments that as early as 1958 broadcasters such as Billy James Hargis and McIntire found encouragement from a new group of conservative organizations such as the John Birch Society’s “growing crusade dominated by conspiracy theories and active in secular politics.” Clabaugh comments that McIntire helped in the careers of other prominent anticommunists such as Fred Schwarz, whose Christian Anti-Communism Crusade arranged traveling schools that were nationally successful. Aided by McIntire, Hargis’s attempts to send scripture into the Iron Curtain via hot air balloon in 1953 gave him national publicity, and he developed a persona independent of McIntire that eventually in some ways outshone him. Hendershot believes that Hargis may actually be the most important bridge between old fundamentalism and the era of the Moral Majority:

Of all of McIntire’s Old Christian Right contemporaries, Billy James Hargis is the only one who has been readily acknowledged by the New Christian Right, probably because he was an innovator in direct mail, laying the groundwork (and creating address lists) for mechanized mass mailings focused on specific political issues and candidates. In the 1960s, Hargis was also a major agitator against sex education…It created controversy that drew many conservative Christians into politics, creating a base that could later be tapped into to pursue other political goals.

Important precedents had been set as fundamentalists began to categorize the components of the outside world. An illustration of the worldview of the Beacon will serve to highlight how the “politics of doomsday” was constructed.

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161 Clabaugh, Thunder on the Right, p. 88.

162 Ibid., p. 87.

The Ecumenical Monster Cartoon

A July 1954 cartoon entitled “Prelude to the Great Apostasy: X-ray of the Ecumenical Monster” brought together all of the forces the *Beacon* considered destructive of a Reformed vision of America. At the center of a large, two-page diagram stood a demonic figure labeled “satanic wisdom,” with two large appendages entitled “Roman Catholic Hierarchy” on the right and “World Government Conspiracy” on the left. References to the book of Revelation were scattered along the margins. Interestingly, the Communist manifesto of Karl Marx was depicted as empowering two communities seeking to join hands with each of the two arms—with Marxism giving ecclesiastical power to the right side, labeled “The World Council of Churches” and “Modernism,” and political power to the left, labeled “Moscow” and “Communism.” An additional pair of hands extended between the modernists and the Communists through the Russian Orthodox Church. In the cartoon, the WCC was particularly guilty of receiving individuals tainted with Communist teaching, depicted by lines of communication among numerous parties on the left side to the WCC leadership on the right.

The goals were symmetrical and sinister: both sides of the picture are wrestling to achieve “control” in the religious and political realms of a central image of the earth, labeled “a dying world that needs the living savior.” On the side stood a reminder of the “blood of Protestant martyrs.” The WCC was also associated on the bottom right side to its affiliate, the National Council of Churches. As a product of the NCC, the Revised Standard Version was attacked as a modernist’s distortion of the truth. Likewise, “Moscow” on the left side had a “Communist Apparatus, U.S.A.,” which included “modernist schools” such as Vanderbilt

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University and Union Theological Seminary and “fronts” such as civil rights and social action groups. A small cartoon figure walked away symbolically from the entire set of associations, exclaiming, “God says, Come out from among them, and be ye separate…I’ll take my stand for Christ and Country with the American and International Council of Christian Churches!”

A caption explained the central deception of “satanic wisdom” was economic: “The deceptive philosophy of Marx, ‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his need’ became the political creed of Lenin, Stalin, and other modern disciples”. In other words, one’s ability to produce wealth made it all the more likely that the reward of that exertion would be given to others “in need”. Thus the control of world existence both religious and political was ultimately about the redistribution of wealth, and in this context everything else fit like stars in a galaxy---from a translation of the Bible, to the cause of civil rights, to the Soviet agenda. And presumably, the blood of the martyrs was indeed spilled to maintain free enterprise and capitalistic systems as part of God’s command.

Several striking features were noteworthy. First, the National Association of Evangelicals did not have a conspicuous presence in the picture, though some of its denominations were associated with the NCC. Second, evolution as a worldview was missing altogether, as if it was not threatening enough in 1954 to earn a place among the culprits. The difficulty of articulating Darwinist thought in a context dominated by economic concerns may have been part of the cause for omission. Lastly, the economic interests of every American appeared on the surface to be defended by the fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible and the move to separate, all this the meaning of the diagram to elevate the ICCC as champion of laissez faire economics. The

\footnote{166 Ibid.}
\footnote{167 Ibid.}
bifurcation of the universe was quintessential in this arrangement, and the Beacon’s perspective could not have easily come to grips with the idea of a plurality of interests. As a result, the cartoon made the fundamentalist cause appear not only heroic, but fundamentalism a protector of wealth. Soon challenges from within the fundamentalist cause and on the field of race relations would shake and alter these certainties.

A Year of Transition: 1957-1958

Nineteen fifty-seven was a momentous year for the Beacon as many of its prophecies about the evils of collectivism appeared to be fulfilled. Two major shifts were underway. The neo-evangelical faction led by the NAE and Billy Graham, although originally rooted in fundamentalism, came closer to a middle ground with modernism. Secondly, civil rights activists began to provoke a broader response. Deep in the background was concern about evolution and apologetics: clearly no immediate threat compelled action. Though the launch of Sputnik spurred science education, including the reintroduction of Darwinism into textbooks, resistance remained high, and antievolution statutes still were on the books in three Southern states. Nonetheless Communism, ecumenism, and the rights revolutions later became the matrix in which antievolutionism was re-organized. One cannot overlook the significance of how fundamentalists aligned themselves against these three forces.

A Matter of Vocabulary: Unveiling the Deception of the Middle Steps into Apostasy

January 1957 began with a blast against the public face of modernism. It was directed against “[a]postasy’s high priest”, Harry Emerson Fosdick, for a Christmas television program broadcast on behalf of the National Council of Churches.168 Fosdick was described as “an outspoken repudiator of the fundamental doctrines of the Protestant religion”, in particular “the

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Virgin birth of Christ”; he was quoted as saying, “I regard Fundamentalism as one of the worst traversties [sic] that ever cursed Christian thought”; finally, the paper concluded that Fosdick was teaching “an entirely different religion from Christianity.”*169 Fosdick represented the militant arm of modernism and the Beacon the fundamentalist counterpart.

The writers of the Beacon then revealed that they were realigning their opponents in order to make clear to their readers exactly who the enemies were. They deemed it particularly important to distinguish between themselves and one-time allies who were compromising with the enemy. What previously had gone by the name “Christian”, “evangelical”, and “fundamentalist” now required a litmus test administered by the Beacon. Deciphering the gradualness of a trend away from orthodoxy was all important. James Bennet, a leading Bible teacher for the Beacon, explained the dangers of the trend in the context of Billy Graham’s suspected partnership with modernists:

This trend develops into a deviation [referring to the process of manipulative teacher’s deception of an unaware pupil], slight at first, and then greater, until it is transformed into a departure, and the person who merely follows the popular trend is misled and does not know that a definite departure has occurred, and he never gets to be saved.170

Earlier, Carl McIntire had called out the United Nations for its uncertain stance on the Soviet Union in much the same terms.

A bullfrog, when dropped into a kettle of hot water, will jump out; but the same frog, put in a kettle of cool water with the water being slowly heated to the boiling point, will cook to death. He cannot make up his mind at which point to jump out.

All the policies of the Western world should be designed to undermine, to expose, to imprison, and to destroy Communism…To accept a policy of competitive coexistence with an aggressive Communism bent on world domination as an

ingredient and necessary evil of our present shrinking sphere is to toll the death knell of freedom.\textsuperscript{171}

This process of departing from a God-given norm, a static point, perfectly illustrated the revulsion fundamentalists felt about revolutions of all kinds, including Graham’s choice of partners. The \textit{Beacon} promised to delineate zones of safety and danger in a new world.

However, in spite of the clear dichotomy implied by the “Ecumenical Monster” cartoon, America’s religious pluralism guaranteed that there were many ways to fall into apostasy. A February editorial admitted as much: “To the modernist Protestant there are two main enemies---Roman Catholicism and the historic Christian faith (fundamentalism). To the Roman Catholic there are two main enemies---Communism and the fundamentalists. To the fundamental Protestant, there are three main enemies---Communism, Roman Catholicism, and modernism.”\textsuperscript{172} Nonetheless the general tendency of the paper was to lump rather than to split, and perhaps the betrayal of the cause by one of the favorite sons of fundamentalism was an impetus.

\textbf{Revolution as Seduction of the Brethren, Part Two: The New York City Crusade of Billy Graham}

The May 1957 Billy Graham crusade signaled a parting of the ways between the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the traditional fundamentalists. The latter could not tolerate Graham’s association with liberal forces. Even those conservatives who had applauded Graham’s earlier efforts now turned their backs, for the social disconnection of the earlier crusades from modernist involvement dictated the degree of orthodoxy in fundamentalist eyes.


This moment indicated a greater degree of marginalization culturally for the fundamentalist as well.

A February editorial listed the charges against Graham, in an unforgiving tone:

1. In specific violation of the commands of God, he puts unbelievers, modernists, and ungodly men who profess to be “ministers of light” on his sponsoring committee.

2. He directs his converts, all of them, to churches of their choice, including modernist, fundamentalist, Roman Catholic, and even Jewish synagogues.

3. His own message in its content, ignores and temporizes with the major sin of the hour in the house of God—the sin of apostasy….modernism…

The writer referred to the members of the sponsoring committee as “harlots, saloon keepers, murderers and apostates” and concluded that “Dr. Graham is practicing ecclesiastical and spiritual coexistence”, using the term “coexistence” to draw a parallel between Graham’s approach to modernism and America’s to Communism. The column identified Carl Henry and Christianity Today, bulwarks of the NAE, as Graham’s defenders. Lines had been drawn. In a letter directed at Carl Henry, James Bennet singled out three prominent fundamentalists who were up in arms: both Bob Joneses, father and son, guiding lights of Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, which Graham had attended briefly, and John Rice, editor of The Sword of the Lord newspaper, who had endorsed Graham in the past. In addition Bennet referred to “several other well-known fundamentalists and evangelists” who were unhappy with Graham.

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174 Ibid., p. 8.

Graham appeared to conservatives to be siding with the enemy. The title of an April 4
stated the problem clearly: “Graham Replies to Bennet: Making Cooperation with Modernism an
Issue in New York Campaign.” Graham made several statements upsetting to separatist
fundamentalists:

“I intend to go anywhere, sponsored by anybody, to preach the Gospel of Christ, if
there are no strings attached to my message…Not one person in New York has
even suggested or hinted as to what my message should be…No group of ministers
in any large city anywhere in the world would agree on what constitutes a sound
church…The old terms, fundamentalism and liberalism, are now passé. The
situation has radically changed, since the days of Machen, Riley, and other
defenders of the faith a generation ago.”176

In the next issue Graham gave his cause a larger context and historical meaning: “Graham
likened himself to [nineteenth century evangelist] D.L. Moody in his policy and said, ‘I’m sure
that many of the extreme fundamentalists today would never be able to support Mr. Moody.’”
Graham’s inclusiveness inevitably offended his former allies: “We welcome everyone,
Protestant, Catholics, Jews, everyone. There are no statements made against people in other
religions.”177

Bob Jones Sr. attacked Graham for publicly stating that the “‘situation has radically
changed since the days of Machen, [William Bell] Riley, and other defenders of the faith’”:

As a man who has been in evangelistic work for more than fifty years and who has
known all of the great evangelists in Europe and America who have lived for the
last fifty years, I would like to say that the terms fundamentalism and liberalism are
not passé on Bob Jones University campus. We are still religious fundamentalists
and not religious liberals.178

Graham’s push to include new viewpoints in his campaign was to Jones, McIntire, and their group the trending toward apostasy they abhorred. The same edition of the Beacon opposed calls for a “three religion nation” (Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant). Fundamentalists had to stand firm in their convictions while America was changing ethnically and religiously.  

A basic sense of betrayal about Graham’s spirit of broad cooperation dominated the Beacon’s pages. A Long Island pastor, Walter Patrick, asked Graham a series of questions about why he had distanced himself from old friends such as John Rice, who had asked Graham to sign a statement of faith, or Bob Jones, Sr., who had called for a separation from apostasy.  

Approximately two weeks before the 1957 Crusade, the ACCC declared its refusal to endorse the campaign for its “inclusivist policy” that welcomed “the Protestant Council of New York…[which was] controlled by the modernists”. Unfortunately no amount of public relations efforts from the neo-evangelical camp could shake fundamentalist certainty. Edward J. Carnell, president of the neo-evangelical bastion, Fuller Seminary, depicted Graham as taking a stand for orthodoxy against the “Goliath” of neo-orthodoxy, but the Beacon was singularly unimpressed. “Billy has not gone out to slay Goliath…Billy has accepted Goliath’s [modernists’] invitation for a united campaign…Goliath has become the chairman of the sponsoring committee, and all his power and influence, his shield, his sword, his armor, are at Billy Graham’s disposal.”

But perhaps the most potent criticism came from John Rice, who had praised Graham’s earlier crusade in Scotland. Rice responded to Graham’s entreaty not to be deceived by rumor

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and innuendo but to come and see the campaign, which had begun May 15th, 1957, for himself.

Rice was quick to side with the fundamentalist critics:

And I say to you frankly that the kind of language which I quote from your letter seems to be unbecoming to a servant of God, particularly when you speak of the men whom I know for conscience’ sake and for Jesus’ sake have said that you do wrong to go under the sponsorship of the modernist Protestant Council in New York City. You also say, ‘Almost every statement made by a few of the Fundamentalist critics has been twisted and distorted.’ If you have a cause that needs that kind of language and that kind of slanderous characterization of good men to support your cause, then either your cause is wrong or you are too carnal in supporting your cause, in my humble judgment.183

For Rice, it was clear that Graham and the neo-evangelicals had begun the process of “departure” by steps; the frog was calmly awaiting a slow boil. Evangelicalism was evolving, and partnership with modernists---in an effort to maintain cultural relevance----was hastening the divergence from fundamentalism, with its doctrinal focus.

In October, Bob Jones, Jr., noted the profound change. “For many years I have been a warm, personal friend of Billy Graham’s”, he mused. But now “he is doing untold harm in breaking down the lines between orthodoxy and heresy.”184 The break would become permanent as Graham’s outreach to modernists became a habit in his work. In January 1958, Jones issued another warning about Graham’s San Francisco crusade. A transition was underway, and to Jones many failed to catch the significance of a new category of Christian emerging into an independent life despite fundamentalist beginnings:

These same, gullible Bible-believing fundamental Christians, strangely enough, seem to have been as deaf to Dr. Graham’s innuendos and jibes at fundamentalists as they have been blind to his fawning attitude toward modernists, infidels, and

183 John R. Rice, Editorial, Christian Beacon, June 6, 1957, p. 4. The column is a reprint of letters between Graham and Rice from a May 24, 1957 The Sword of the Lord issue.

Unitarians. Slowly but surely these folk are becoming less gullible and the scales have fallen from the eyes of many.\textsuperscript{185}

Graham and the neo-evangelicals had developed an autonomous existence, and 1957 was the moment of departure from fundamentalism. The dilemma remained. To what extent was outreach to a lost world fraught with danger to doctrine? For fundamentalists, doctrine ruled over concerns for community. For modernists, this-worldly issues put shoe leather on the Gospel. For neo-evangelicals like Graham, there was a third way.

As if confirming that revolution had come, Carl McIntire concluded that both Graham and the NAE had come to occupy uncertain ideological ground. Graham satisfied neither the extreme right because of his cooperation with modernists nor the extreme left because of his message. Further, the NAE sat in a middle position between fundamentalism and modernism with connections to both. In January 1958, McIntire responded to a Carl Henry editorial in \textit{Christianity Today}:

\textit{\textquote{The burden of the entire article [Henry’s] is built around the theme, ‘Not separation but penetration.’ The evangelicals …are openly repudiating not merely the separatist movement as it has developed, but particularly the emphasis of the Scriptures on separation from unbelievers, and, instead, are advocating ‘penetration’---entrance into the World Council of Churches.}}\textsuperscript{186}

The concept of penetration was intended to reverse the marginalization that had beset fundamentalists ever since the Scopes era. However, for McIntire, success at such contact came at great cost. “Now since the New York campaign there is piling up evidence that Dr. Graham has become the No. 1 Ecumenical Promoter.”\textsuperscript{187} Two simultaneous attempts to maintain both a distinctive identity and satisfy modernist parties had a disintegrating effect, and McIntire


\textsuperscript{187} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 2.
concluded that the “NAE had fallen into confusion.”188 McIntire was certain that the NAE was becoming a bridge into apostasy, and only the traditional fundamentalist could see past the lies to the truth.

Beside Billy Graham, the most prominent neo-evangelical was Harold Ockenga, and his reputation figured heavily in the relationship of fundamentalists to neo-evangelicals. Marsden observes that as early as 1951 McIntire attacked Ockenga on the grounds that apostate teaching saturated his message and his leadership as a pastor of a prominent evangelical church.189 Furthermore, McIntire’s fundamentalists were adamant on the topic of biblical inerrancy. This position stood in contrast to the increasingly popular neo-orthodox view which had lured some neo-evangelicals into de-emphasizing biblical literalism. Marsden comments that Francis Schaeffer, who in 1948 was “a Bible Presbyterian missionary to Europe and one of McIntire’s most vocal lieutenants,” directly attacked Ockenga because he “had counseled tolerance toward the World Council of Churches and that both he and the NAE had praised neo-orthodoxy.”190 But the division between McIntire and Ockenga had a personal side as well. Following Machen out of Princeton Seminary along with McIntire in 1929, Ockenga had created animosity in the 1940s by attempting to lure the star of Faith Seminary, Professor Allan McRae, to Fuller Seminary.191

Billy Graham’s alliance with Ockenga would have compromised him in McIntire’s eyes, but other fundamentalist leaders were slow to distance themselves from the successful evangelist Graham. The eventual separation between fundamentalists and neo-evangelicals was no more

188 Ibid.
189 Marsden, Reforming Fundamentalism, p. 135.
190 Ibid., p. 111.
191 Ibid., p. 28.
painful than in the break of Billy Graham with evangelist and publisher John Rice, whom Marsden notes remained a friend until late in the story: “In the 1950s, while McIntire…and others were attacking Graham for his associations with Ockenga and his lack of militance toward some modernists, Rice still backed Graham and helped keep most of fundamentalism solidly in Graham’s camp.” Marsden calls the 1950s a period of “sorting out” between fundamentalists and evangelicals. Ultimately, as one of their favorite sons, Billy Graham became the chief target of fundamentalists’ frustration. Rice eventually did turn against Graham, joining Bob Jones and McIntire in attacking Graham publicly.

Fundamentalists and neo-evangelicals simply could not agree about how to orient to mainstream culture and mainline religion. The nail in the coffin, or what Marsden calls “the irreparable breach” came in 1957 with the decision of Graham to partner with modernists for the New York Crusade. Hendershot agrees that Graham himself became the focal point of the fundamentalist-evangelical battle:

The separatists [fundamentalists] and the neo-evangelicals would do battle throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and Graham became the symbol of the new approach. He collaborated with mainline churches during his crusades, which infuriated the hard-line separatists… Graham was a major figure in Youth for Christ…fervent, committed, and also “normal”, middle-class, modern, and far from the old fire-and-brimstone stereotype.

She offers a striking contrast between Graham and McIntire: “Graham provided a positive example of what neo-evangelical engagement could be. McIntire provided a negative example

192 Ibid., p. 159.
193 Ibid., p. 166.
194 Ibid.
195 Ibid., p. 162.
of what neo-evangelicalism was not and, in doing so, inadvertently contributed to neo-evangelicalism’s triumph.”

In McIntire’s view, there was never a cause for change in the life of the church, and certainly not change on the scale Graham and the NAE sought. In this sense, the fundamentalist view stood outside the flow of historical time. World events did not deter or alter the sense of certainty, only fulfill biblical revelation. But to Graham and the NAE, neo-evangelicals had a hand in making history with others, and such was the will of God. The *Beacon* stood strong against this view, continuing to use familiar categories like the National Council of Churches, Communism, the redistribution of wealth, and civil rights as compasses for understanding the sixties.

**Revolution as Civil Rights**

The *Beacon* from its inception attacked error in ecclesiastical terms first. Until the civil rights controversies pushed the National Council of Churches into activism in the 1960s, the paper’s coverage of the topic was intermittent. However, the linkages made between race relations, Communism, and the overthrow of local rule persisted. Apostasy was once again to blame.

Church life was the point of connection to the larger questions. A March 1957 editorial confirmed as much with regard to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: “The Communists are in there working.” The article noted the immense church support for the NAACP and the pooling of financial resources to deal with a lawsuit. “Racial strifes, tensions, hatreds, and all sorts of situations are being created, which are what the

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197 Ibid., p. 388.
Communists desire and in which they particularly delight.”¹⁹⁹ This kind of narrative-building removed the topic of race relations from its historical context, so that social stability, not a legacy of injustice, was center stage.

Two reprints suggested how strongly the *Beacon* supported the side of segregation. Both national organizations of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Presbyterian Church in the United States struggled with regional bodies and local churches over the topic. The (South) Carolina Baptist Fellowship protested against the national pro-integration discussions of its Convention, declaring that it held “solidly to the segregation of the races as upheld by our Baptist forefathers in the South.” It simultaneously attacked the “victory for the modernists in the New York Campaign of Dr. Billy Graham”.²⁰⁰ Revolutions in race and in church required a similar response from conservatives. The First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi attacked its denomination, the PCUS, for commenting on the desegregation of schools. “It is not within the province of the Presbyterian Church in the United States to determine the basis on which the public schools should be operated.”²⁰¹ At the base of all the turmoil once again—so went the assumption—was Communism:

The report [made by a PCUS council] appears to be oblivious to the fact that Communism is an enemy of freedom; it seems to ignore the ruthless methods employed by the Communists of turning people against the existing form of government and of pitting class against class and race against race. The report encourages us to relax our guard against [sp] Communism and to cease trying to uncover it or its sympathizers in our schools and churches.²⁰²


²⁰¹ “Church Session Witholding Funds for Council Support,” *Christian Beacon*, June 20, 1957, p. 5. The article is a reprint from the *Jackson Daily News*, Jackson, Mississippi, of June 6, 1957.

The battle over civil rights will be addressed more fully in the next chapter, but it is clear that the *Beacon*’s writers were content to use familiar categories to contextualize this new phenomenon as a social evil.

Amidst the turmoil surrounding Communism, ecumenism, the NAE, and civil rights, the topic of evolution was virtually invisible in the *Beacon*’s pages from the 1930s to the 1950s. Topics more pressing than the old controversy that had once defined fundamentalism dominated. Brotherhood language in the age of ecumenism had to be exposed as a deceptive trap from the fundamentalists’ point of view. Communism appeared to be everywhere, and the *Christian Beacon* jumped on the opportunity to participate in a national witch-hunt, along with American Council of Christian Churches and the International Council of Christian Churches. For fundamentalists, the 1950s were the last time they could sit peaceably with their evangelical cousins. Rights became the new buzzword; Carl McIntire participated in protest several times for his right to be heard on the radio. But parents’ rights to control their children’s education in science was not an issue of concern in this era.

Four forces were needed to make evolution important to fundamentalists again. Academic and judicial activism plus the turbulence of the 1960s were three of them. A fourth was the voice of Francis Schaeffer. A student of Machen at Westminster and a disciple of McIntire, Schaeffer created an emergency-driven mindset among fundamentalists about “secular humanism,” the worldview with which evolution would be scandalously associated. Atheism, communism and evolution became one in this framework. As the *Beacon* denounced the evils of civil rights in America, Schaeffer raised questions about science, government, and culture in the 1960s in Europe. This unknown missionary would skyrocket to fame in the Christian world for his oracles about the trajectory of Western civilization.
CHAPTER 5
THE SUPREME COURT AND THE FUNDAMENTALIST WORLDVIEW

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

---from the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

---from the First Amendment

The 1920s and 1930s were a period of greater diversity among fundamentalists than their label as reactionaries would suggest. Some, for example, defined themselves as anti-evolutionists. But, as we have seen in earlier chapters, antievolutionism was a secondary concern for J. Gresham Machen and Harry Rimmer, whose major focus was denominational liberalism and higher criticism’s role in demoting the trustworthiness of the Bible. Rimmer’s battle against Darwinism did not include a young earth, unlike George McCready Price, who warred for the preeminence of a worldwide deluge in shaping the fossil layers. Fundamentalists were divided among “day-age”, “gap” and “young earth” theories, but no pressure emerged to resolve those differences. In this sense, these crusaders were differing cobelligerents.

What linked these early fundamentalist, however, was the absence of a concern that later marked the movement. Nowhere did Machen, Rimmer, Price, or even William Jennings Bryan, as leader of the Scopes prosecution, mention fears of expanding federal power as a sign of the secular worldview Darwinism promoted.
Machen of course did comment about the expansion of governmental power in areas such as child labor and suffrage. He foresaw and feared state intervention in family affairs. For this cause, he also fought against a federal department of education, arguing that education was not to be a matter within state jurisdiction. But Machen’s words speak of the federal government in a general way, and nowhere does he make a case for a worldview anchored in evolution driving the push for the centralization of power. Machen’s reflections on evolution were cast instead as philosophical objections. George McCready Price did seek to prove a vital link between Darwin and Nietzsche, but this, like Bryan’s complaint that German militarism was upheld by evolution, painted evolution as a foreign invader yet to contaminate young American minds. Price’s warnings did not intimate that Darwinism had yet (by the 1930s) conquered America and its politicians.

The Scopes era therefore represented a period of profound denominational chaos between the conservative and liberal wings of several denominations, with antievolutionism being a secondary concern. But clearly Bryan, Machen, Rimmer, and Price were united against the philosophical impact of Darwinism just as they stood together for the promotion of democratic knowledge. In Presbyterian terms, this promotion meant the preservation of Common Sense reasoning, advancing the notion of access to evidence by all, not merely the “experts”. Any self-declared autonomy of an individual or of an academic specialty from conservative Christian concerns was coded as a threat by these leaders. Because of its promotion of secular specialization, Enlightenment expertise in science and biblical studies was a cornerstone for the construction of evolutionary theory and higher criticism. Except for Machen, who was willing to use higher critical tools in the defense of a supernatural Bible, the Enlightenment became the object of fundamentalist fury. By the end of the 1930s most fundamentalists were making the
argument that the particular fields of biological science and textual criticism had grown autonomous from God, but they were not yet saying that their government had.

The new wave of secularization was challenged by J. Gresham Machen’s student and Carl McIntire’s ally (until the mid-1950s) Francis Schaeffer, Marsden notes, but his description of Schaeffer’s impact is brief and limited to describing Schaeffer’s cultural critique in the 1960s and 1970s, with a spotlight thrown on films Schaeffer made after Roe v. Wade ruling that legalized abortion in 1973.\(^1\) Marsden also cites Rousas J. Rushdoony as a major influence on the Religious Right, albeit one whose specific teachings as a “Christian Reconstructionist” (described in Chapter 5) were far too radical for most Christians.\(^2\) Marsden does not discuss the impetus for the feminist and gay rights movements that the civil rights movement provided and added fuel to the fire known as the culture wars. Furthermore, Marsden does not explore how the rulings of the Supreme Court had a cumulative effect in the decades between Scopes and Schaeffer. The present chapter will attempt to summarize the impact of changing judicial assumptions of members of the Supreme Court in the period immediately before and during the heyday of fundamentalist activity in the culture wars of the 1950s and 1960s.

**The Beginnings of Judicial Revolution**

An important aspect of the creation-evolution controversy is the revolutionary behavior of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1931 to 1973. In this 42-year span, which was directly experienced by all the major fundamentalists of the 1950s, the Supreme Court claimed authority to regulate the states in five domains in which citizens demanded their rights, namely, speech, race, church and state, women’s issues, and the teaching of evolution. (The latter two

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\(^1\) Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 245.

\(^2\) *Ibid.*, p. 248. Marsden concludes that Rushdoony’s recommendations were too extreme for most: “The positive proposals of Reconstructionists are so far out of line with American evangelical commitments to American republican ideals such as religious freedom that the number of true believers in the movement is small.”
domains will be addressed in a later chapter.) With regard to evolution, the Court’s changing position since the Scopes era had a dramatic national impact. Writing in 1985 Edward Larson explains the transformation: “The Establishment Clause [of the First Amendment, prohibiting the state establishment of religion] has undergone a complete reinterpretation by the Supreme Court in the past forty years.”\(^3\) He goes on to say that by the 1960s, in the high Court’s new estimation, what constituted an establishment of religion, a violation of the separation of church and state, included anti-evolution laws put in place by states such as Arkansas. This revolution in judicial thinking was the result of “incorporation”—a new linkage made between the Fourteenth Amendment and the First:

The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, added in connection with ending slavery in the 1860s, barred states from depriving “any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” Over the years, the Supreme Court gradually incorporated many of the federal rights contained in the Bill of Rights into the “liberty” protected from state interference by the Fourteenth Amendment.\(^4\)

Bypassing majoritarian democracy and the acts of legislatures, the Fourteenth Amendment gave the Supreme Court the power to regulate the states if a citizen’s rights were infringed. Because eventually fundamentalists who argued for creationism complained about the secularization of America partly based on new rights the Supreme Court had granted by the 1970s, a history of the Fourteenth Amendment and its initial and later scope is in order. Larson’s comment about the transformation of the First Amendment’s reach sits within a larger historical context, a moment of compressed revolution within approximately four decades that changed Americans’ relation to their governments both national and state to a much greater degree than had been the case in the nation’s history prior to 1931.

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Federal protection of citizen’s rights from state-level encroachment is the product of three phases of American judicial history. This protection was a general principle initially put into action through the Fourteenth Amendment under a particular circumstance, namely the need to secure equality for the emancipated slaves after the Civil War, but later broadened to balance the scales of power in other situations such as the arenas of free speech and religion. To understand the import of the Fourteenth Amendment in the 1960s, one must consider the initial state of the Constitution and later developments that altered the jurisdictions of federal and state power.

The first phase involved the Founding Fathers and the establishment of the Bill of Rights in 1791 and extends to the origin of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868. In this 77-year block of time, very little federal power was exerted to defend the rights of citizens against the authority of the states. Noting that the Bill of Rights included the first eight amendments to the Constitution, Richard C. Cortner comments: “It was clear from the history of the adoption of the Bill of Rights that it was intended to restrain the power of the national government to interfere with basic individual liberties, and was not intended as a limitation on the powers of the states.”\(^5\) The Bill of Rights protected individuals only from infringement by the federal government until the Civil War. “For the protection of their most basic political and civil liberties from invasion by the states, Americans were required to look to their state constitutions and state bills of rights and not to the federal Bill of Rights.”\(^6\) In other words, until the nation became engulfed in the conflict that transformed the rights of blacks, all Americans understood that anyone complaining that a state impinged upon individual liberty ultimately had no access to appeal beyond state law.


\(^6\) Ibid., p. 5.
Cortner offers two Supreme Court cases as illustrations of the government’s pre-Civil War attitude—a refusal to demand that states acknowledge citizen’s rights as absolute. In *Barron v. Baltimore* (1833), the central question was whether the Fifth Amendment’s requirement that compensation be made for private property taken for government use was a limitation upon the states. The Supreme Court voted that such a stricture could not be placed upon the states.\(^7\) In *Permoli v. New Orleans* (1845), a Catholic priest, under the claim of the free exercise of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment, demanded the right to bury dead in a Catholic chapel despite a city ordinance mandating otherwise during a threat of yellow fever. Cortner concludes, “The Court, however, dismissed the case for lack of jurisdiction.”\(^8\) The Court’s approach was straightforward when a moment of decision came: “The Bill of Rights was thus confined to being a limitation only upon the power of the federal government and played a very limited role in American constitutional adjudication prior to the Civil War.”\(^9\)

But then the matter of race revolutionized Americans’ thinking about rights generally. Cortner forcefully depicts the transformation:

The Civil War, however, led to the adoption of the Civil War Amendments to the Constitution—the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments—and as a consequence, the federal system was significantly altered. This alteration was most forcefully symbolized by the Fourteenth Amendment, which was ratified in 1868. Unlike the Bill of Rights, the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment was directed at restraining the exercise of power by the states. “No State shall,” the first section declared, “make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, and property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” These clauses—the Privileges and Immunities, Due Process, and Equal Protection Clauses,

respectively--opened up broad new avenues of potential appeals to the federal Constitution against exercises of power by the states.\(^{10}\)

Thus began the second phase of constitutional development, a sixty-three year stretch from 1868 to 1931.

The promise of the Fourteenth Amendment for “broad new avenues of potential appeals” went unfulfilled until 1925. The initial stage of the Amendment’s actual impact was mixed and reflected an unwillingness by the Supreme Court to broaden citizens’ rights to complain against states. Nowhere was this fact more apparent than the Court’s establishment of the “separate but equal” doctrine of racial segregation in the case *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Donald Lively recounts the Supreme Court’s rejection of Homer Plessy’s claim that his Fourteenth Amendment rights had been violated when a Louisiana law required segregated rail cars. The Court’s ruling demonstrated a deep reluctance to use the Constitution to question the social custom of segregation that had replaced slavery in the South. “Official segregation, from the Court’s perspective, however, did not imply inferiority. Rather it reflected the reasonable exercise of a state’s police power to promote the public good.”\(^{11}\)

In the ruling the Court held that the Fourteenth Amendment had no bearing in the *Plessy* case:

> The object of the amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but in the nature of things it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or a commingling of the races upon terms unsatisfactory to either.\(^{12}\)

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Furthermore, the feelings of inferiority of which Plessy complained were deemed to be solely the products of his imagination: “We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff’s argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it.” Speaking of Justice Henry Billings Brown who wrote for the Court, Walter F. Pratt, Jr. comments:

   It was equally fundamental to Brown that laws could not alter the long-established customs of society. For the Court to mandate that the races be mixed would be futile in the face of strong public sentiment as manifested by statutes requiring separation of the races in educational facilities.

Therefore, the Fourteenth Amendment was rendered ineffectual for the purpose for which it was created—the equalization of African Americans to whites. Nonetheless, the seed for a judicial revolution had been sown. Cortner acknowledges the organic principle the Amendment represented: “the nature of the American constitutional system was profoundly altered by the Fourteenth Amendment, which ultimately became a guarantee of individual liberty second only to the Bill of Rights itself.”

   After 1896 the first authentic reinvigoration of the Fourteenth Amendment took place in 1925, not in the area of race but of free speech. It came about with the aid of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Clarence Darrow, who later became famous in the Scopes trial. Avowed socialist Benjamin Gitlow “was convicted for violating the New York Criminal Anarchy Law of 1902,” primarily for authoring a pamphlet advocating the overthrow of the

13 Ibid., p. 551.


15 Cortner, The Supreme Court and the Second Bill of Rights, p.11.
government. Despite an initial defense by Darrow, Gitlow was ruled guilty by the New York justice system. This case, which went on to the Supreme Court, illustrated the centrality of the ACLU to the story of rights in America.

Edward J. Larson details the history and significance of the ACLU in his recounting of the Scopes trial. The organization in part resulted from the agitation of a religious community, namely the Quakers, for their right to object to the First World War. The ACLU became known as the champion of free speech rights. But the defense of those rights meant opposition to the opinion of the masses, including the parties rallying to the antievolution cause in Tennessee in 1925: “This new antimajoritarian impulse, forged in the crucible of wartime mass hysteria, profoundly influenced the ACLU’s response to the antievolution crusade.” Larson also reflects on the impact of a sudden reversal in the influence of the Fourteenth Amendment upon judicial thinking, as he describes the ACLU’s quest:

In fact, at the time of the Scopes trial in 1925, the ACLU was still looking for its first court victory. From a legal standpoint, the problem was twofold: states and municipalities imposed many of the objectionable restrictions on speech and assembly, particularly against labor unions, but First Amendment guarantees for freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion only applied to restrictions by the federal government. The Fourteenth Amendment, however, forbade states from depriving “any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” Supreme Court justice John M. Harlan had long maintained that the “liberty” protected against state action by the Fourteenth Amendment incorporated the basic freedoms enumerated in the First Amendment and other provisions within the Bill of Rights. The full Court did not begin to adopt this position until 1925.

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17 Cortner, The Supreme Court and the Second Bill of Rights, p. 50-53.
19 Ibid., p. 65-66.
Here Larson mentions the Gitlow case as the cause for the Supreme Court’s incorporation of the freedoms of speech and the press in the First Amendment under the umbrella of the Fourteenth— but oddly the Court’s decision neither benefited Gitlow, who was judged to pose a violent threat beyond mere words, nor did it have a practical impact upon the fate of John Scopes in his quest for academic freedom. Paul Murphy concludes, “At the time the [Gitlow] ruling’s significance was largely doctrinal.”

With the Founding Fathers’ establishment of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment’s creation in 1868, a third phase of constitutional history began with the case *Stromberg v. California* (1931). The real-world application of the Fourteenth Amendment as a federal means to defend the rights of a minority against the will of a state stood a mere six years away from *Gitlow*, again in the issue of free speech. In this third period, which for the purposes of the present work extends to 1973, one judicial revolution after another occurred in multiple domains of concern to the Protestant fundamentalists who led the charge against evolution in the 1970s. Further complicating matters are the simple facts that overlapping with this 42-year burst of change in jurisprudence were both the Cold War and the event in academic biology known as the Neo-Darwinian synthesis.

Yetta Stromberg was a staff member at a summer youth camp in California accused of promoting subversive activity and arrested for violating a state law banning the use of a red flag. (She later admitted using the flag of the Soviet Union in a flag-raising ceremony with children.) Ultimately the case reached the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes.

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20 Ibid., p. 66.


22 Cortner, *The Supreme Court and the Second Bill of Rights*, pp. 73-75.
Carol E. Jenson notes that “the majority declared the California Red Flag Law unconstitutional because it violated the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment.”23 The wording of the ruling was explicit: “It has been determined that the conception of liberty under the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment embraces the right of free speech.”24 Therefore incorporation of the First Amendment rights as protected by the Fourteenth immediately gave the federal judiciary authority to overthrow the California law. A revolution in rights as part of the American vocabulary had begun. Jenson concludes: “Hughes’s Stromberg opinion is considered a milestone in First Amendment constitutional law, for it was the first ruling in which a Court majority extended the Fourteenth Amendment to include a protection of First Amendment substance—in this case symbolic speech—from state encroachment.”25

Cortner, in trying to pinpoint the moment of the judicial revolution in thinking about the breadth of the Fourteenth Amendment’s applicability, concurs that the early 1930s, which included the Stromberg ruling, were pivotal. The freedom of speech as well as freedom of the press was being debated by the Court, and the beginning of “the nationalization of First Amendment freedoms” [i.e., the linkage or incorporation of First Amendment rights to the protections guaranteed in the Fourteenth] occurred during this period.26 Therefore the principle behind the Fourteenth Amendment---of the federal right to overrule the states from hindering the rights of any citizen---which had been intended to solve racial inequality, had actually been reinvigorated in the First Amendment context.

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26 Cortner, The Supreme Court and the Second Bill of Rights, p. 87.
The significance of the increase in the Supreme Court’s power, however, did not become practically apparent to the mass of Americans until the arena at stake shifted from speech to race and then later to religion (with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling of 1954 and then the *Engel v. Vitale* ruling of 1962 respectively). Therefore, the Fourteenth Amendment’s empowering the Supreme Court did not figure to be a large concern of white Protestant fundamentalists until the 1960s. But the incremental nature of the Amendment’s elevation from a place of negation during the *Plessy* ruling to gradual prominence with the *Gitlow* and *Stromberg* cases can be easily overlooked in relation to the creation-evolution controversy, which ultimately by 1987 in the Supreme Court’s assessment fell under the category of problems related to the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

Setting aside smaller scale events on the local and state levels, the period from 1925 and the humiliation of fundamentalists at the Scopes trial until the ascendancy of Henry Morris’ creation science concurrent with the Moral Majority’s promotion of Ronald Reagan’s candidacy in 1980 appears at first glance to be a period of relative inactivity for the creationist cause, at least on a nationwide level. But the context of change in American culture responsible for fundamentalist support of the Moral Majority’s spokesman Jerry Falwell as he supported Morris had been established *between the Scopes fiasco and the 1960s*. Fundamentalists repeatedly watched as interest groups championed the rights of minorities, ethnic and otherwise. But it was only in the late 1970s that these conservative white Protestants find their own voice in the new national discourse of rights.

After the ACLU, another rights organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), pushed for federal power to control state abuses in the 1930s. In 1938, the Supreme Court case *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* was the spark for
an NAACP crusade to come. Augustus M. Burns III states, “This case provided an early test in the campaign, launched by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1930, to challenge the separate but equal principle that required racial segregation in public educational institutions.” The Supreme Court ruled that by denying Lloyd L. Gaines admission to its all-white law school, the University of Missouri had violated his Fourteenth Amendment rights. “Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, for the majority, ordered Gaines admitted to the all-white facility, dismissing the state’s offer to pay Gaines’ tuition to an out-of-state law school as inadequate to the requirements of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.” The Amendment had already restricted state power on the grounds of free speech; now the principle was being extended to race questions.

However, the harbingers that the separate-but-equal doctrine neared collapse did not come until two 1950 cases again dealing with blacks’ admission problems at the postgraduate level. In Sweatt v. Painter, Heman Marion Sweatt had been denied admission to the University of Texas law school. The Supreme Court voted unanimously with Fred Vinson speaking as Chief Justice. Burns records the Court’s decision as straightforward: “The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment thus required Sweatt’s admission to the previously all-white state university law school. The decision made clear that statutory segregation was doomed, whether by piecemeal dismemberment or one sweeping judicial thrust.” At the same time the Court showed hesitation at the idea of a sudden overthrow of the Plessy ruling even at this late date. The decision’s language reflected this ambiguity: “Nor need we reach petitioner’s contention that

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Plessy v. Ferguson should be reexamined in the light of contemporary knowledge respecting the purposes of the Fourteenth Amendment and the effects of racial segregation.”

Apparentely the Court was not then ready to embrace the total set of revolutionary implications that a generous application of the Fourteenth Amendment to modern problems would have ignited.

Nonetheless, the Sweatt case was decided concurrently with McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education et al. (1950), in which George W. McLaurin complained the forced segregation that accompanied his participation in the University of Oklahoma’s graduate school denied him his basic rights. The Supreme Court agreed:

We conclude that the conditions under which this appellant is required to receive his education deprive him of his personal and present right to the equal protection of the laws…We hold that under these circumstances the Fourteenth Amendment precludes differences in treatment by the state based upon race. Appellant, having been admitted to a state-supported graduate school, must receive the same treatment at the hands of the state as students of other races.

Regardless of the unknown degree of the Court’s enthusiasm for being publicly seen as negating the Plessy ruling, historical events were about to force a moment of confrontation. Still fundamentalists seem to have ignored the legal precedents that built up to the climactic moment the 1954 decision Brown v. Board of Education. According to Dennis J. Hutchinson, the Brown decision to desegregate America’s public schools was “the beginning not only of substantive changes in the American social structure but also in the nature and expectations of how the Supreme Court interpreted the Constitution.”

But again the legal precedents involving a revitalized Fourteenth Amendment revealed a

cumulative impact over time rather than a sudden reversal in Supreme Court decision-making with *Brown*. The domains of free speech and freedom of the press fell under the umbrella of the Fourteenth Amendment before race.

With the most controversial issue of the era at stake, the Court went about its task with caution. In one sense it set aside the debates over the initial intent of the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment, deeming those arguments as “inconclusive.” But the Court nevertheless addressed the doctrine laid down by *Plessy v. Ferguson* fifty-eight years earlier in its observation that “The plaintiffs contend that segregated public schools are not ‘equal’ and cannot be made ‘equal,’ and that hence they are deprived of the equal protection of the laws [guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment].”

But instead of wrangling over the past, the Court looked to the present and the future:

In approaching this problem, we cannot turn the clock back to 1868 when the Amendment was adopted, or even to 1896 when *Plessy v. Ferguson* was written. We must consider public education in the light of its full development and its present place in American life throughout the Nation. Only in this way can it be determined if segregation in public schools deprives these plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws…

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe it that it does.

The Court sought to prove the case that segregation caused permanent psychological damage to blacks and simply stated, that “Any language in *Plessy v. Ferguson* contrary to this finding is rejected.” A new era of rights vocabulary in American life had begun.

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34 Ibid., p. 488.


36 Ibid., pp. 494-495.
From Free Speech and Race to the Rights of Religious Minorities

The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment upon rights in the religious arena caused a national frenzy only in the 1960s when the Court outlawed school-sponsored prayer; however, as in the matters of speech and race, there were precedents to the prayer decision. Faced with religious minorities seeking the protection of their freedoms, the Court had historically struggled in its interpretation of the First Amendment. The upshot was that it strove first to protect the free exercise of religion and then to prevent the state establishment of religion.

In the arena of religion, as with speech and race, the spark for the Supreme Court’s innovative extension of Fourteenth Amendment protections was the activism of an interest group. How these developments eventually affected creationists seeking their own rights requires a careful tracing of events. The earliest complaints for the rights of religious communities came from a little-understood and marginalized sect, the Jehovah’s Witnesses. In *Cantwell v. Connecticut* (1940), the Supreme Court ruled that the state of Connecticut could not demand that a Jehovah’s Witness proselytizer submit to certification by the secretary of public welfare. The free exercise of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment was at stake. The Court directly assaulted the state of Connecticut for violating an individual’s rights and once again the incorporation of the First Amendment into the rights protected by the Fourteenth was central to the Court’s argument:

We hold that the statute, as construed and applied to the appellants, deprives them of their liberty without due process of law in contravention of the Fourteenth Amendment. The fundamental concept of liberty embodied in that Amendment embraces the liberties guaranteed by the First Amendment. The First Amendment declares that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. *The Fourteenth Amendment has rendered the legislatures of the states as incompetent as Congress to enact such laws.*

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Likewise, in 1943, the Court again ruled in favor of the free exercise of religion, as it overruled a Pennsylvania city ordinance requiring Jehovah’s Witnesses to pay a license tax. The Court reaffirmed its earlier position by stating that the “First Amendment, which the Fourteenth makes applicable to the states” protected the free exercise of religion which the tax impeded.  

Neither one of these rulings appear to have made much impression among the fundamentalist group, as the Court’s defense of the free exercise of religion fell into line with the Protestant vision of a “Christian America”. But the Fourteenth Amendment was a double-edged sword that eventually had significance for the first part of the First Amendment, the Establishment Clause. Fundamentalists in the 1940s assumed that the clause had little to do with their understanding of a permeable membrane between church and state instead of the “wall” Thomas Jefferson had argued for. Writing in 1985, Edward J. Larson discussed the changing reputation of the First Amendment:

> The Bill of Rights begins by guaranteeing that “Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” During the past two decades, the legal controversies surrounding the teaching of evolution and creation in public schools have focused on the interpretation of these two clauses of the U.S. Constitution, with the Establishment Clause becoming a bulwark for evolutionary teaching, and the Free Exercise Clause invoked for teaching creationism. That neither clause figured prominently earlier bespeaks a changing interpretation of the Constitution.

The Establishment Clause has undergone a complete reinterpretation by the Supreme Court in the past forty years. During the heyday of the anti-evolution crusade in the twenties, no court would have seriously considered a legal argument that state anti-evolution statutes violated the Establishment Clause. The clause traditionally barred only an American state church, like the Anglican Church in England.

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Therefore the Establishment Clause was interpreted by fundamentalists as a nonthreatening statement in the early 1940s. That sense of assurance was about to change. The first significant test of the Establishment Clause came in 1947, in the *Everson v. Board of Education of Ewing Township* case. At the center of the controversy was a New Jersey statute that allowed Catholic parents to be reimbursed for the cost of using public school transportation to get their children to parochial schools. A local citizen complained that this law was a violation of the prohibition against state-establishment of religion. Ultimately in a close decision (5 to 4) the Supreme Court ruled that the mere transportation of children without state funding to the parochial school directly did not violate the separation of church and state. Because this principle later became so central to the Court’s position relative to creationism, the first major articulation of the idea in the modern era deserves some extended attention. Though the outcome of this case left fundamentalist concerns untouched in a direct way, the foundation for a revolution in the domains that religion could lawfully inhabit was created at this point. Therefore the future restrictions placed upon creationist teaching have their root in the doctrines the Court expounded in this decision.

Writing for the Court, Justice Hugo Black denied that the New Jersey statute established a state religion. He reviewed the intention and the history of the Establishment Clause. He outlined three stages. First was the constant warring over religion that characterized Europe before the creation of the United States:

The centuries immediately before and contemporaneous with the colonization of America had been filled with turmoil, civil strife, and persecutions, generated in large part by established sects determined to maintain their absolute political and religious supremacy. With the power of government supporting them, at various times and places, Catholics had persecuted Protestants, Protestants had persecuted Catholics, Protestant sects had persecuted other Protestant sects, Catholics of one
shade of belief had persecuted Catholics of another shade of belief, and all of these from time to time persecuted Jews.\footnote{Everson v. Board of Education of Ewing Township, \textit{United States Supreme Court Reports} Series, vol. 330, 1 (1947), pp. 8-9.}

He then noted that Great Britain repeated the mistake of wedding church and state in its initial colonization of America, going so far as “generating a burning hatred against dissenters.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 10.}

The second stage came with the American Revolution. The colonials awakened to the need for authentic religious liberty, with two leaders and the state of Virginia leading the way.

No one locality and no one group throughout the Colonies can rightly be given credit for having aroused the sentiment that culminated in adoption of the Bill of Rights’ provisions embracing religious liberty. But Virginia, where the established church had achieved a dominant influence in political affairs and where many excesses attracted wide public attention, provided a great stimulus and able leadership for the movement. The people there, as elsewhere, reached the conviction that individual religious liberty could be achieved best under a government which was stripped of all power to tax, to support, or otherwise to assist any or all religions, or to interfere with the beliefs of any religious individual or group.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 11.}

Black celebrated the work of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson. In the mid-1780s, both wrote against a Virginia tax that aided a state-established church:

The movement toward this end [religious liberty] reached its dramatic climax in Virginia in 1785-86 when the Virginia legislative body was about to renew Virginia’s tax levy for the support of the established church. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison led the fight against this tax. Madison wrote his great Memorial and Remonstrance against the law. In it, he eloquently argued that a true religion did not need the support of law; that no person, either believer or non-believer, should be taxed to support a religious institution of any kind; that the best interest of a society required that the minds of men always be wholly free; and that cruel persecutions were the inevitable result of government-established religions. Madison’s Remonstrance received strong support throughout Virginia, and the Assembly postponed consideration of the proposed tax measure until its next session. When the proposal came up for consideration at that session, it not only
died in committee, but the Assembly enacted the famous “Virginia Bill for Religious Liberty” originally written by Thomas Jefferson.\textsuperscript{43}

Thus Black sought to establish a segregation of religious concerns from those of the state as a value embraced by the Founding Fathers. This view proved to be in substantial contrast to the Reformed position on government championed by Carl McIntire, Francis Schaeffer, and R. J. Rushdoony as the evidence of the following chapter will show. Chapter Seven will extend the story to reveal how fundamentalists sought a rights revolution of their own, as they felt by the 1970s that their rights had been infringed while the nation acknowledged the rights of other parties.

Black began a third and final stage by making a direct comparison between the Virginia bill and the First Amendment’s religion clauses: “This Court has previously recognized that the provisions of the First Amendment, in the drafting and adoption of which Madison and Jefferson played such leading roles, had the same objective and were intended to provide the same protection against governmental intrusion on religious liberty as the Virginia statute.”\textsuperscript{44} Thus Black avoided the accusation that the Court’s present views were the result of true revolutionary innovation; instead, they rested on precedent.

What did not obtain in the time of the Founding Fathers, however, was the existence of the Fourteenth Amendment of 1868 and its potential to revolutionize the relationship of the federal government to the states. Black now argued for an organic connection between the First and Fourteenth Amendments that gave the federal government authority to prevent the state-level establishment of religion:

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 13.
The meaning and scope of the First Amendment, preventing establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, in light of its history and the evils it was designed forever to suppress, have been several times elaborated by the decisions of this Court prior to the application of the First Amendment to the states by the Fourteenth. The broad meaning given the Amendment by these earlier cases has been accepted by this Court in its decisions concerning an individual’s religious freedom rendered since the Fourteenth Amendment was interpreted to make the prohibitions of the First applicable to state action abridging religious freedom. There is every reason to give the same application and broad interpretation to the “establishment of religion” clause.45

Here in 1947, in a case involving the state of New Jersey’s support of Catholic families, was the foundation for attacking the creationist cause and supporting the teaching of evolution for the next forty years. The principles elaborated by the Court proved to be multivalent and living forces that eventually came to press upon the interests of fundamentalists. But in the initial stage represented here, the threat to fundamentalist Protestant interests was not yet a clear and present danger. Fundamentalist leaders appear to have ignored the wide-reaching consequences of the Supreme Court’s ruling. Justice Black concluded by using Jefferson’s famous image: “The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state. That wall must be kept high and impregnable. We could not approve the slightest breach. New Jersey has not breached it here.”46 The Court had taken a position on a matter of doctrine, but that position had no practical consequence as far as altering the Catholic families’ situation, and therefore fundamentalists’ concern about impacts upon them would have been minimal. The Court set in place principles that could have rocked the fundamentalist boat, but in 1947 the threat was not yet actual.

The threat became real only in 1962. Larson adds to his reflections about the Establishment Clause and makes a direct connection between the story of Catholic rights and the creation-evolution battle:

46 Ibid., p. 18.
Since the federal government never established a state church, the Supreme Court did not directly encounter the clause until the *Everson* case questioned the constitutionality of providing public transportation for parochial students in 1947, and it did so then only by interpreting the clause to preclude aiding religion generally rather than simply establishing a particular denomination.

Even more ominous for the anti-evolution statutes [still in place for three states since the 1920s], the *Everson* decision, written by Justice Hugo Black, applied this newly recognized constitutional “wall of separation” between religion and government to the states. The Establishment Clause expressly limited only federal action—states were left free to establish state churches, and many states did so during the first half-century of the republic. The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, added in connection with ending slavery in the 1860s, barred states from depriving “any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” Over the years, the Supreme Court gradually incorporated many of the federal rights contained in the Bill of Rights into the “liberty” protected from state interference by the Fourteenth Amendment. The Court first used this mechanism to apply the Free Exercise Clause to the states in 1940, followed by the Establishment Clause seven years later in *Everson*. Only then were the constitutional principles in place for the federal judiciary to address the issue of evolutionary teaching, but the full impact of that new interpretation of the Constitution did not become apparent until the early 1960s.47

Larson’s contribution of placing the creation-evolution controversy into a legal context adds color and detail that supplements the analysis of Ronald Numbers, which is primarily limited to a description of the scientific and religious issues at stake for both sides. Larson sees that there is legal context which touches upon the struggle between science and religion, and thus by broadening the reader’s vision Larson adds the element of power to a controversy that on the surface appears to be merely a contrast between sets of ideas.

Although fifteen years passed before fundamentalists realized the revolutionary and creative use of the Fourteenth Amendment generally and its particular impact upon the church-state relationship, the Supreme Court justices had laid the groundwork for a rearrangement of power well before the controversial school-prayer ruling of 1962 that finally grabbed

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fundamentalists’ attention. The ruling was only revolutionary in that it applied the Establishment Clause against a religious tradition in a very public way---but it reflected a trend in Supreme Court decision-making that fundamentalists had overlooked.

**Religious Minorities and the Beginnings of Organized Culture War**

In 1962 the forces representing America’s religious past clashed with those of cultural pluralism when the Supreme Court sided with the pluralists by constructing a public domain into which religion could no longer enter. The Court’s decision made possible the re-elevation of evolution in the public consciousness over time, and so the *Engel v. Vitale* decision requires careful detail.

In a Cold-War world where references to God appeared on the nation’s currency and were heard from the halls of Congress to the military’s chaplaincy, Americans felt acutely that they had to separate themselves from the godlessness of Russia. The New York State Board of Regents had approved a nonsectarian prayer to be said in the public schools: “Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our Country.” As in the aforementioned cases in which the ACLU, the NAACP, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Catholics argued for rights of minorities against the will of the majority, so in the case of school prayer, interest groups played a critical role in the turn of events. The story of evolutionary teaching in the public schools later turned upon the principles these interest groups championed.

On the other side stood those insisting on the separation of church and state.

Not only was the Court’s slate cluttered with legal precedents [as it approached the *Engel* case] but it also contained the badge of modern constitutional litigation: substantial interest group presence. Pushing the strong separationist line it had drawn since *Everson*, the American Civil Liberties Union joined the parents of ten

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public school students in a suit claiming that a state-authored prayer…was an unconstitutional establishment of religion. Supporting the ACLU position were amicus curiae briefs filed by the American Ethical Union, the American Jewish Committee (joined by the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith), and the Synagogue Council of America (joined by the National Community Relations Advisory Council). 49

In making their argument, Joseph F. Kobylka notes that the separationists drew heavily from the writings of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, emphasizing the latter’s ‘Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments,” which had played a prominent role in the Everson decision. 50 Clearly the separationist group was depending on the Court to be consistent with its recent interpretation of the First Amendment and its use of the Fourteenth to defend minority rights. Working alongside the main counsel for the defendants and defending the use of the prayer was the “Cardinal’s lawyer”, Porter R. Chandler, who had ties to the Archdiocese of New York, but there were also other powerful allies:

Appearing as amicus curiae in support of the prayer were the Board of Regents of the State of New York and twenty state attorneys general. Essentially, they contended that the prayer, because it created no Establishment Clause problems, facilitated free exercise values, was not coercive, and involved no expenditure of public monies. 51

The Supreme Court was blunt in its decision. “We think that by using its public school system to encourage recitation of the Regents’ prayer, the State of New York has adopted a practice wholly inconsistent with the Establishment Clause.” 52 The Court agreed that “it is no part of the business of government to compose official prayers for any group of the American people to recite as a part of a religious program carried on by government.” 53

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50 Ibid., p. 85.
51 Ibid., p. 85.
52 Engel v. Vitale, p. 424.
53 Ibid., p. 425.
gave another history lesson on the importance of the separation of church and state. It pointed out that the British government’s seeking to control the public in the area of prayer was why religious freedom was a central part of the founding of America. But then when those who were powerless in Britain gained prominence in their new country, they dictated to others:

It is an unfortunate fact of history that when some of the very groups which had most strenuously opposed the established Church of England found themselves sufficiently in control of colonial governments in this country to write their own prayers into law, they passed laws making their own religion the official religion of their respective colonies.  

The Court, as with the *Everson* ruling, put the Virginia Bill for Religious Liberty as well as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison into the spotlight. The American Constitution was unique in that it protected religious liberty from the tyranny of kings, legislature, or even local majorities: “Our Founders were no more willing to let the content of their prayers and their privilege of praying whenever they pleased be influenced by the ballot box than they were to let these vital matters of personal conscience depend upon a succession of monarchs.” Noting the First Amendment’s prohibition against the establishment of religion, the Court asserted its right to connect the First to the Fourteenth and thus overrule the State of New York.

The Scopes trial of the 1920s had involved a perceived attack upon God, but it did not involve the reinterpretation of constitutional amendments. Scopes remained on the state level, and left no residue more substantial than a few anti-evolution statutes in Southern states. Moreover, the Supreme Court was not involved, and an impact of racial and cultural diversity was not yet felt in what was commonly understood to be a Judeo-Christian nation guided by

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Anglo-Saxon culture. But the environment after World War II showed significant potential for changes that, to fundamentalists, appeared as a frontal assault on conservative sensibilities.

The spark for the culture war came with the Supreme Court’s decision that a school-sponsored prayer violated the rights of certain citizens. For the first time, unlike the Scopes scenario, the federal government seemed at war with Bible-believing Christians. “In the mid-twentieth century,” writes Bruce J. Dierenfield,

about half of America’s 35,000 public school districts permitted religious exercises of one kind or another, including reading from the King James Bible, baccalaureate services, and spoken prayer. Such devotions had aroused little controversy until 1958 when the Herricks public school district in New Hyde Park, Long Island, instituted a prayer prepared by the New York State Board of Regents. 57

According to Dierenfield, “On June 25, 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court dropped a bombshell when it invalidated the regents’ prayer.” 58

The impact of the Supreme Court’s new understanding of its duty to protect minority rights created an immediate backlash among even some of the country’s highest-ranking and experienced politicians. Opposition was widespread, including the president of the American Bar Association and 79 percent of Americans cited in a Gallup poll. 59 In addition major newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, the Boston Globe and The New York Daily News attacked the court’s decision; a consensus of state governors and two former presidents, Hoover and Eisenhower, were similarly shocked. 60 In other words, the simplistic characterization of the fundamentalist as a marginalized extremist did not mesh with

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
the widespread fury over *Engel*. The Supreme Court also taxed the sensibilities of many Americans repeatedly, according to Dierenfield:

And the Court repeatedly stirred the constitutional pot. Major decisions concerning obscenity, communism, and reapportionment preceded *Engel*, and others concerning Bible-reading (*Abington v. Schempp*, 1963) and the rights of the accused would soon follow. A cry arose from the right wing that Chief Justice Warren must be impeached. Candy manufacturer Robert Welch and his anti-communist John Birch Society paid for hundreds of billboards across the country that demanded Warren’s job…Court-bashing became a national pastime. 

Through the Court’s simple fiat, the relationship of minorities to majorities of various kinds underwent revolution in the 1950s and 1960s. African Americans, like Engel and his group, had been denied their basic rights and the Supreme Court led by Earl Warren addressed the complaints of both. Furthermore, civil rights leaders positioned themselves with the high Court on the matter of school prayer: Dierenfield comments that both Martin Luther King and the NAACP favored the *Engel* decision. Likewise, the pro-civil rights National Council of Churches, the ecumenical body attacked fiercely by fundamentalists, sided with the Court as well.

Supporters of segregation opposed the decision, such as Senator James Eastland of Mississippi; Dierenfield quotes Representative George Andrews of Alabama to say that “They put the Negroes in the schools and now they’ve driven God out.” It should be noted that Prescott Bush and A. Willis Robertson, the senator-fathers of two prominent future leaders of the Republican Party, President George H.W. Bush and televangelist Pat Robertson, also went on the record as opposed to *Engel*. While the forces of tradition stood arrayed against *Engel* and the

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64 *Ibid.*
forces of change, it is often overlooked in analyses of the culture wars that race and religion were related issues at the beginning, as illustrated by the following statement from Dierenfield:

*Engel* provided conservatives with a heaven-sent opportunity to attack the Warren Court. The anti-Warren billboards that had sprouted after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)…were modified to add the phrases “Save Prayer” and “Save America.”…With the fall elections approaching, most politicians had to bow to public demands to denounce *Engel.*

The reaction to *Engel* brought some surprises. As might be expected leading voices against *Engel* came from the Roman Catholic church. The church wished to counter what it saw as disturbing trends toward secularism, materialism, and atheism. But Baptists, though many were theologically conservative, had in their history a memory of being a religious minority and, as Dierenfield notes, “had traditionally opposed any intermingling between religion and government. The Joint Baptist Committee on Public Affairs, a prominent lobbying organization for 17 million members, endorsed *Engel.* Further, the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Herschel Hobbs, also supported the ruling, a sign of how liberal the Convention was prior to the fundamentalist takeover of the late 1970s. Hence fundamentalist Presbyterians found themselves in an odd alignment of players in the fight over *Engel.* They were joined by Catholics, whom fundamentalists identified with the Antichrist, while Baptists stood in opposition. The upshot of these realities was that *Engel* touched the interests of various groups in unpredictable ways. Finally, despite their apparent drift toward liberalism from the *Christian Beacon*’s point of view, both Billy Graham and the National Association of Evangelicals opposed the *Engel* decision.

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The Court’s later ruling against school-sponsored Bible reading, known as *Abington v. Schempp*, added fuel to the fundamentalists’ fire. The combined impact of *Engel* and *Abington* was to alienate fundamentalists. Nonetheless, the rights language of the day became, as we will see in the next chapter, a new vehicle for Carl McIntire’s party to voice its outrage. Through a movement and a proposed amendment, McIntire and his allies would contend for a counterrevolution to restore local majoritarian power in America.

Dramatically, the Court defended its position on the Establishment Clause by claiming that government and religion need to be considered as separate spheres for the survival of the nation. The Court defined the Establishment Clause as a statement about separation to prevent the persecution of religious minorities:

Its first and most immediate purpose rested on a belief that a union of government and religion tends to destroy government and to degrade religion. The history of governmentally established religion, both in England and in this country, showed that whenever government had allied itself with one particular form of religion, the inevitable result had been that it had incurred the hatred, disrespect, and even contempt of those who held contrary beliefs.

The Court celebrated the foresight of the Founding Fathers even as it attempted to defend itself from the accusation of being anti-religious:

These men knew that the First Amendment, which tried to put an end to governmental control of religion and of prayer, was not written to destroy either. They knew rather that it was written to quiet well-justified fears which nearly all of them felt arising out of an awareness that governments of the past had shackled men’s tongues to make them speak only the religious thoughts that government

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69 *Engel* was a landmark because even though the “wall of separation” concept had been defended previously in the *Everson* case, the state of New Jersey in that matter had not violated the Establishment Clause in the Court’s opinion, so the articulation of the “wall” principle had no practical impact but served didactic purposes only. There was one other important precedent to *Engel*: according to Kent Greenawalt, *Illinois ex rel. McCollum v. Board of Education* was a 1948 case in which the “Court decided that public schools could not allow religious teachers to offer religious instruction within school buildings. The tenor of the majority and concurring opinions was strictly separationist, suggesting a high wall between the state and religious activities.” (See Kent Greenawalt, “Illinois ex rel. McCollum v. Board of Education,” in *The Oxford Guide to United States Supreme Court Decisions*, pp. 134.) But the *Engel* case got national attention for the church-state issue like no other cases before it.

70 *Engel v. Vitale*, p. 431.
wanted them to speak and to pray only to the God that government wanted them to pray to.  

The Court has created a tool for disentangling historically imbalanced situations which disadvantaged religious minorities by using its Fourteenth Amendment prerogative to enforce the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. It reiterated the doctrine of separation of church and state a year later when the issue of school-sponsored Bible reading came to its notice---but the principles used were the same as with Engel.

The ACLU led the charge against Bible reading in the schools in two cases, one involving a Unitarian family in Pennsylvania and the another in Baltimore, where an atheist mother (Madalyn Murray, later famously known as Madalyn Murray O’Hair) and her son made complaints about the use of the Bible in the classroom. A Pennsylvania district court had ruled in favor of the Unitarian family, the Schempps, and against the Pennsylvania statute mandating Bible reading, by using the Fourteenth Amendment to apply the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.  

That these constitutional issues were still a matter of debate became clear when the Maryland Court of Appeals’ upheld the Baltimore city schools’ rule regarding Bible reading. A striking aspect of this case was that testimony was included which dealt with the likelihood that Jewish students would be persecuted and ridiculed for their faith because it did not include the teachings of the New Testament. The interests of religious minorities against the Protestant majority appeared to be bound up together.

71 Ibid., p. 435.


73 “The Maryland Court of Appeals affirmed, the majority of four justices holding the exercise [mandated by the city of Baltimore] not in violation of the First and Fourteenth Amendments, with three justices dissenting,” Ibid., p. 212.

74 Ibid., p. 209.
The Court had turned a corner with the *Engel* decision that essentially made the outcome with the *Schempp* case a foregone conclusion. Joseph Kobylka observes that “*Schempp* was essentially a rerun of the Court’s decision the previous term in *Engel v. Vitale*”. He adds that Court wanted to emphasize that “the ‘wall of separation’ was real and was to be kept high.”

The wording of the ruling was straightforward: “In light of the history of the First Amendment and of our cases interpreting and applying its requirements, we hold that the practices at issue and the laws requiring them are unconstitutional under the Establishment Clause, as applied to the States through the Fourteenth Amendment.”

The Court reviewed the American scene and judged it as both historically religious and pluralistic. Citing *Cantwell v. Connecticut*, the Court reaffirmed its right under the Fourteenth Amendment to enforce the requirements of the First. Citing the *Everson v. Board of Education* case, the Court stated that the intentionality of the First Amendment was to establish separate spheres between church and state.

Although the Court has alluded to its basic neutrality before, in this instance it stated clearly its position.

The wholesome “neutrality” of which this Court’s cases speak thus stems from a recognition of the teachings of history that powerful sects or groups might bring about a fusion of governmental and religious functions or a concert or dependency of one upon the other to the end that official support of the State or Federal

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Government would be placed behind the tenets of one or of all orthodoxies. This the Establishment Clause prohibits.  

The Court then announced a simple test to measure the constitutionality of a law in the realm of church and state:

The test may be stated as follows: what are the purpose and the primary effect of the enactment? If either is the advancement or inhibition of religion then the enactment exceeds the scope of legislative power as circumscribed by the Constitution. That is to say that to withstand the strictures of the Establishment Clause there must be a secular legislative purpose and a primary effect that neither advances nor inhibits religion.  

Strikingly, the Court defined “secular” as synonymous with “neutral”---neither to give aid to religion nor to hinder its advance, but to function independently of religion’s concerns. Here the Court again referred to Madison’s “Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments” as support for its stance. And once again the Court fended off the accusation of its being antireligious by applauding the study of the Bible in an academic context while noting that the present cases were another matter altogether. “But the exercises here do not fall into those [academic] categories. They are religious exercises, required by the States in violation of the command of the First Amendment that the Government maintain strict neutrality, neither aiding nor opposing religion.” Therefore the use of the Bible crossed an invisible line into the state’s domain when the Scripture was used in a religious way in a public school context.

Finally, the Court addressed the issue of majority rule in matters of church and state. “While the Free Exercise Clause clearly prohibits the use of state action to deny the rights of free exercise to anyone, it has never meant that a majority could use the machinery of the State to

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80 Ibid., p. 222.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., p. 225.
practice its beliefs.” Agreeing with the Pennsylvania court and overruling the Maryland Court of Appeals, the Court ended with a reiteration of its commitment.

The place of religion in our society is an exalted one, achieved through a long tradition of reliance on the home, the church and the inviolable citadel of the individual heart and mind. We have come to recognize through bitter experience that it is not within the power of government to invade that citadel, whether its purpose or effect be to aid or oppose, to advance or retard. In the relationship between man and religion, the State is firmly committed to a position of neutrality.

In developing the two doctrines of separate spheres and neutrality, the Supreme Court had effectively displaced the Judeo-Christian tradition from its place of cultural prominence in order to make room for religious minorities—and those with no faith at all. But those groups that benefitted relied upon the steady accumulation of rulings that reinvigorated the Fourteenth Amendment which gave the Court its authority to rebalance the scales in general for minorities against the will of a majority. The backlash to these church-state rulings was immediate.

Kobylnka summarizes the public fury:

*Schempp* came in the wake of a hostile response to *Engel*, which raged throughout the summer of 1962 and into the Court’s next term. Representative L. Mendell Rivers accused the Court of “legislating—they never adjudicate—with one eye on the Kremlin and the other on the NAACP.” Cardinal Spellman said it had struck “at the very heart of the Godly tradition in which America’s children have for so long been raised.” Representative Frank Becker called *Engel* “the most tragic [ruling] in the history of the United States,” and offered an amendment to reverse this (and, later, the *Schempp*) decision. According to the Gallup Poll, 76 percent of Americans supported this approach. All told, 150 such amendments were offered by 111 members of Congress, with Becker’s coming to a vote but losing in the House of Representatives.

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The Court’s decisions upholding the Establishment Clause were understood by many Christian leaders as attacks upon their faith. William Martin underscores the impact: “Nothing, perhaps, generated more lasting resentment against the Supreme Court and stirred more concern among conservative Christians than the 1962 and 1963 decisions banning officially sponsored prayer and Bible reading in public schools. The Court claimed such practices violated the historic First Amendment prohibition against government establishment of religion.”

Suddenly fundamentalists had cause to look at themselves as an interest group, much like blacks, supporters of free speech, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Unitarians, atheists and others who had campaigned for their rights. Martin describes how the tumultuous sixties stimulated fundamentalists to express their rights as a culture in the form of building a new network of Christian schools. But the schools were symbols of a search for rights in a general sense in a transforming America. Jerry Falwell, a Lynchburg, Virginia pastor in the 1960s later to become famous as the de facto leader of the Moral Majority that propelled Ronald Reagan to the White House and creationist Henry Morris to new levels of influence, was suspected of attempting to create a whites-only environment in his founding of Lynchburg Christian Academy. This charge he refuted just as public school integration accelerated in Lynchburg in 1967. Falwell claimed it was not Court-ordered desegregation that motivated him but rather the perception of Court-ordered secularization: “Falwell attributed his interest in building a school to the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court decisions that banned school-sponsored prayer and Bible reading.”

In other words, fundamentalists, as a result of the Supreme Court’s incitement, began to search for their

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86 William Martin, With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America (New York: Broadway Books, 2005), p. 77. Martin continues: “Its [the Court’s] critics viewed the decision as a declaration of war against Christianity, a conviction that has not diminished over time.”

87 Ibid., p. 70.

88 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
own rights revolution. As we will see, understanding the later resurgence of antievolutionism, spearheaded by Henry Morris and with Falwell’s Moral Majority’s blessing, only makes sense in light of a new rights mentality of which Presbyterians such as McIntire, Francis Schaeffer, and Rousas J. Rushdoony were each contributors as they responded to the new legal and political realities of the 1960s.
CHAPTER 6
THE FUNDAMENTALISTS’ SEARCH FOR RIGHTS

As fundamentalists set about to foment their own rights revolution, they also began to establish new alliances with like-minded conservatives. The aforementioned Becker Amendment symbolized a much wider frustration with the Court than was evident merely among Protestant conservatives. Carl McIntire’s ally Billy James Hargis remembered the intensity of his reaction against the Court as the motivation behind his support of the Becker Amendment, “which sought to exempt school-sponsored prayer and Bible reading from the Court’s prohibitions”.¹

A foreshadowing of the future embrace between fundamentalists and the Republican party came with Barry Goldwater’s 1964 presidential run, in which he attacked “the Supreme Court’s banning of school prayer and Bible reading for much of the general down-turn in morality.”² This manner of cause-effect linkage became central to fundamentalists’ arguments in a building culture war—reminiscent of William Jennings Bryan’s complaints that Darwinism led the young away from God and the German people to militarism in World War I. Goldwater’s words were echoed later in future assaults upon evolution that increased after the Supreme Court struck down Arkansas’ anti-evolution statute in 1968’s *Epperson v. Arkansas* decision, based again upon the Establishment Clause.³

Fundamentalists felt that the federal government’s turn to secularization mirrored the nation’s motion in the same direction, and the hunt for a worldview that undergirded this

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¹ Martin, *With God on Our Side*, p. 78.
³ Edward J. Larson, *Trial and Error*, p. 114. See the following chapter for the culture-war contextualization of the new creation-evolution controversies of the 1970s.
unpleasant surprise eventually settled on evolution.⁴ Ample evidence seemed to suggest that evolution was making a comeback in the 1960s, as the world had eyewitnessed the celebration and apparent unity of biologists around Darwinism in the Darwin Centennial at the University of Chicago in 1959, at which Hermann J. Mueller had called for “the restoration of Darwinism” in American public schools, a statement which Betty Smocovitis noted was an effort to keep “the increasingly hostile hoards of American fundamentalists at bay.”⁵

In the meantime the focus of fundamentalist leaders was on the implications of secular government on rights. The present chapter endeavors to show that fundamentalists in the 1960s agitated for their rights, as they had four decades earlier in the Scopes confrontation. Hence this period is critical for understanding the 1970s, when evolution once more stepped into the public limelight. That decade will form the subject of the Chapter 7; here we focus on three fundamentalist leaders of the 1960s.

The first to command our attention is Carl McIntire, whom we met in Chapter 3 in the context of his struggles against communism and ecumenism. Among the intellectual leaders of the fundamentalists was Francis Schaeffer, who had been a student of J. Gresham Machen and, until the mid-1950s, an ally of Carl McIntire. Schaeffer’s view of America was affected in turn

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⁴ Larson claims that the 1947 *Everson* decision was the decisive moment for the eventual legal battles over evolution: “Only then were the constitutional principles in place for the federal judiciary to address the issue of evolutionary teaching, but the full impact of that new interpretation of the Constitution did not become apparent until the early 1960s.” (*Trial and Error*, p. 94) The creation in the Schempp case of a test for “secular” purpose (meaning neutral with regard to religion) as a means of enforcing the Establishment Clause was critical as it later became the criteria for the eventual dismantling of the remaining anti-evolution statutes. (p. 95) A noteworthy aspect of the Court’s ruling was its use of the term “neutrality” and the contrast with William Jennings Bryan’s understanding of the word. Larson discusses Bryan’s understanding of neutrality as either requiring that neither creation nor evolution be taught or allowing both to be taught. (p. 95) The Court in *Schempp* argued that its neutrality was based upon neither advancing nor inhibiting religion—this was the definition of having a “secular” purpose. But the term “secular” in fundamentalist minds came to be synonymous with “antireligious”. As noted in Chapter 7, strong evidence exists to suggest that Bryan’s definition is still enthusiastically upheld by creationists across the country, who have failed to secure equal time for their ideas due to the obstacle of the Establishment Clause. Over eighty years have elapsed since his supposed humiliation at the hands of Clarence Darrow, and the Commoner’s words still ring true for many.

⁵ Smocovitis, *Unifying Biology*, p. 23.
in a significant way by the teaching of Rousas J. Rushdoony, a follower of Machen’s colleague at Westminster Seminary, Cornelius Van Til. As social upheaval and rights movements collided with the Supreme Court’s reinvigoration of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Reformed triad of McIntire, Schaeffer, and Rushdoony encountered a transforming America in the early 1960s. Together these three articulated the rights of fundamentalists in the midst of the rights revolutions, even if their warnings and exhortations only later took root.

**Carl McIntire: Forerunner of the Religious Right**

As the Cold War and the civil rights movement intensified during the early 1960s, so did the convictions of the Bible Presbyterians led by McIntire. A vocabulary of rights dominated the pages of his weekly newspaper, the *Christian Beacon*, between 1963-1965, and McIntire led the way as fundamentalists sought a counterrevolution to the civil rights movement and the Communist network they assumed promoted the cause. Three entities—conservative politicians, fundamentalist churches, and anticommunists—united against liberal politicians, ecumenical churches, and civil rights activists. By launching his youth group, International Christian Youth, as a rights organization, McIntire’s forces created a counterpoint to civil rights by focusing energies on returning prayer and Bible reading to America’s public schools, which the Supreme Court rulings of 1962 and 1963 had declared to be religiously neutral spheres.

Supporting Goldwater’s campaign for the presidency in 1964, McIntire came into contact with the powerful conservative wing of the Republican party and understood the significance of Southern segregationist sentiment embodied by such stalwarts as South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond. The engagement between clergy and politicians to rescue America from internal revolution foreshadowed the marriage of Ronald Reagan and Southern-rooted Moral Majority in
1980. Though unsuccessful on many points, McIntire spearheaded a rights “counterrevolution” for the fundamentalist cause.

The perceived sudden expansion of federal power after World War II shocked fundamentalists into action. Alarmed like many other Americans to see the rejection of school-sponsored prayer and Bible reading in the early 1960s, McIntire and the Bible Presbyterians witnessed what they regarded as a transformation in the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the Constitution. Morris Udall, an Arizona congressman in 1964, articulated the shift clearly:

Since 1940 the high court has taken jurisdiction in a number of such cases [such as school prayer], ruling that the 14th Amendment extends the provisions of the First Amendment to acts of state and local governments.\(^6\)

As we have seen in the previous chapter, since the 1940s the Supreme Court had begun to interpret the rights stated in the First Amendment as included among the rights states were instructed not to deprive citizens of in the Fourteenth. By making rights absolute, this connection represented a revolution in judicial decision-making as now legal rights were not only a matter of federal but state protection, thus making jurisprudence not only concerned with preservation of the law but with its living quality as an entity capable of adaptation and change. Most importantly, the states were suddenly made accountable to the federal government in a new way regarding the treatment of minorities and diversity-related issues.

America after World War II was primed for change. African American soldiers hoped for victory in civil rights at home just as they had brought victory against Hitler overseas. The desegregation of the military and the racial integration of baseball were, in fact, harbingers in the 1940s of what was to come. The highest Court in the land soon made its contribution. The Supreme Court led by Chief Justice Earl Warren became known for its radical reinterpretation of

the Constitution because of its ruling that America’s schools should be desegregated. The Court’s 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision struck down the separate-but-equal doctrine of its 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling. By proving that separate schools meant inherently unequal schools, the Supreme Court applied the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Therefore, the Warren Court’s later rejection of school prayer followed a pattern established in the use of the Fourteenth Amendment with *Brown*. The Court had decided that the rights of atheists and non-Christian religious minorities also deserved equal protection in the arena of the local public school. But Carl McIntire would hardly be alone in expressing shock and outrage over a perceived expulsion of God from the schoolroom and the introduction of a new dynamic in American law.

**The Christian Beacon: Rights and America’s Future**

The *Christian Beacon* of June 27, 1963 declared shock at the Supreme Court’s ruling against school-sponsored Bible reading:

> The decision is sweeping beyond all words. Never did the founding fathers believe that God should be separated from the state. The establishment of religion to them, in the context of the Constitution, was simply that we were not to have a State Church such they have in certain countries in Europe of which the early Americans came.

> The Court, in its desire to protect what it calls liberty for all and no discrimination, came out on the side of neutralism and atheism…Almighty God will judge the Court and the land for this rejection of Him.\(^7\)

The writer was quick to offer practical solutions, such as amending the Constitution and the creation of a Christian school system; most prophetically, he declared the “long-term remedy…is to elect a conservative President who will replace the members of the Supreme Court with

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conservative-minded men". The ruling set the American judiciary into a publicly oppositional stance relative to the fundamentalist churches. The paper featured a cartoon that declared the high Court had violated the boundaries of its sphere and moved into the role the legislative branch occupied.

In both the schoolroom and the diplomatic realm, McIntire’s forces felt under assault. For these Presbyterians, the language of diversity was not far from the language of adulteration and apostasy. Hence on a domestic front, defending the rights of minorities appeared to be a serious threat.

The narrative of revolution was profoundly offensive to the editorialists of the *Beacon*. Therefore discovering that Communists supported the civil rights March on Washington slated for August 1963 seemed to confirm fundamentalists’ fears of an anti-God conspiracy. On August 8th, the *Beacon* declared “the Communists have been involved in this whole agitation from the very beginning as it has been a tactic of the Communist Party in the United States.” The paper also noted the joining of ecumenical forces with the cause of civil rights as the National Council of Churches saluted the March. The *Beacon* denounced the March as an expression of secularism: “This [belief in the brotherhood of man as an unbiblical position] has been inherent in the whole racial conflict from the beginning.” A cartoon proclaimed openly that civil rights brought the dynamite of revolution to the country, guided by Communist and NCC leadership.

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8 *Ibid*. The *Beacon* called Christians to a new kind of battle on a domestic front. In the same issue Carl McIntire issued a condemnation of President Kennedy’s willingness to seek peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union as “an official enunciation of [an] American policy of appeasement. An accompanying cartoon suggested that the President contaminated Christian America by mingling it with the corrupt Soviet empire for the sake of respecting “diversity”. (*Ibid.*, “The President’s Speech: Moral and Biblical Considerations,” p. 1.)


10 *Ibid*. 

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The perceived relationship among rights, secularism, and Communism demanded from fundamentalists a continued response and eventually a rights movement of their own. The September 5th issue of the Beacon declared in its banner headline that the March had been openly opposed by McIntire’s American Council of Christian Churches. The edition described at length the deficiencies in the civil rights cause. Carl McIntire rejected the narrative of the civil rights movement completely and constructed one of his own: “The Negro in the U.S.A. is free. He is free to work, to labor, to improve himself, and to get ahead in life, just as any other American has been and is.”

McIntire held fast to the belief the civil rights movement was a veil for Communist subversion, citing a report by J. Edgar Hoover. He justified his opposition using the Bible:

Of course, a direct assault was made upon the rights of property. The director of the march actually said that civil rights were above property rights.

This is of course contrary to the teaching of the Bible. Property rights are a divine right protected in the Eighth Commandment of the Decalogue, “Thou shalt not steal.”

He continued:

The question of segregation has become a minor matter indeed compared to the over-all revolutionary program to change the United States of America, to destroy capitalism, to establish socialism, and to bring about a bureaucratic regulation of the lives of the business leadership of the country and of all the people.

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12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.
Denying a long history of injustice which the African American had endured, McIntire rejected the idea that the federal government could assume a caretaker role—instead he held the advance of the Christian Gospel would suffice.

The *Beacon* thus began an antirevolutionary crusade, against civil rights but also for fundamentalists’ right to mingle church and state in just the way the Supreme Court had attacked. The paper began to draw allies from the South, chief among which was segregationist senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. The *Beacon* reprinted Thurmond’s speech about patriotism and faith in its October 17, 1963 edition. Thurmond simultaneously claimed to uphold the separation of church and state and maintain a connection between God and America as indivisible.\(^\text{15}\) The nation’s fortunes were linked to a deity defined as unchanging—therefore revolutionary action, represented by the Supreme Court’s prayer ruling or the civil rights movement, had to be stopped as a means of social change. These sentiments formed the foundation of the *Beacon*’s campaign.

**1964-1965: Antirevolutionary Fervor Peaks**

The *Beacon* began 1964 by declaring proof that a working relationship existed between the World Council of Churches and Russian Communists—the World Council in February convened its executive committee in the U.S.S.R for the first time. Domestically, in discussing the future of youth ministry, the National Council of Churches in the *Beacon*’s view threatened parental authority on the matter of race relations. Revolution seemed everywhere.\(^\text{16}\)

As champion of all the paper held dear, Strom Thurmond was celebrated for attacking civil rights, the National Council of Churches, and secularism in one speech: “Senator Strom

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Thurmond is a great American, a great senator, and a great Christian; and men of his integrity and courage are needed in the legislative halls of the United States of America.”  

International Christian Youth, a rights organization shepherded by McIntire and his son Carl Thomas, gave Thurmond the spotlight at its second annual leadership conference, held in June 1964, along with Allan MacRae, the president of Faith Theological Seminary, and Dr. Bob Jones III, the descendant of the original Bob Jones, evangelist and university builder. Thurmond was described as “a friend of International Christian Youth for some time” and as a “defender of liberty”.

But amidst what appeared to be an Anglo-Saxon-dominated leadership, the conference showed signs of ambiguity in the matter of race nonetheless, as the promotional article noted “a panel of African students discussing the future of Christianity and liberty in the face of the African revolution will be featured during one of the nightly sessions”. Hence the question of race was more problematic for McIntire’s organizations than a cursory examination reveals. International Christian Youth represented a union of fundamentalists North and South with Southern segregationists like Thurmond. But the Christian emphasis created an impulse to label both white Southern anger embodied in Thurmond as the same instinct held by Christian Africans—for “liberty”. Finally, while opposition to civil rights was a defensive move, retaking the public schools for prayer and Bible reading gave ICY an offensive side.

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A Movement for Fundamentalist Rights

Congressman Frank Becker of New York proposed an amendment to the Constitution in light of the Supreme Court’s professed attack on school prayer and Bible reading (the final form of the proposal came forth in September 1963). The proposed amendment read:

Nothing in this Constitution shall be deemed to prohibit the offering, reading from, or listening to prayers or Biblical Scriptures, if participation therein is on a voluntary basis, in any governmental or public school, institution, or place.

Nothing in this Constitution shall be deemed to prohibit making reference to belief in, reliance upon, or invoking the aid of God or a Supreme Being in any governmental or public document, proceeding, activity, ceremony, school, institution, or place, or upon any coinage, currency, or obligation of the United States.

Nothing in this Article shall constitute an establishment of religion.

In 1964, Congressman Morris Udall noted that to become an amendment, the Becker proposal faced a steep challenge as an approval by two-thirds in both House and Senate was required, followed by ratification by three-quarters of the states.

Nonetheless, the CQ Almanac for 1964 recorded that Becker’s opinion was shared by many, included Southern politicians already angered by judicial activism by the Supreme Court:

The Supreme Court decisions were sharply attacked by some Members of Congress, including many Southerners who had often denounced the Court since its 1954 decision against school segregation. During the 88th Congress, through Sept. 21, 1964, 151 measures proposing constitutional amendments to reverse the Court’s prayer and Bible reading decisions were introduced in the House…Nine similar measures were introduced in the Senate…

21 Ibid.
22 Udall, “Congressman’s Report.”
23 Unnamed author, “Congress Fails to Act”
The *Almanac* likewise recorded the immense public support for the Becker amendment, with McIntire’s International Christian Youth leading the charge:

Those favoring a constitutional amendment exerted pressure on Congressmen with what reportedly was one of the largest mail campaigns in history…

Probably the largest national group pressing for mail to Congressmen was Project America, which was based in Collingswood, N.J., but claimed to have local groups throughout the country. Project America was an offspring of the Liberty Lobby, which was founded in 1955 to present the right-wing point of view. In its May 1964 newsletter the Liberty Lobby urged readers to “Write your Congressman now and urge him to sign discharge petition No. 3 (the Becker petition) as the only realistic means to insure that Congress be allowed to vote for religious freedom…The public’s wishes must be respected on this moral issue!…” Project America’s director, Larry Miller, April 22 announced that more than one million signatures had been gathered in support of the constitutional amendment. Miller said his group was “hopeful that members of the Judiciary Committee will expedite the hearings and report out a satisfactory proposal.” In addition to gathering signatures, Project America solicited mail to Congressmen, largely by providing the writer with a form letter or a post card which he was asked to sign and address to his Congressman. The post card was headed “Project America, International Christian Youth—USA” and read, “Dear Congressman, I, as one of your voting constituents, respectfully request you to sign discharge petition No. 3 for the Becker amendment to return the Bible to our schools. Please let me know whether or not you have signed the petition. Thank you.” The cards were received in great numbers not only by Representatives but also by several Senators.24

Furthermore, the *Almanac* recorded the views of many religious leaders. Carl McIntire was quoted as stating that the “Court’s decisions had ‘demoted God to the level of Shakespeare and Dante.’”25 Robert Cook of the National Association of Evangelicals gave a less sarcastic but similar affirmation of tradition: “The good that has come from the practice (of having prayers in public schools)…has been considerable and provided a stabilizing influence greater than many realize.”26 Clearly on the matter of religious exercises the Supreme Court had created substantial alienation for many fundamentalists and evangelicals. But for Carl McIntire’s disciples, the


25 Carl McIntire quoted in Unnamed author, “Congress Fails to Act”.

26 Robert Cook quoted in Unnamed author, “Congress Fails to Act”.
matter was twofold: restoring prayer in schools was a basic right while the civil rights movement demanded a counter-response. International Christian Youth would become a symbol of this twofold emphasis.

In March 1964, speaking of the “the battle…to preserve the Religious Heritage of our Nation”, Becker’s encouraging statements to International Christian Youth’s Project America were reprinted in the *Beacon*:

> It is encouraging to see International Christian Youth, through their sponsorship of ‘Project America,’ affording the citizens of the United States an opportunity to ‘stand up and be counted’ on this vital issue. For this fight to be won *for* all, it must first be fought by all, and ‘Project America,’ will provide every concerned American with the means to join in this struggle.  

The April 2, 1964 issue set civil rights and school prayer side by side, as Carl Thomas McIntire, the son of the Bible Presbyterian leader, spoke as Chairman of International Christian Youth—USA: “Flashy stories about civil rights and ‘freedom now’ have usually confined to back pages the less spectacular news of efforts to guarantee freedom for prayer and Bible reading.”  

His analysis assumed the extreme: “By ruling prayer out, the Court has, in effect, established compulsory atheism as the official position of the American educational system…In the battle against atheistic Communism, political and economic considerations are secondary to the overriding spiritual considerations. The Becker Amendment would help place first things first in the life of the nation.” Alongside the younger McIntire’s column ran a news release by Congressman Becker celebrating hearings to be held in connection with his amendment and, in

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29 Ibid.
contrast to the son’s plea for greater freedom, a letter from the elder McIntire to President Lyndon Johnson condemning the Civil Rights Bill.

The elder McIntire reiterated some familiar themes, such as the notion of the universal brotherhood of man as being in contrast with the biblical notion of only the converted being brothers, and the idea of civil rights as an assault on property rights. He criticized the President for opening the door to the National Council of Churches but not the fundamentalist American Council that McIntire founded. But McIntire added that civil rights had consequences in the streets:

A spirit of lawlessness and even riot has been stimulated in this country in order to obtain the civil rights legislation, and we have waited in vain for word from your lips as the Chief Executive to discourage and denounce such a fundamental assault upon civil order itself.  

McIntire ended with a blast upon the President’s silence regarding school prayer and Bible reading:

Why is it, may I ask, that you have not lifted your voice in behalf of the return of Bible reading and prayer to the public schools? The greatest crisis facing this Republic is our departure from the Word of God…You have remained silent on this great question, and this….is at the heart of the whole question of civil rights and equality and non-discrimination between our peoples. If we are to be free, our relations with our neighbors must be of mutual respect and love which I say your legislation cannot produce!

McIntire believed that Johnson’s support of the bill was in the end politically not theologically motivated: “Your civil rights legislation seems to us to be designed directly to win the votes of a

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31 Ibid.
minority element in this country and it carries with it definite political advantages for you and your political party.”³²

Continuing with the theme of the abuse of federal power, the *Beacon* published a speech by West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, under the headline, “Civil Rights Bill Political Issue, Not Moral, Senator Says,” but what was most striking about this particular edition was the front-page cartoon depicting the Civil Rights Bill as a violation of rights rather than the fulfillment of them.³³ The cartoon showed a disproportionately large white caveman with a sinister grin subduing a young blonde white woman at his feet. The caveman’s body was labeled “Civil Rights ‘Bill’” while the woman’s body was labeled “Private Property”. In the caveman’s muscle-bound hand was a club labeled the “Federal Power Cudgel.” A caption read, “‘Bill’ is a product of devilution.”³⁴

The moral arguments of Martin Luther King took a back seat in the paper’s analysis to a simpler narrative about power. By depicting the violation of private property as a male-female struggle, the *Beacon* used the theme of rape as a metaphor for the impact that the Civil Rights Bill would have. The calculus of rights was little more than an act of bullying a weaker party—innocent, fair, white, and female. The “race” of the “bill” appeared to be white, but the logical connection to make was that a bill benefitting black Americans allowed them to violate the private property rights of white Americans—hence the familiar Southern anxiety of the black male sexually assaulting the white female was part of the overall coding of the cartoon.


³⁴ The cartoon was on page 1 of the *Christian Beacon*, May 7, 1964.
The image was a particularly violent turn for the *Beacon*, which had previously demonstrated at least a willingness to negotiate with the President of the United States about the bill. The cartoon suggests therefore a hardening of the *Beacon*’s position.

In the same issue of the *Beacon*, the Mississippi branch of International Christian Youth (ICY) vowed to challenge the incursion of ecumenical forces into the state for the purposes of civil rights activism. The group, formed on May 2, 1964, planned “to undertake research on the question of the invasion by the National Council of Churches of the Delta area of the Mississippi”:

The National Council has announced that it plans to send a number of youth social workers into the Mississippi Delta...to undertake an extensive program of “agrarian reform.” They have leveled charges of “Naziism” against Mississippians and indicated that they feel that portion of the state “needs missionary work” from both the NCC and the World Council of Churches.\(^{35}\)

In response ICY-Mississippi planned to address civil rights head-on, beginning with a discussion of the NCC churches at the ICY national leadership conference.

In this struggle the ICY was attempting to have its wishes both ways. On the one hand it advanced the cause of rights while, on the other hand, it sought to hinder the advance of rights. It demonstrated that it could campaign for fundamentalist rights to pray in the public schools as well as against the advance of civil rights.

The leaders of ICY, Carl Thomas McIntire and Larry Miller, went to Washington to testify for the Becker Amendment before the House Judiciary Committee on May 7, 1964. The younger McIntire spoke of the impact of removing the Bible from the school as removing part of America’s “heritage” from the educational process: “How can you expect our youth to honor America in the future, if it is ‘unconstitutional’ to read in our schools the very Book which has

most shaped our history?36 Yet despite these protracted efforts, neither ICY nor other interested parties were able to move Congress to act. The CQ Almanac records that neither the House Judiciary Committee nor its counterpart in the Senate chose to act upon recommendations made by the end of 1964.37 Morris Udall made a striking observation about the ways fundamentalists and others viewed their government both as a hindrance and a help simultaneously:

It is strange that many of the people writing in behalf of Mr. Becker’s amendment have written on other occasions to denounce government interference with people’s private affairs and individual freedoms. Yet they seem to believe that home and church can no longer be depended on, and that government must save religion by compulsory instruction.38

Nineteen sixty-four marked the end of the Beacon’s efforts to promote the school prayer issue aggressively, although it continued its attack on civil rights. One of its first concerns was the openness of many Baptists to the civil rights cause, as evidenced by the embrace of Martin Luther King by both Baptists of various denominations and by Billy Graham at the Baptist Jubilee in May 1964. Graham’s presence at the Jubilee was a sign of a degree of rift between evangelicals and fundamentalists regarding civil rights. A cartoon in the May 21, 1964 Beacon mocked King’s attempts at integration and referred to civil rights as civil “riots”. The event was an indicator of denominational differences between Baptists and Presbyterians that continued to cause problems for those who wished to form alliances. Co-existence with civil rights was equivalent to apostasy, the caricature declared. As the cartoon mentioned, the only answer the Beacon could support given these divides was a maintenance of the separatist position.

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37 Unnamed author, “Congress Fails to Act”.

38 Morris Udall, “Congressman’s Report.”
Furthermore, in July International Christian Youth issued a statement on segregation and integration that seemed to attack both and affirm both. At first the writer appeared to show humility:

Thus Christians attempt to avoid absolutizing and declaring infallible their various schemes for social organization. They know that on earth even their own systems, which they call “Christian,” will be fraught with difficulties and sins.\(^39\)

He then proceeded to attack humanism for putting the “general human race in its religious center” and racism for putting “racial distinctiveness in its religious center” as two forms of idolatry to be avoided for taking the focus off of Jesus Christ.\(^40\) The writer declared God’s love for all of humanity and that a political outworking of this principle should be that the franchise be extended to people of every race; at the same time he refused to condemn “racially differentiated social organization”.\(^41\) Instead, “the problems of social organization in regard to race may be left to the various congregations, denominations, localities, states, institutions, and individuals according to law and custom and personal preference.”\(^42\)

The upshot of the article was to take a position in sharp contrast with the ecumenical movement that it sought to counter in Mississippi: race was to be a spiritualized issue that required a hands-off policy when outsiders intruded upon local politics. The ecumenical movement erred on the side of the idolatry of humanism:

The Ecumenical Movement does not consider sufficient the revelation of Jesus Christ, according to Holy Scripture, as the Truth about race. Instead, it places alongside Holy Scripture the idolatry of humanism and makes a fundamental moral judgment against Christians of nonconcurring views. Furthermore, the Ecumenical

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\(^40\) *Ibid.*

\(^41\) *Ibid.*

\(^42\) *Ibid.*
Movement contributes to the creation of racial tension, especially by coercion and extra-legal agitation, operating under the slogans of “equality”, “brotherhood”, “the Kingdom of God.”

Churches related to the Ecumenical Movement are, therefore, in need of reformation in the matter of race according to the Word of God. They must accept guilt for any violence and bitterness they have already fostered on all sides through programs based on exalted humanism.43

Thus ICY planned to be a counter-revolutionary force, re-establishing the white power structure in Mississippi as the rule of “law and custom and personal preference”. History and power played no role in the ICY statement, only a spiritual concern. If there was any abuse of power to address, it was the National Council of Churches training volunteers for the Delta work, as exemplified by a cartoon in the September 3, 1964, showing a Delta worker pounding the head of a Mississippian with the Social Gospel.

The *Beacon* warned that the NCC was “obviously promoting a system of federal control which would reduce the sovereign states…[to] nothing more than the importance of counties in the original system of government in the United States.”44 The notion of state sovereignty was an important part of the Reformed worldview as well as libertarian politics. In July 1965, as if a foreshadowing of the eventual marriage of the Religious Right with the Republican Party, the *Beacon* reprinted Ronald Reagan’s speech “A Time for Choosing”.45

Nonetheless, clearly by 1965 the *Beacon* showed signs of an internal struggle among fundamentalists about race. Two examples stood out. At a national assembly meeting of the International Christian Youth at Fort Worth, Texas, in December 1964, an agreement could not

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be reached about a statement on race and religion. The sticking point was the Christian basis for segregation:

A fourth paragraph, summarizing the viewpoint of International Christian Youth as an organization made up of members of various viewpoints on social organization—some favoring and some opposing segregation and or integration by legal establishment—could not be drafted…[Referring to the above statement on Religion and Race] The study paper, published in the Christian Beacon, July 2, 1964, had concluded that a Christian attitude toward race and religion could allow either legal integration or segregation and that Christians could operate according to Biblical injunctions under either circumstance. One member of the committee [issuing the new statement] could not agree that legal segregation could be condoned by ICY, and on this issue the statement fell.46

The second instance, reported in the February 4, 1965 Beacon, involved Carl McIntire’s personal trip to Africa to aid fundamentalist forces facing the advance of the World Council of Churches on that continent. The incident prompted several front-page stories and sent the message that the International Council of Churches welcomed people of African descent. The Sixth Plenary Congress of the International Council of Churches held in Geneva in August 1965 showed the presence of a substantial African contingent.47 Photographs of participants mingling also gave a sense that integration had come at last to Carl McIntire’s universe.

The Third Protest: Reformed Fundamentalists as Eclectic, Independent, and Cobelligerent

In his study of the roots of fundamentalism before 1925, George Marsden makes clear that fundamentalism emerged from diverse movements:

Fundamentalism was a “movement” in the sense of a tendency or development in Christian thought that gradually took on its own identity as a patchwork coalition of representatives of other movements. Although it developed a distinct life, identity, and eventually a subculture of its own, it never existed wholly independently of the older movements from which it grew. *Fundamentalism was a loose, diverse and*


changing federation of co-belligerents united by their fierce opposition to modernist attempts to bring Christianity into line with modern thought. 48

Amidst that “patchwork” and “loose, diverse and changing federation” were Baptists, Presbyterians, and others, each with denominational distinctives that themselves harbored differences. One over-arching point of unity was a shared hostility for the agenda of university learning to transform the Bible into a merely human document and humanity into a relative of animals. As the conservative Presbyterians who followed J. Gresham Machen’s lead began to battle at Princeton Seminary against the forces of liberal theology, by 1929 eventually separation became the only option.

Francis August Schaeffer (1912-1984)

Schaeffer was an activist of a different sort, seeking to demonstrate the rule of the Christian God over all spheres of intellectual significance, including law and science. His lectures on government and evolutionary theory foresaw a totalitarian threat on the horizon similar to McIntire’s prophecies, but with greater nuance. The Reformed tradition was from Machen’s time particularly sensitive to growth in the power of the federal government. In this regard Schaeffer stood alongside Machen and McIntire. The sixties inverted Reformed expectations about the behavior of government, and for the first time two Americas seemed at war with each other. On the one hand, civil rights theorists held to a vision of the nation as an evolving organism, but the language of Reformed creeds imagined a nation based upon an unchanging divine word. “Revolution” meant apostasy. But the demand for “rights” was a theme of the era that fundamentalists did not ignore in their defense of their own interests.

Francis Schaeffer was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania to working-class parents. According to Barry Hankins, Schaeffer grew up an agnostic but came to respect ancient Greek thought as well as the Bible. According to Colin Duriez, “after a six-month period of reading through the Bible,” Schaeffer in 1930 became a Christian on his own as he came to believe the faith held the solution to the philosophical questions he was contemplating. Schaeffer began his college career studying engineering at Drexel Institute in Philadelphia before changing direction altogether and attending Hampton-Sydney in Virginia in 1931 to prepare for the ministry.

After completing his degree in 1935, Schaeffer married Edith Seville, the daughter of missionaries to China. The partnership would span almost fifty years and be the cornerstone of a fruitful ministry. In their story Machen’s legacy played a role—Francis came to known Machen directly and Edith discovered Machen’s Christianity and Liberalism. Together in 1935 they journeyed to Philadelphia so that Francis could continue his ministerial training at Machen’s Westminster Seminary. Here Schaeffer viewed the fundamentalist-modernist controversy up close, as he witnessed Machen’s battle with his own denomination, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA). However, Schaeffer eventually left Westminster due to disagreement and attended the newly founded Faith Seminary to finish his degree.

Duriez comments that Schaeffer’s intellectual foundations were laid by two Westminster professors in particular, Cornelius Van Til and Allan MacRae, the former an expert in

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51 Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, pp. 3-4.


53 Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 31.
apologetics and the latter in biblical exegesis. Duriez claims that Van Til was a prime motivator behind Schaeffer’s antagonism for Karl Barth’s neo-orthodox views. (Van Til, who lived until 1987, became a living bridge between the era of J. Gresham Machen and the rise of the Religious Right.)

But Marsden’s comment about fundamentalism’s nature as a “loose federation” of co-belligerents is borne out in the case of Van Til and Schaeffer. Udo Middelmann, who knew the Schaeffer family from 1960 and married into it in 1964, described a different version of Schaeffer’s influences. Middelmann acknowledged that there was a “deep admiration for [J. Gresham] Machen” on Schaeffer’s part, as well as a profound friendship with MacRae; however Middelmann claimed that Schaeffer left Westminster due to disagreement with Van Til’s presuppositionalist apologetic:

Presuppositionalism he [Schaeffer] understood very much to be in the line of religious existentialism. That is somehow you’ve got to believe first before the thing becomes true and real. And Schaeffer worked the other way around. That is,

54 Ibid., p. 37.
55 Ibid., p. 40.
56 See John R. Muether, Cornelius Van Til: Reformed Apologist and Churchman (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 2008). Cornelius Van Til was born in 1895 in the Netherlands and immigrated to the United States in 1905. His family culture was deeply influenced by Dutch Calvinism and the views of Abraham Kuyper, prime minister of the Netherlands (1901-1905), who emphasized the animosity of Calvinism toward the Enlightenment (p.24). Muether notes that the Dutch Reformed Christians felt a sense of tension as they began to Americanize, fearing they would lose their ethnoreligious distinctiveness: “Most Christian Reformed [the church Van Til initially joined] observers saw American religion as too subjective, materialist, and pragmatic. It was indifferent to principle, especially to Reformed principles” (p.37). Cf. Also pp.28 and 30.

Nonetheless Van Til would make the transformation from Dutch Reformed to Machen’s Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Van Til entered Princeton Seminary in 1922 as a student when Machen was a faculty member (p. 50). Van Til would eventually become a professor at the seminary himself but join Machen in leaving in 1929 to found Westminster Seminary, at which he remained for the duration of his professional life (pp.19 and 61).

Van Til’s views did not comprehensively mesh with that of other fundamentalists. He was not a premillenialist and in apologetics chose the path of presuppositionalism as opposed to evidentialism (pp. 82 and 68). He had bitter arguments with Allan MacRae and J. Oliver Buswell—two of Schaeffer’s key influences—as Westminster Seminary underwent fracture (pp. 86-87).

57 See footnote 59.
there’s a real world there, [and] it raises questions to which only the Bible gives sufficient answers… Faith for Schaeffer was always the end result of a quest. It wasn’t the starting point [as Van Til taught].

The disagreement between Duriez and Middelmann regarding Van Til’s influence on Schaeffer is further complicated by John Frame, professor of systematic theology and philosophy at Reformed Seminary in Orlando. According to Frame, Schaeffer vigorously agreed with Van Til on the matter of presuppositions when the worldview of the non-Christian was under discussion.

Divisions among the conservative Christians that made up Westminster led to a schism in 1937. A first group, led by Machen, gave liberty on the matter of alcohol use, looked down upon premillenialism, and controlled the Independent Board for Foreign Missions, created under Machen’s leadership to counter modernism among missionaries. A second group led by Carl McIntire and Allan MacRae [whom Schaeffer would join] abstained from alcohol, upheld premillenialism, and sought control of the Independent Board. As has been noted in the previous chapter, McIntire spearheaded the founding of a competing school, Faith Theological Seminary, as well as a competing denomination, the Bible Presbyterians. Schaeffer was among

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58 Udo Middelmann, telephone interview by author, January 13, 2011.

59 John Frame, telephone interview by author, January 27, 2011. Frame comments: “Schaeffer in his books sometimes gave credit to presuppositional apologetics…So he was still under the spell of Van Til even going into the sixties and seventies. I always felt that what made Schaeffer’s apologetics so influential and so persuasive to so many people were the presuppositional elements in it. I think he saw his apologetic as kind of a halfway point between Van Til and [evidentialist apologist J. Oliver] Buswell. But I think the Van Tillian elements that really made Schaeffer’s apologetics what it is. He pointed out that non-Christian thought had abandoned reason and that it was based on presuppositions that would destroy reality if it were true.” Frame acknowledged occasional philosophical tensions between Schaeffer and Van Til, while at the same time, in speaking directly with Schaeffer, Frame heard a clear endorsement of presuppositionalism. John Muether claimed likewise that Schaeffer acknowledged Van Til’s intellectual contribution as significant but in practice ignored the core of Van Tillian ideas regarding the unregenerate mind’s ability to grasp truth prior to salvation (Muether, *Cornelius Van Til*, pp. 197-198).


61 Machen’s denomination was originally named the Presbyterian Church of America but was later changed to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
the first graduating class at Faith (1938) as well as the first minister ordained by the Bible
Presbyterians.\textsuperscript{62}

Schaeffer held two pastorates in Pennsylvania before a momentous appointment in St.
Louis in 1943 as pastor of a large Bible Presbyterian congregation. Part of Schaeffer’s
responsibilities included organizing a children’s ministry called Empire Builders. Amidst the
playing of games and memorization of Scripture, a strong separatist message went forth. A 1946
pamphlet authored by Schaeffer revealed an ambiguity about American religious pluralism. On
the one hand, children were taught to respect American ideals, embodied in the flag: “The Flag
of our country stands for freedom under law. As Christians we especially honor it for the
freedom we have in our country to worship the true God in the way the Bible directs.”\textsuperscript{63} On the
other hand, that freedom had allowed the multiplication of false religions, among which
Schaeffer numbered Christian Science, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventism,
Mormonism, and Modernism. “True Christianity takes the Bible as its only rule of faith and
practice. All false religions base their claims upon man’s experience.”\textsuperscript{64}

Most importantly, Schaeffer’s warnings to children revealed that the Fundamentalist-
Modernist controversy was far from over. With regard to the doctrine of sin, modernism openly
deceived the young with an evolutionary view: “Man is in a process of evolution; sin is not guilt
in the sight of God but a result of incomplete evolution. WHATSOEVER sin there is, is a product of

\textsuperscript{62} Hankins, \textit{Francis Schaeffer}, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{63} Francis Schaeffer, \textit{Empire Builders for Boys}, 1946, p.7, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Box 349, File 4, PCA
Historical Center.

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Ibid.}, p.74. Schaeffer’s rejection of Adventism may serve to explain the decreasing popularity of George
McCready Price’s ideas among some fundamentalists in the middle of the twentieth century. Henry Morris, as a
Southern Baptist, repackaged Price’s thought in more theologically traditional form in the 1960s.
man’s finiteness rather than of disobedience.” Finally, modernism offered a highly distorted view of Christ: “Jesus is the world’s greatest ethical teacher. He was a son of God, as we all are sons of God. The Virgin birth, the miracles of Christ, and his resurrection are non-essentials.”

The fact that Schaeffer spoke so sternly in a manual designed for a separatist Protestant version of the Boy Scouts demonstrated that on every front, including for the minds of children, he imagined a life-and-death battle.

According to Barry Hankins, Schaeffer remained true to the fundamentalist cause in the 1940s and only in the 1960s identified with mainstream evangelicalism. Hankins comments: “Schaeffer’s separatism was never more evident than when he chose to stay aloof from the National Association of Evangelicals when it was formed in St. Louis in 1942.” Contamination even in an indirect way was a constant threat. Schaeffer found himself in his children’s work agreeing with separation in that realm, aligning himself with the separatist Children for Christ against the more inclusive Child Evangelism Fellowship in the 1940s. The mission of Children for Christ was straightforward:

Children for Christ Incorporated was an enlargement of Child Evangelism Fellowship in St. Louis; the larger work started at a meeting of the ACCC in St. Louis in 1945. Schaeffer was named director, and Carl McIntire was on the board. The organization was to evangelize and disciple children and direct them into fundamentalist churches—and away from modernist ones.

65 Ibid., p. 78.
66 Ibid., p. 76.
67 Hankins, Francis Schaeffer, p. 25.
68 Ibid., p. 25.
69 Ibid., p. 29.
A life-altering moment came when the Independent Board for Foreign Missions sent Schaeffer to Europe for three months in 1947. The environment was ripe for evangelism after the Second World War:

Just as the United States was gearing up for the Marshall Plan to rebuild the infrastructure and political institutions of western European countries, Schaeffer and others wanted to rebuild orthodox Christianity by alerting Europeans to the dangers of theological modernism and training a generation of children in the fundamentals of the faith…

Schaeffer’s charge for the summer of 1947 was to gauge the prospects for starting Independent Board and Children for Christ work and to persuade European evangelicals to leave the Federal Council of Churches to join the American Council of Christian Churches.  

By the end of 1947, the Schaeffers accepted the mission board’s proposal that they become missionaries to Europe permanently. They made their way overseas by stages, and while in Philadelphia the Schaeffer family (with Francis already traveling in Europe) began a friendship with C. Everett Koop, a physician who later assisted Schaeffer in an anti-abortion film entitled Whatever Happened to the Human Race? and became Surgeon General of the United States under President Reagan.

The Schaeffers moved first to Lausanne, Switzerland, to extend the work of Children for Christ. Hankins notes that Barthian neo-orthodox Christianity was a prime target in Schaeffer’s list of priorities due to its perceived spread on the continent. In addition, in 1948, Schaeffer cooperated with McIntire’s agenda by aiding the establishment of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) as a counter to the ecumenical World Council of Churches in

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70 Ibid., p. 29.
71 Ibid., p. 33-34.
72 Ibid., p. 35.
Europe. In 1949 the Schaeffers moved to Champery, a village in the mountains, for four years. This period was pivotal in Francis’ intellectual growth away from separatist fundamentalism. However, Schaeffer maintained a commitment to fight liberalism. He and other ICCC leaders met with Karl Barth in 1950 in an attempt to persuade him of orthodoxy. The heart of Barth’s mistake was, for these fundamentalists, to argue that biblical truths could be true as moral statements without being dependent upon the events of the Bible being factual. Instead of Barth’s conversion, Schaeffer received the following sarcastic reply:

And I see: you and your friends have chosen to cultivate a type of theology, who [sic] consists in a kind of criminology; you are living from the repudiation and discrimination of every fellow-creature, whose conception is not entirely (numerically!) identical with your own views and statements. You are “walking on the solid rock of truth.” We others, poor sinners, are not. I am not.

Barth aimed for the jugular:

You may call me names (such as: cheating, vague, non-historic, not interested in truth [sic] and so on and on!) You may continue to do your “detective”-work in America, in the Netherlands, in Finland and everywhere and decry me as the most dangerous [sic] heretic. Why not? perhaps the Lord has told you to do so. But why and to what purpose do you wish further conversation? The heretic has been burnt and buried for good.

He ended with a crescendo:

“Conversations are possible between open-minded people. Your paper [on Barth’s theology] and the review of your friend [ICCC leader J. Oliver] Buswell reveals the fact of your decision to close your window-shutters. I do not know how to deal with a man who comes to see and to speak to me in the quality of a detective-inspector or with the behavior [sic] of a missionary who goes to convert a heathen. No, thanks!

Yours sincerely [sic]

Karl Barth

73 Ibid., pp.38-39.

74 Karl Barth to Francis A. Schaeffer, September 3, 1950. Francis Schaeffer Correspondence, Allan MacRae Papers PCA Historical Center. The phrase “I am not” has been penciled in.
Excuse my bad English. I am not accustomed to write in your language.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Rev. Buswell.\textsuperscript{75}

Barth met with Schaeffer on the cusp of a transformation in the latter’s approach to separatism. While Schaeffer never accepted Barth’s world view, nonetheless, forces around Schaeffer introduced him to a wider world by the end of 1950s.

First, there were personal relationships that introduced Schaeffer to intellectual vistas unknown to him. Hankins describes the impact of Schaeffer’s meeting Hans Rookmaaker, a Dutch art historian, during early years in Europe: “Rookmaaker was instrumental in the development of Schaeffer’s own critical appraisal of modern art.”\textsuperscript{76} Schaeffer was not a typical fundamentalist in that he embraced artistic expression as something more than a vehicle of worldliness, making a point of taking detours to artistic venues and historic sites in his European travel.\textsuperscript{77}

Udo Middelmann has described the mutually edifying discussions between Rookmaaker and Schaeffer regarding art and politics. Middelmann stated that Rookmaaker and Schaeffer were “good interacting friends for years, in that Schaeffer helped Rookmaaker understand the philosophical base of Christianity more and Rookmaaker helped Schaeffer with the cultural artsy side.”\textsuperscript{78} Middelmann added that Rookmaaker introduced Schaeffer to the political thought of Abraham Kuyper, who was prime minister of the Netherlands between 1901 and 1905. Kuyper was invited to give the Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary by B.B. Warfield in

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76} Hankins, Francis Schaeffer, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 31.

\textsuperscript{78} Udo Middelmann, telephone interview by author, January 13, 2011.
1898. Kuyper asserted that John Calvin endorsed the republic as the ideal governmental form, and furthermore “he [Calvin] does not hesitate to state, in an ideal sense, that the most desirable conditions exist, where the people itself chooses its own magistrates.” Kuyper also made a strong distinction between the godly roots of the American Revolution and the atheistic base of the French Revolution, in a manner very similar to that which Schaeffer would argue in the 1960s and 1970s. For the present discussion, the most important part of Kuyper’s thought is his notion of “sphere sovereignty”, which limits the extent of state intrusion upon family life:

The sovereignty, by the grace of God, of the government is here set aside and limited, for God’s sake, by another sovereignty, which is equally divine in origin. Neither the life of science nor of art, nor of agriculture, nor of industry, nor of commerce, nor of navigation, nor of the family, nor of human relationship may be coerced to suit itself to the grace of the government. The State may never become an octopus, which stifles the whole of life. It must occupy its own place, on its own root, among all the other trees of the forest, and thus it has to honor and maintain every form of life which grows independently in its own sacred autonomy.

According to Middelmann, the extent of Kuyper’s influence upon Schaeffer is not easily discernible; nonetheless, Schaeffer’s similar ideas about sovereignty would emerge in his discussion of \textit{Brown v. Board of Education}, as will become evident below.

In addition to personal relationships there was a wider network of itinerant students and intellectuals that challenged Schaeffer to articulate his faith. In Champery the Schaeffers became acquainted with a group of schoolgirls who attended the church service they held. According to Udo Middelmann, no religious community existed around the Schaeffers in Champery but nonetheless relationships formed. The headmaster of a local girls’ boarding school initially asked

\begin{flushleft}
80 \textit{Ibid.}, p. 87.
81 \textit{Ibid.}, p. 96-97.
82 Hankins, \textit{Francis Schaeffer}, p. 36.
\end{flushleft}
the Schaeffers to lead Bible studies for the students at the school, the students desired to discuss more over dessert at the Schaeffer chalet, and the girls attended church services the Schaeffers organized after being requested to do so by a local tourism office.83 The European context forced the American fundamentalist to confront secularism far beyond the comforts of the closed circle of Bible Presbyterians. Hankins comments: “During his first three years in Europe, as he traveled and spoke, and as Edith and the girls brought young people to the Schaeffer home for Children for Christ meetings, Schaeffer began to encounter secularized youths who believed in nothing.”84 Hankins contends that the Hegelian notion of synthesis lay at the heart of what Schaeffer sought to combat:

Schaeffer’s application of Hegel in 1950 went like this: historic Christianity was the thesis, the old modernism was the antithesis, and the new modernism was the synthesis. Whatever Schaeffer’s understanding, the concept of antithesis, which he believed Hegel destroyed in favor of synthesis, would become central to Schaeffer’s thought in the 1960s.85

In other words, synthesis offended Schaeffer’s sensibilities because it blended opposites—thus maintaining that a clear sense of right and wrong through antithesis was the only means to restore sanity to a chaotic and relativized worldview that represented the perspective of modern humanity: “Synthesis, for Schaeffer, meant that the difference or antithesis between truth and untruth was lost”.86

But while Schaeffer was struggling to communicate with secularized Europeans, he began to question his own foundation built upon McIntire’s notion of separatism. By the mid-

83 Udo Middelmann, email to author, October 26, 2013.
84 Hankins, Francis Schaeffer, p. 42.
85 Ibid., p. 41.
86 Ibid.
1950s matters had reached a critical point. The peak of Schaeffer’s personal doubts occurred in the spring of 1951, when the level of dissatisfaction Schaeffer was experiencing caused him to rethink the entire basis of the Christian faith from its first principles. At first a reinvigorated Schaeffer was unsure what such revelations meant in relation to his view of separatism. He had begun to sense the limits of separatism as early as 1938 when he noted that infighting among Christians took precedence over the common cause of evangelism. A major rift lay on the horizon:

In 1951, even while reiterating that separatism was correct, he began to argue that separatism was not enough. Christians needed a better balance, it now seemed to Schaeffer, between militant separatism and positive spiritual growth. Schaeffer accused McIntire and the small group around him of having missed the forest for the trees: “I do not think we can throw everything that we can lay our hands on at even the World Council, let alone the N.A.E, and curse those who happen to differ from us in our own work and expect the blessing of which should be the desire of our hearts. I think we have to be involved in combat, but when we are fighting for the Lord it has to be according to his rules, does it not?”

No longer could separatism be in Schaeffer’s mind the sole defining issue that characterized his witness, “but rather a balance between combat and personal spirituality geared toward following the Holy Spirit’s lead.” Middelmann has pointed out that the era of Joseph McCarthy’s anticommunist witchunts energized Carl McIntire to follow suit, to such a degree that Schaeffer could no longer work with him.

88 Barry Hankins, Francis Schaeffer, p. 44.
89 Ibid., p. 44-45. The quotation Hankins cites from correspondence from Schaeffer to Allan MacRae, April 14, 1951, MacRae Papers, PCA Historical Center.
90 Ibid., p. 45.
91 Udo Middelmann, telephone interview by author, January 13, 2011. Middelmann stated that Schaeffer attacked the notion of anticommunism as sufficient for spirituality: “All this anticommunism, antiliberalism [and] purity of the church emphasis in the Bible Presbyterian Church has a life of its own. It would continue even if there is no God…[Schaeffer realized] true spirituality means you do God’s work in God’s way rather than a self-promoting, self-perpetuating, political way. Well, McIntire took that as a personal offense, and called Schaeffer a Communist…”
This new message of balance McIntire saw as an attack upon his integrity. Duriez recounts the split of the Bible Presbyterian Church into two Synods in 1956, a larger one labeled the Columbus Synod and a smaller one with which McIntire sided, the Collingswood Synod:

The McIntire wing in the meantime accused Fran [Schaeffer] of dubious motives for his message of balance; he was, they said, trying to take over the leadership of the denomination. This paranoia reflected deeper tensions within the denomination at that time. Suspicion of Schaeffer must have been enhanced when Robert Rayburn, on behalf of Highland College, presented him with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree on May 28, 1954. That same year Rayburn led several younger ministers in the denomination to challenge the “oligarchical” direction of McIntire’s crusading separatism.\(^92\)

McIntire accused Schaeffer of being a communist—of being tainted by his European associations; nonetheless, as Udo Middelmann points out, a large group walked away from McIntire along with Schaeffer in forming the Columbus Synod.\(^93\) This exodus included Rayburn and Schaeffer’s ally J. Oliver Buswell.\(^94\)

The new freedom Schaeffer enjoyed, now loosed of McIntire’s grip, came with a price. The financial support for the Schaeffers’ work from the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, which McIntire influenced, was at risk, and the Schaeffers had no other choice but to raise their own funding or else leave Europe altogether.\(^95\) Another ordeal came in early 1955 when the Schaeffers learned they were being expelled from Champery. Upon appeal, they learned they would be forced to change residence but could remain in country, and they chose a

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\(^{92}\) Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 122.

\(^{93}\) Udo Middelmann, telephone interview by author, January 13, 2011.

\(^{94}\) Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 122 and footnote 41. The Columbus Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church would in 1965 become the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and later merge in 1982 with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), born in 1973 to combat liberalism in the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS).

\(^{95}\) Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 52; Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 123.
chalet in nearby Huemoz. From this spot they went on to fame within evangelical circles around the world.96

**L’Abri Fellowship: Lecturing in an Era of Rights**

But one final transformation was necessary, and thus the Schaeffers formally resigned from the Independent Board in June of 1955. Hankins comments that the “break with fundamentalist associations was now complete.”97 Duriez concurs: “The resignation…was far more than a break with an organization; it marked an end of Francis Schaeffer’s separatism. In the North American perception, he was now an evangelical rather than identified with Reformed fundamentalist groups.”98

Now the Schaeffers were free to create the Christian work of which they had dreamed—a place of refuge where the sincere questions of modern humanity regarding faith and ultimate meaning could be asked in a welcoming environment. In July 1955 the new ministry was dubbed “L’Abri” Fellowship—L’Abri being the French word for “shelter”.99 Over the years, the Schaeffers would invite many inquirers to stay, and many would respond, requiring housing for a day, a week, or much longer. Eventually L’Abri in Huemoz came to be a complex of buildings and people. Hankins observes that L’Abri came to be known as a place where the traditional Christian faith was intellectually defensible, but equally as important was the environment of hospitality the Schaeffers created to all comers.100 Soon, in 1958, a work inspired by the Schaeffers began in England that put Schaeffer into contact with Inter-Varsity Fellowship and

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97 Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 56.
98 Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 132.
99 Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 57.
the youth culture scene. Middelmann stated that a branch of L’Abri in England began in 1964.

The growth of protest among the young as well as the worldview of the hippie generation came to fascinate Schaeffer, who had the opportunity to debate ideas with many travelers in the early sixties exactly when the seeds of youth revolution came. Schaeffer rejected his separatist past, now coming face to face with perspectives antithetical to his own:

Some of those who dropped in were disciples of Timothy Leary, who advocated LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs, while others were from a radical German group that advocated violence against the establishment, and still others were reading Nietzsche, Siddhartha, or C.S. Lewis. They would arrive at L’Abri, announce themselves as Nietzschean or whatever else they happened to be, ask what Christianity was all about, and the conversation would begin, often lasting for hours into the night and early morning. A variety of social misfits, societal dropouts, and even participants in the occult all came calling…

The discussions were open to all topics. On one occasion a young woman announced her sexual proclivities and challenged the Christians present as to what they believed about sex. Schaeffer never blinked at this or other topics. He would discuss endlessly, often with tears in his eyes, in an attempt to convince all comers that Christianity was the only coherent worldview, the only answer to the deepest questions of the human race.

The creation of L’Abri thus represented an attempt to reverse the trend toward marginalization that had plagued fundamentalists ever since the 1920s.

The Schaeffers’ experiment with cultural discourse eventually got the attention of *Time* magazine, which ran a short piece on L’Abri in its January 11, 1960 issue. The article, entitled “Mission to Intellectuals,” described L’Abri as “one of the most unusual missions in the Western world”:

101 Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 148. Duriez notes that the British Inter-Varsity Fellowship was an equivalent to America’s Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship.

102 Udo Middelmann, email to author, September 25, 2013.


104 Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, pp. 60-61.
Each weekend the Schaeffers are overrun by a crowd of young men and women mostly from the universities—painters, writers, actors, singers, dancers and beatniks—professing every shade of belief and disbelief. There are existentialists and Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and left-wing atheists; the 20-odd guests this week include an Oxford don, an engineer from El Salvador, a ballet dancer and an opera singer. The one thing they have in common is that they are intellectuals. And the European intellectual is the single object of the Schaeffers’ mission in the mountains.

“These people are not reached by Protestantism today,” he [Schaeffer] says. “Protestantism has become bourgeois. It reaches middle-class people, but not the workers or the intellectuals. What we need is a presentation of the Bible’s historical truth in such a way that it is acceptable to today’s intellectuals. Now as before the Bible can be acted upon, even in the intellectual morass of the 20th century.”

Although the medium and the context of the declaration had changed since the era of William Jennings Bryan and evangelists such as Billy Sunday, the content of L’Abri discussions was little changed from a traditional gospel message. The writer described Schaeffer’s message as “uncompromisingly Biblical and fundamentalist” with a life-changing impact upon certain hearers:

The Schaeffers count their conversions in low numbers—last summer there were 17, and last week there were two more. But those who do become Christians are not likely to be superficial ones… [Schaeffer speaking] “We have had to solve the most unlikely problems, and the Lord has even helped us in preventing certain suicides. But religion isn’t a crutch for kids or psychos. Religion is the universal truth. It is irrational to think that watertight doors exist between religion and intellectual thinking. A step of faith is no step in the dark.”

Only the word “radical” aptly described how different Francis Schaeffer’s approach was at L’Abri compared to the strict separatist stance he maintained while under McIntire’s influence. Yet Schaeffer remained a religious conservative. He merely learned how to call people to a Bible-believing salvation in the language of the hippie and the professor, and in the European context far away from the sanctuary of fundamentalist America.

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106 Ibid., pp. 62 and 64.
Schaeffer’s view of the tumult on the streets in America in the early 1960s reflected a conservative political mindset reminiscent of J. Gresham Machen. Where Machen called for limited government in the area of child labor, Schaeffer called for the same in the area of civil rights. The innovation of audiotaping L’Abri lectures preceded Schaeffer’s most important statement on civil rights, and the Reformed emphasis on the limitation of federal power had significant implications for the later controversy over the teaching of evolution in the 1970s and 1980s, which touched upon the Supreme Court’s use of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and its Fourteenth Amendment powers. Furthermore, Schaeffer’s words from 1962 foreshadowed the prophet he later became in the late 1970s to the pro-creationist Moral Majority.

“A Change in the Concept of Law”: Schaeffer on the Supreme Court in the Civil Rights Era

In the 1962 L’Abri lecture entitled “A Change in the Concept of Law in [the] USA,” Francis Schaeffer interpreted judicial activism by the Supreme Court of the United States as the natural outcome of a shift away from what he termed a Reformation “base” in American culture. The fruit of this falling away from Reformation orthodoxy could be seen in all fields of human endeavor. In Schaeffer’s worldview, “The problem in law is exactly the same problem as… in painting or in music in our modern generation.” Schaeffer relied upon four articles, one describing factions within the Supreme Court from an October 1962 Saturday Evening Post, and three more from the 1956 American Bar Association journal dealing with the issues of the desegregation of schools and union matters.

107 Francis Schaeffer, The Change in the Concept of Law in USA, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.2 (CD). Soundword staff claim the original L’Abri recording from 1962 became part of their audio-library in the 1970s.
In all of Schaeffer’s analysis there is an understanding that the American system was initially based upon the Bible and therefore legitimate processes of change in government and law could not occur beyond the categories laid down by the Bible. In this lecture, he did not articulate exactly what those legitimate means were, but gave strong hints that majoritarian democracy and legislative involvement were the cornerstones. He was an explicit supporter of states’ rights. The lecture is illuminating for what Schaeffer did and did not say, and how the future culture wars over creation and evolution related to judicial activism and the increase of federal power.

But the starting point for these controversies over race, religion, and the state (with science coming to the fore later) was the differing mentalities of the members of the Court, which formed the beginning of Schaeffer’s narrative of how secularization and relativism were subverting America’s spiritual foundation. Most importantly, Schaeffer sounded like a supporter of racial segregation in his defense of states’ rights but then repeatedly endorsed the idea of desegregation as a concept. In Schaeffer’s view, desegregation was, however, not a goal to be achieved by the quick and radical means employed by the Warren Court.

**A Review of a Saturday Evening Post Article on the Activism of the Supreme Court**

Schaeffer’s common practice was to provide commentary on popular articles of the day, and for his discussion of judicial activism he picked one of the most well-known periodicals of the era, *The Saturday Evening Post*, which ran a piece by Marlo Pusey in its October 6, 1962 issue on the struggle between traditional and activist factions within the high Court.

The *Post* article declared that by 1962 the Supreme Court had already gained a reputation for internal conflict just as its decisions stimulated conflict nationwide:

During its last session the court handed down two of the most bitterly controversial opinions in its long history—one against a prayer in the public schools and the other for reapportionment of gerrymandered legislatures. Both these cases are new
landmarks in the law. Yet, like others before them, they represent no more than battles in the long war within the court itself—the war between the “activists” and the “traditionalists.” This struggle has already deeply affected the political climate of the United States…

Both decisions reflected a new set of priorities and a new vocation for the Court in rebalancing power arrangements. Strangely, Francis Schaeffer barely mentioned the school prayer decision in his lecture entitled “The Change in the Concept of Law in [the] USA.” He focused his energies upon the impact of *Brown v. Board of Education* instead, a decision the *Post* noted created opposition similar to the school prayer ruling:

In part this furor [over school prayer] was a reecho of the hot crusade against the court which followed its unanimous decision in 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools. Many Southerners who had grown weary of belaboring the court for its desegregation decision were delighted to find a new stick to beat it with. “They put the niggers in the schools,” shouted the most irate extremists, “and now they’ve taken God out.” But these hot-tempered wisecracks heard around the cracker barrel missed the true significance of the school-prayer case—the “activists” were in control.

Though Schaeffer did not express such racist sentiments or defend segregation as such, he was a staunch defender of state sovereignty in considering legitimate and illegitimate processes of change, as his lecture shows. The notion of judicial activism was the central feature of these new church-and-state debates that had not existed during the time of the Scopes trial. Judicial activism begun by the Warren Court had a profound impact in matters of race and religion, and in the case of the latter, the principle that the government shall not participate in the establishment of religion struck a blow first against school prayer and then later creationism. Hence it is vitally important to reconstruct the “activist” justice’s mindset.

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The *Post* defined the distinction between activist and traditionalist using the leaders of each faction:

The “activist” bloc on one side of the doctrinal gulf which divides the court is led by a cool and affable Alabama lawyer, Justice Hugo L. Black. Black and his allies have tried to write into the court’s decisions their belief that the guaranties of freedom of speech, press, and religion, as contained in the Bill of Rights, are “absolutes,” subject to no qualification whatsoever.  

Pusey was quick to comment that “if the absolutist doctrine in its more extreme forms should be established as the law of the land, the consequences would be almost revolutionary” such the overthrow of the Smith Act, which allowed the prosecution of Communists plotting a violent overthrow of the government. Furthermore, “the general maintenance of public order would be severely handicapped because irresponsible people would presumably be free to indulge in perjury, obscenity, misrepresentation, false advertising, and even solicitation of crime and subversion.”

Still, the activist justices faced opposition from the beginning:

The Black doctrine has been resisted by a more conservative group of Justices who for want of a better word are often called “traditionalists.” These men highly esteem the guaranties of liberty in the Bill of Rights but insist that those guaranties be interpreted in the light of the Constitution as a whole. The most effective spokesman for this group—until his recent retirement—was Justice Felix Frankfurter. In many controversial cases he led a majority in rejecting the concept of “absolute rights.” But the doctrine has strong support, and the prayer decision went a long way toward giving an “absolutist” meaning to the First Amendment provision that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.”

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110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
Pusey added that Frankfurter stood in the tradition of judicial restraint that Oliver Wendell Holmes had championed by “giving free rein to Congress and the states unless they clearly exceed their constitutional powers.”

Somewhat mysteriously, Schaeffer only made a scant reference to a matter Pusey described at length—the Court’s attitude to school prayer. Pusey illustrated for Schaeffer that irritation with the Court was means for fundamentalist Christians to unite with many other Americans; the marginal status of conservative Christians since the Scopes trial of 1925 was changing, and Schaeffer meant to lead the charge back into cultural relevance by attacking judicial activism. Still, Pusey’s comments on school prayer could not have been far from Schaeffer’s mind.

If the court stops anywhere short of forbidding all acts of devotion in the public schools, it will then have the unwelcome task of deciding which religious exercises are permissible and which are not. One of the cardinal principles laid down in the past by the court is that public officials have no right to determine what is and what is not a religious cause. Yet the court itself appears to have assumed such a role.

Pusey added that the reality of the church-and-state relationship was territorial. “Of course it is impossible to attain absolute separation of church and state and absolute freedom of religion at the same time. The two concepts have to be merged into a relationship in which the state will not encroach upon religion, or religion upon the state.” Pusey concluded that the struggle within the court reflected a basic tension between order and liberty—and that judicial activists’ tipping the scale toward the latter would breed anarchy. “The granting of absolute rights to individuals, untouchable by any rules for the common good, tends toward a negation of government.”

114 Ibid., p. 24.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid.
Recovering the Sole Origin of the American Legal System: The Reformation

Schaeffer gave some background on the Supreme Court crisis from his vantage point as an Anglo-Saxon Presbyterian. His language demonstrated a privileging of his ethnoreligious heritage as the root of American justice.

I think in order to comprehend this [the changes in the Supreme Court], we have to go back to the understanding of law as it is developed in Western Europe and specifically in England. The basic view of law in Northern Europe springs from the Reformation….one does not find the same concept of law in Europe prior to the Reformation. Now there’s no better book ….to feel this than Samuel Rutherford’s *Lex Rex*. *Lex Rex* of course means “law is king”…. In what sense is law king to the Reformation mind?118

Schaeffer believed the Reformers’ view was undiluted, with the “Bible as the only rule of faith and practice” and an “absolute authority.”119 He pointed out a painting by Paul Robert hung outside the Supreme Court of Switzerland in Lausanne which depicted Justice as a woman with a sword pointing to the Scriptures as the basis for law. In Schaeffer’s words, the Reformers saw the Bible as “an absolute base to begin not only for private morals but for law.”120

Next came Schaeffer’s central point of the entire lecture. The solid base provided by the Bible, as “an absolute, solid, objective platform from which to begin your structure of law” gave America an uncommon beginning as a “government of laws and not of men”.121 Then came the key result that affected the present discussion of judicial activism:

A corollary of this…now this is an important thing and …our discussion tonight will be meaningless to you unless you see the following corollary. The following corollary is that after you have set up a government of law on such an absolute base …the powers of the government are limited by that law until the law is changed.

118 Francis Schaeffer, *The Change in the Concept of Law in USA*, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.2 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.
Now unless you understand this, you don’t see anything. Law is king…You have an absolute starting place…In other words, you knew exactly what the government could and could not do, because they could not move beyond the law set down until the law was changed by the proper methods.\textsuperscript{122}

Middelmann elucidates Schaeffer’s approach to law, focusing upon the notion that all are accountable to the law, including the king:

Off the top of my head, I think what he would have meant is that rather than having a king or a bishop in church or the pope determining what was true below these authorities, that the government itself is under the rule of law, that law is king, which is of course is a Biblical principle, that you have in the Old Testament, that even the king has to read God’s law and is subject to it and can be accused if he violates it. And he felt very much that that was an idea that had come from Scotland to America, and was very much part of the American self-understanding of its government, that there was not going to be a king or any form of government that was above the law. It was self-government by the consent of the governed that made laws and everyone was subject to those laws. And then of course at that point 200 years ago that law would have been under the law of God, to which anybody could appeal, as it says in the Declaration of Independence that God has given the unalienable rights, that no one can take away, because that’s the law.\textsuperscript{123}

This statement of worldview implied that any court suddenly reinterpreting the law was acting not only illegally but unbiblically.

John Frame has noted the Puritan roots of Samuel Rutherford:

He comes out of the Puritan tradition, and the Puritans were very much concerned about government and society…Rutherford was certainly concerned about the biblical doctrine of law and government…Rutherford was opposed to the blatant form of the divine right of kings and insisted on the basis of Scripture that there is a level of popular sovereignty. King David for example was ordained by God to be the king of Israel, but he didn’t actually rule until the elders of Judah and then the elders of Israel—the northern kingdom—appointed him as the king. So he was both anointed by God and also accepted by a kind of contract. Rutherford was actually kind of a social contract theorist, sort of like Locke…\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid. Emphasis mine.

\textsuperscript{123} Udo Middelmann, telephone interview by author, January 13, 2011.

\textsuperscript{124} John Frame, telephone interview by author, January 27, 2011
Frame added that the ideal situation was a combination between “Christian presuppositions” and that “democratic ratification of government following the biblical presuppositions of the society”; this arrangement would have appealed to not only Schaeffer but many Christian activists. Middelmann’s use of the term “the consent of the governed” and Frame’s term “popular sovereignty” however do not address the issue of the rights of minorities against a majority. Therefore, the Supreme Court’s attempt to rebalance the scales of power was understood by Schaeffer as a form of tyranny against the popular will.

Schaeffer then argued that the Founding Fathers were touched by Rutherford’s ideas through two streams—one directly Christian from John Witherspoon, prominent clergyman, a Presbyterian like Rutherford, and president of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University), and the other from John Locke through Thomas Jefferson. Schaeffer commented that although Jefferson did not hold to Christianity, he nonetheless functioned out of a “Reformation memory” in a culture where a “Christian consensus” was dominant. Schaeffer feared that America in the present was in danger of losing its ties to the Reformation worldview due to changes in law. He made America’s history separate and discontinuous from other forces in the world at the time of its founding and later, claiming that such a free citizenry and potent government and legal system had not emerged from any other culture outside the orbit of the Reformation. He disparaged Roman Catholicism and Islam, as well as the French and Russian Revolutions, for failing to produce such a legal system. It is clear that he depicted America as specially blessed by God for its faithfulness to the Reformation views of Rutherford. “This

\footnote{125 \textit{Ibid}.}

\footnote{126 Francis Schaeffer, \textit{The Change in the Concept of Law in USA}, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.2 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.}

\footnote{127 \textit{Ibid}.}
Reformation view of the Bible as basis for law] is not a common thing. It is very extraordinary.”¹²⁸

However, Schaeffer acknowledged that America evolved, and its Christian consensus reduced in scale and at the present was lost. Schaeffer saw the end result being a worldview based on Jeffersonian thinking, without the expressly Christian content. Now a new problem arose:

What kind of a base are you going to have for the group and yet protect the individual?...Or to put it another way, from a legal viewpoint, how are you going to guarantee individual freedom… and yet be able to use force?...What kind of base are we going to have to be able to maintain some form of individual freedom and yet know how the force is to be used so there can be unity?¹²⁹

The 1930s as the Turning Point: The Loss of America’s Reformation Base

Schaeffer noted that Justice Felix Frankfurter only appeared conservative relative to Justice Hugo Black, the leader of the judicial activists in 1962. On the larger spectrum of justices dating back to the 1930s, Frankfurter was a liberal, as the Post noted. The Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Charles E. Hughes, had attacked President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal measures as well as the President’s attempts to increase the size of the court to push those measures through. The efforts of Hughes and his staunchest conservative allies, Justices Willis Van Devanter, Pierce Butler, George Sutherland, and James C. McReynolds, known as the Four Horsemen, elicited admiration from Schaeffer, who saw the 1930s as the beginning of America’s decline spiritually and legally.

The Hughes court, these old conservatives, were the men that were still functioning on the basis of the concept of law that was handed down from the days of Constitution….They stood in the place where the Founding Fathers stood. Whether they would have been in the stream of John Witherspoon or whether they were in the stream of Jefferson wouldn’t matter at this particular point…These people

¹²⁸ Ibid.
¹²⁹ Ibid. Emphasis mine.
[were active] back as late as 1935 and 36…. these are the important moments…[Historical evidence showed that] in the 1930s in the United States the consensus moved from the Protestant country to the non-Protestant cities….These are the moments when the weight of consensus passed from the traditional Protestant viewpoint into something else…And at that particular point you have the Hughes court standing for the old concept of law…\textsuperscript{130}

Schaeffer emphasized that the conservatives of the Hughes court held it was still “possible to perceive ultimate universal truth.” He continued, “With it, [there existed] the corollary that law sets limitations which the government cannot pass until these laws are constitutionally changed. With the passing of this, in which Frankfurter would have been definitely on the left, you have the passing of the traditional concept of law.”\textsuperscript{131}

Schaeffer blamed Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes for introducing an arbitrary feature into judicial decision-making as opposed to preserving tradition and for attacking believers in natural law. Holmes has introduced an area of “no absolute base.”\textsuperscript{132} To Schaeffer, an absolute base could only be defended under Witherspoon’s view. But America had lost its Christian consensus, and so it was left with Jeffersonian thinking and a fading Reformation memory. Relativism was the next logical step, toward Holmes’ position, and the modern Supreme Court reflected this drift.

But the erosion of conservative Protestantism happened on two levels by the 1930s, destroyed by atheism and by competition from Roman Catholicism externally, and internally, by theological liberalism, according to Schaeffer. Cultural pluralism appeared to be a close cousin of relativism in theology.

\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Ibid.}
The Relativistic Pattern of “Beneficent” Actions

Schaeffer expressed anger that the law changed by judicial fiat rather than by amendment to the Constitution. He refused to accept an about-face in the law that bypassed a majority vote for the sake of what the justices recognized as a “socially desirable” outcome. “[What] you are dealing now in these [segregation] cases is a court deciding outside of the framework of the laws there have been and the legal processes which have preceded ….what they deem socially desirable. This is the contrast [to rule by Lex Rex].”\(^\text{133}\)

Schaeffer then came to a major conclusion:

Of course the terrifying thing immediately is that fact that you have a purely subjective situation. You no longer have Lex Rex, you have something very very contrary to that. It may seem to be beneficial, it may seem to be beneficent, but nevertheless you have to understand that the safeguards are gone. You are in a sea….an arbitrary situation. That which may begin as beneficial, you have nothing more to appeal to absolutely. Things are adrift.\(^\text{134}\)

Schaeffer was stunned to realize that judicial decrees in the new age were to be set upon whatever the Supreme Court believed was a sociological good, rather than upon a law above human whim. Even when Christians could agree a social good was achieved by the Court in one instance, as in the case of the desegregation of schools, the power of the Court would turn to an evil outcome in the next instance. Relativism instead of Lex Rex now ruled. “Lex Rex is dead. The Reformation consensus of law is at an end…not only would John Witherspoon be disturbed but Jefferson would have been disturbed.”\(^\text{135}\)

Schaeffer wanted to point out that once the high Court was allowed to determine law on a shifting and sociological basis, it came under attack for various types of decisions that emanated

\(^{133}\) Ibid.
\(^{134}\) Ibid.
\(^{135}\) Ibid.
from such a relativistic worldview. He quoted well-known segregationist Senator James Eastland of Mississippi: “What the Bar and the people of the United States are slow to realize is that in the opinion on the school segregation cases the entire basis of American jurisprudence was swept away.” Slowly Schaeffer added, “If only people would listen. Because he’s right. It isn’t just the segregation cases, the mentality’s changed.”

Schaeffer believed that states’ rights were an important safeguard that could not be violated by the Supreme Court, and interposition by the states was a valid response to the Court’s method of desegregation of the schools. “Even if we don’t like the individual situation, we mustn’t get emotionally involved with the individual situation… [so that] we forget what the flow of the principles are,” he commented. Schaeffer noted the segregation decisions were denounced by a host of Southern states and various legislators. He concluded there was underway a direct attack on majoritarian democracy. Quoting Fagan Dickson in the American Bar Association Journal he questioned where the trend would end.

“These decisions [by the Supreme Court in the matter of desegregation] have been denounced by 101 members of Congress in the so-called manifesto of May 17, 1956, and by the legislatures of Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi.” That’s a lot of the United States… “Although the decision was by a unanimous Court which clearly had jurisdiction over the subject matter, the anguished cry of ‘illegal’ is frequently heard by those who insist that state statutes and constitutions should prevail.” This would be the case in point of course. Where does it end? Really who has the rights?

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137 Francis Schaeffer, The Change in the Concept of Law in USA, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.2 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.

138 (This citation begins the second disc of a two-disc set). Francis Schaeffer, The Change in the Concept of Law in USA, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.

Schaeffer noted Dickson enlarged the number of Americans angry at the Court by adding that the Court had challenged states’ rights in economics as well as in the schools, given its recent rulings. But he then questioned Dickson’s conclusion that the Supreme Court was being persecuted for making “progressive” decisions in an “enlightened and contracting world.”

In response, Schaeffer went on the attack: “But the real question is what happens to the law?...Where is the concept by this time that law is king rather than merely the sociological results being king?” Schaeffer mourned that true conservatism of the Hughes court variety no longer had a presence on the Supreme Court. Oliver Wendell Holmes’s concept of justices’ making non-historically-rooted decisions now held sway, in Schaeffer’s mind. Still, he celebrated those who called for a return to judicial restraint, such as former Supreme Court Justice James F. Byrnes and the National Association of Attorneys General.

Schaeffer reiterated that a legal system based on the Bible would have held the government in check, but went on to quote Dickson that the Supreme Court had overthrown the American system since World War II: “In fact, if Plessy v. Ferguson [the 1896 decision that established the ‘separate but equal’ doctrine] had been followed the Court would have had to reverse a trend in its own decisions.” Schaeffer grieved this result: “Of course there’s a trend...

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140 Schaeffer quoted from Dickson, “The Segregation Cases,” p. 731, in which Dickson noted the Tidelands oil case in which the Court angered states’ rights proponents in California, Texas, and Louisiana.


142 Francis Schaeffer, The Change in the Concept of Law in USA, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.

143 Ibid.


145 Ibid., p. 732.
in its own decisions. The whole concept’s changed.\textsuperscript{146} Again, he interpreted a growing relativistic philosophy in law that had a mirror in the arts and other fields. Desegregation done through judicial activism was a harbinger, in Schaeffer’s worldview, for a coming national disaster. Finally, ever watchful for totalitarianism, Schaeffer grated against Dickson’s idea of the United Nations’ opinion shaping the Supreme Court’s activism on civil rights.\textsuperscript{147} Antagonism for the influence of a world-government was natural for a premillennialist such as Schaeffer, who coded the United Nations much as McIntire did—as the forces of Antichrist.

Schaeffer saw interposition by the states as the only hope for recovery of the old ideals. Referring to Thomas Jefferson and James Madison’s concept, Schaeffer gave a simple definition: A state has the right to interpose its sovereignty if the national government acts on powers not granted to it by the compact.\textsuperscript{148} Schaeffer elaborated:

Now this is a tremendous idea. In other words, we must go back in history. The states were sovereign…. They handed over to the national government certain things by their own free agreement. They had the Jeffersonian view of law. In this concept there was no base… nevertheless, the [Reformation] memory was there. And their concept was that men would grant to the government certain things that would be clearly granted by the compact. And the law limited the government from taking other powers, until the law itself was changed. Already by 1798 a man like Madison and a man like Jefferson realized that this would at some time come to a place of very practical importance.\textsuperscript{149}

Hence to Schaeffer the original notion of the federal government held by the Founding Fathers was an entity that emerged and existed based upon the will of the states, which retained their

\textsuperscript{146} Francis Schaeffer, \textit{The Change in the Concept of Law in USA}, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.

\textsuperscript{147} Dickson, “The Segregation Cases,” p. 732. Dickson notes that with the advent of the United Nations “world opinion has become an instrument of national policy and is now probably a more powerful force than the atomic and hydrogen bombs.”

\textsuperscript{148} Francis Schaeffer, \textit{The Change in the Concept of Law in USA}, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962. Schaeffer claimed this was a quotation but did not provide the source.

\textsuperscript{149} \textit{Ibid}. 

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sovereignty. This arrangement was an outflow not merely of the Constitution, but of a Reformation view of the Bible.

Schaeffer then analyzed the statement of Sims Crownover, a Nashville attorney writing in the August 1956 *American Bar Association Journal* that the desegregation decisions represented “a deliberate and dangerous exercise of power”. Crownover gave a historical background to the doctrine of interposition and Schaeffer was quick to defend the lawyer’s goal: “This lawyer is writing against the segregation cases. But let’s not get involved emotionally in the question of the segregation [issue]. That isn’t the thing the lawyers are arguing. They’re arguing something much more profound. One might or might not agree with the Southern view of segregation. That doesn’t enter into the lawyer’s case.” Schaeffer failed to mention, however, a critical statement from Crownover: “We of the South know the sound reasons behind school segregation, that immense difficulties divide the races in the South in terms of moral standards, education, aptitude, customs, and culture.”

Schaeffer went on to agree with Crownover’s assertion that the Reconstruction amendments (the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth, which abolished slavery, granted equal protection under the laws, due process, and voting rights to African Americans) in no way affected state sovereignty: “[The amendments] fail to alter the basic structure of the compact, leaving still a union of states, each state retaining certain sovereign rights that it has never surrendered to the general Government, and each state still being entitled to make its own decisions except where a power has been prohibited to the states or the people by the


151 Francis Schaeffer, *The Change in the Concept of Law in USA*, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.

Constitution.”¹⁵³ “Law is still law, to be considered as protecting the people until the thing is changed,” Schaeffer concluded.¹⁵⁴

He then quoted Crownover’s climactic section, which illustrated how deep the offense against states’ rights was. The idea of the rule of majoritarian democracy ran deep in Crownover’s words, with the concurrent view of an unlawful intrusion by the federal government upon state sovereignty. Schaeffer was quick to voice a hearty agreement:

The doctrine of interposition rests not on expediency, but on simple fundamental principles. It relies upon the assertion of a sovereign state that the Supreme Court has acted unconstitutionally; that we are not bound in honor or in duty, or in law, to abide by unconstitutional decrees; and that the power to operate public separate facilities is not a power prohibited to the states until this prohibition is clearly spelled out by valid constitutional amendments.¹⁵⁵

Crownover then presented the only legitimate means for change, which echoed Schaeffer’s words above:

If three fourths of the states agree that this power to operate racially separate but equal schools should be prohibited to the states, then that is the voice of the people. Until such a verdict is handed down by the people, we will continue to state that so violent a disruption in our long-established customs should not be thrust upon us by judicial fiat alone.¹⁵⁶

Schaeffer clarified:

In other words what this man is saying is that this [segregation] has never been forbidden in the law of the land, and as such there shouldn’t be just a judicial fiat changing it, but three-fourths of the states namely by constitutional amendment should state this and then that they [the citizenry of the states] would bow. Now one might raise a whole lot of questions. Would they bow? Would they feel any different? Wouldn’t they fight just as hard? But that doesn’t enter in. We’re not

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Francis Schaeffer, The Change in the Concept of Law in USA, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962..


¹⁵⁶ Ibid. Emphasis mine.
talking about segregation. We’re talking about law, and the mentality of law, and the change in the concept of law.\textsuperscript{157}

Crownover desired to displace segregation from the center of the controversy, which, in his mind, as in Schaeffer’s, was essentially a matter of states’ rights, stating “that by the adoption of a resolution of interposition we may succeed in elevating this controversy from the regional field of segregation to the transcendent national field of state sovereignty.”\textsuperscript{158} Schaeffer referred to the Supreme Court’s dictating to the states as reflecting “a relativistic mentality” where the former Christian base was already eroded away.\textsuperscript{159}

Hence states’ rights were a limitation upon the federal government, a limitation that emerged from the Bible itself, in Schaeffer’s view. Schaeffer went on to cite Crownover’s skepticism about the extent of federal intrusion: “We seriously doubt that any federal marshal will endeavor to enforce orders that are contrary to the wishes of our people.”\textsuperscript{160} Schaeffer then alluded to the federal intervention on behalf of the Little Rock Nine students seeking to integrate Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas and James Meredith’s similar efforts at the University of Mississippi respectively.

That’s in nineteen-hundred and fifty-six [when Crownover was writing], and of course after that we had Little Rock [1957]….and of course in nineteen-hundred and sixty-two we had the University of Mississippi. Never mind who’s right in the individual situation. That isn’t the point. The point is the mentality’s completely

\textsuperscript{157}Francis Schaeffer, \textit{The Change in the Concept of Law in USA}, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.\textsuperscript{.}


\textsuperscript{159}Francis Schaeffer, \textit{The Change in the Concept of Law in USA}, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.\textsuperscript{.}

reversed. It’s completely reversed not just from Witherspoon, it’s completely reversed from Jefferson.”

Schaeffer saw the behavior of the Supreme Court as cause for mourning, calling Jefferson’s seemingly forgotten words in the First Kentucky Resolution that the Federal government held no power not granted to it by the member States as “the thunder of the past.”

Returning to The Saturday Evening Post article, Schaeffer noted again true conservatism was dead on the Supreme Court, and that Justice Frankfurter only “seemed conservative by comparison” compared to the judicial activists. The activists were, as mentioned before, focused on the delivery of rights as “absolutes”, “subject to no qualification whatsoever”. Schaeffer then made his sole comment on the school prayer issue: “In other words, you see, if you have one atheist who will appeal against prayer being said in school, you support this man and throw out the prayer. This is the way it [judicial activism] works.”

Judicial Activism as the Beginnings of Totalitarianism?

Schaeffer then pointed out his belief that judicial activism was not always consistently in favor of the individual but rather truly relativistic:

What they’re [the activists] tending to do is to merely be the extreme as, let’s say, against Frankfurter’s conservatism or moderation…They are going in the direction

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161 Francis Schaeffer, The Change in the Concept of Law in USA, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.. (An important aspect of the story of Arkansas culture was its majoritarian opposition to both desegregation and evolution, as in the case of the latter a statute banning evolution in the public schools was still on the books until 1968, when Susan Epperson, a teacher of the very same Little Rock Central High School that had seen the Little Rock Nine conflict, volunteered to challenge the anti-evolution statute in 1965. The conflict reached the Supreme Court, which in the case Epperson v. Arkansas in 1968 declared the Arkansas statute invalid. See Edward J. Larson, Trial and Error: The American Controversy over Creation and Evolution, 3rd ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 93-124.)

162 Ibid.


164 Ibid., p.22.

165 Francis Schaeffer, The Change in the Concept of Law in USA, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962..
of destroying anything in the old consensus….It isn’t always for the individual as opposed to the group…It may look like that in the current spate of cases, but it isn’t the base. I think what you have here is a group of men carrying their views out logically in the direction of anything that will destroy the old consensus. I think they will destroy the old consensus in both directions—in favor of the individual when it fits and against the individual when it fits.**166**

As evidence, Schaeffer cited J.A. McClain’s article from the American Bar Association Journal entitled “The Union Shop Amendment: Compulsory ‘Freedom’ to Join a Union.” The Supreme Court in this situation ruled in favor of the collective rather than the individual, in a case involving railway workers that refused to join the union in an arrangement where a “union shop” contract with management existed. McClain in disbelief stated that “the Court held for the first time that a man may be compelled under an agreement authorized by federal statute to be a member of a private organization as a condition of employment.”**167**

In this instance, McClain claimed the high Court redefined what was in the best interests of the worker. In *Hanson v. Union Pacific Railroad Co.*, five employees of the railroad demanded in 1955 that they be free of the requirements of unionization under the Union Shop Statute, an amendment to the Railway Labor Act. The lower courts agreed that the Union Shop Statute violated worker rights: “The trial court granted the relief requested, and on appeal the Supreme Court of Nebraska affirmed the trial court, holding that the Union Shop Statute violated the right to work and freedom of association of individual workers guaranteed by the First and Fifth Amendments of the Federal Constitution.”**168** The Supreme Court of the United States overturned the Nebraska ruling, with the judicial activists leading the charge. McClain

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**166** *Ibid.*


concluded: “By this treatment, the Court has advanced a new and totally different concept of the right to work.”

Speaking of the defeated employees, McClain clarified that “[t]heir right to work is no longer an individual but a collective right shared with all other railroad workers, a collective right which may be molded and shaped by Congress in accordance with its notions regarding the promotion of the interests of the whole organized labor movement.” He simultaneously claimed that “the legislative history of the Union Shop Statute may be searched in vain for an indication that Congress intended in the Statute, as attributed to it by the Court, to protect the long-range welfare of the workers”. The latter statement was located under the subheading “Compulsory Unionism…A Step Toward Totalitarianism”, a notion that McClain clarified:

But the right to use force to compel adherence and submission to rule is a prerogative of sovereignty, and heretofore has been limited to government. If the unions should ultimately succeed in obtaining unequivocal constitutional sanction of their scheme, we will have taken a long step towards establishment of a one-party totalitarian state.

Here however Schaeffer sent a double message. On the one hand, he stated:

I don’t mean that it’s [judicial activism] done viciously, I don’t mean that anybody sits down and says ‘We’re going to break the old consensus,’ I don’t think this is the way it is, I just think men think and pretty soon what they think boils forth in what they do…I don’t mean anyone’s vicious in the sense of a plot or any such silly idea. I just think it’s the consensus of our generation coming forth into practical actions.

But in his conclusion to the entire lecture, Schaeffer argued that a sinister intent was in fact behind the court’s actions.

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169 Ibid., p. 725.

170 Ibid., p. 726.

171 Ibid., p. 726.

172 Francis Schaeffer, *The Change in the Concept of Law in USA*, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 95.3 (CD), and the date of the original recording is 1962.
What we must understand then is the death of the limitation of government by law. Back of it we would insist that the reason for this is that which was tenable after the Reformation on the basis of the absolute Word of God….has no meaning once you pull away this basis. It has nothing to stand on. Something else has got to come forward, and something else is coming forward. But in it the concepts that were put forth in the founding of the American Constitution simply have passed….Let’s not forget that we can feel a structure here….there is a solid relationship between, let’s say, Hegel’s philosophy, Kierkegaard’s step, Barth’s thinking….[and] the artists after the impressionists….all of this [along with judicial activism] is just one piece….and one thing that dies along the way is the protection of the old concept produced after the Reformation and nowhere else, the old concept of law in this basic sense.\textsuperscript{173}

Schaeffer added that “once you cut away from a real Christian base, there is no direction in which to move except the direction of chaos or the direction of totalitarianism.”\textsuperscript{174}

It is important to note however that Schaeffer was not speaking in a vacuum about the Supreme Court and the matter of rights. As has already been shown, his former mentor Carl McIntire was vigorously opposed to the actions of the Court and civil rights protestors. However, an additional influence on some level of Schaeffer’s thought was Rousas J. Rushdoony, the founder of Christian Reconstructionism. While Schaeffer developed strong disagreements with the goals of Reconstructionism, he thought it worthwhile to review Rushdoony’s book \textit{This Independent Republic}. Rushdoony developed a connection to Westminster Theological Seminary, and to J. Gresham Machen’s legacy through an association with Cornelius Van Til.

\textbf{Rousas John Rushdoony (1916-2001)}

Rushdoony was born in New York City as the son of Armenian immigrants from Turkey. He received his college education from the University of California at Berkeley and entered the

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
Presbyterian ministry in the 1940s after graduate school.⁷⁵ William Edgar comments that Rushdoony served as a missionary to Native Americans in Nevada and eventually “followed the lead of J. Gresham Machen” and joined the cause of conservative Presbyterians.⁷⁶ Edgar observes that “though Rushdoony did not attend [Machen’s seminary] Westminster himself, he was strongly influenced by its famous professor of apologetics, Cornelius Van Til. Van Til had argued that there was a fundamental difference in the way unbelievers and believers reasoned because their source of authority was radically different.”⁷⁷ Noting his father’s high level of respect for J. Gresham Machen, Rushdoony’s son Mark testified that his father and Van Til had a positive relationship after the elder Rushdoony wrote a favorable review of one of Van Til’s books: “My father very much considered him one of the great thinkers of the twentieth century, although my father, it would be fair to say, extended Van Til’s presuppositional thinking a little farther than Van Til did.”⁷⁸ Furthermore, John Muether paints a picture of a devotee extrapolating far beyond what his guide intended. Rushdoony’s plans for “transforming American culture through the application of the Old Testament civil code,” he claimed, were based upon Van Til’s presuppositional apologetics, a connection that the Westminster professor aggressively sought to deny.⁷⁹


⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Mark Rushdoony, telephone interview by author, May 12, 2011. Rushdoony assumed that Christ must be lord over every sphere of human activity, beyond those with which an academic like Van Til was most concerned.

⁷⁹ Muether, Cornelius Van Til, pp. 216-217.
In addition, at least one witness, John Frame, once a student at Westminster in the early 1960s, has a memory of the distance Van Til desired to maintain when Rushdoony visited Westminster students and faculty.\(^\text{180}\)

He [Rushdoony] really was quite impressed with Van Til’s work and thought that Van Til was the inspiration for a lot of Rushdoony’s work….Of course Rushdoony and Van Til shared ….[the] Abraham Kuyper emphasis that God is Lord over every sphere of life. Van Til’s great contribution was to say that Christ is Lord over the intellect, over philosophy, over worldview, and Rushdoony agreed with that strongly, and added that Christ is also Lord over politics, history and economics…

Van Til was never particularly interested in these other fields, although I think Van Til would have agreed with Rushdoony that Christ is Lord over everything and there is value in trying to see what God’s Word says about all these different disciplines…\(^\text{181}\)

Van Til represented one aspect of the history of fundamentalism—a reluctance to speak about social issues, maintaining instead a focus upon the declaration of the gospel message. Muether’s insight about Van Til’s political views are instructive. “He was a life-long Republican who opposed the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson with as much zeal as he disdained the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt, but the Republican Party represented the lesser of two evils for him. He shied away from cultural and political applications of his apologetic system…”\(^\text{182}\)

The nineteen-sixties, with the civil rights cause, the sexual revolution, and an activist Supreme Court overruling school-sponsored prayer, posed immediate problems for orthodox Calvinists’ eyewitnessing the transformation of an Anglo-Saxon “Christian” civilization into a permissive and pluralistic society.


\(^{181}\) Ibid.

\(^{182}\) Muether, Cornelius Van Til, p. 218.
Rushdoony sought to be a bridge between Van Til’s position and the cause of religious conservatives in the future. In addition, Rushdoony did not hesitate to use the past as a guide for counteracting liberalizing forces. Frame recounts:

Rushdoony came out of the blue… Van Til had never heard of him. I remember when I was a seminary student Rushdoony visited the seminary and Van Til showed him around… Rushdoony spoke to the student dining club…Rushdoony was actually defending the New England Puritans…Rushdoony defended their right to expel people from society that didn’t measure up to their creed, and I kind of joked with him a little bit and said, “Well today we have so many creeds, and almost nobody is an orthodox Calvinist.” “So what do we do, do we pack all these people up into a thousand ships and send them off to other countries, or what?” I meant it sort of as a joke, expecting that Rushdoony would qualify what he said, but he was absolutely serious at the time. He said that, “Well, with faith all things are possible.” Which I guess to him meant that somehow or other we can have a society with nobody other than orthodox Presbyterians…

Frame noted that Van Til overheard this exchange and, seeing Frame at a later point, distanced himself from Rushdoony. “I don’t think Van Til was ever completely in Rushdoony’s corner. Now Rushdoony said that he was.” Nonetheless, Frame added that Rushdoony succeeded in generating surprising publicity for Van Til’s ideas in sectors far flung from the conservative Presbyterian world. Furthermore, Rushdoony’s protégé, Greg Bahnsen, came to Westminster to study under both Van Til and Frame.

**Hostility Toward the Enlightenment**

The construction of Rushdoony’s worldview occurred in stages, but at its root was a naked animosity toward the intellectual legacy of the Enlightenment. According to William Edgar, Rushdoony believed that only the total penetration of divine revelation into all the realms

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183 John Frame, telephone interview by author, January 27, 2011.

184 Ibid.

185 Ibid. Frame was later a professor from 1968-1980.
of human activity could bring about obedience to God.\textsuperscript{186} Rushdoony’s attack on education was one of his most important: “In \textit{The Messianic Character of American Education} (1963) Rushdoony decried the American public school system, tracing its ideology back to John Dewey and other secular thinkers who believed in the natural goodness of children and the role that education could play in liberalizing society.”\textsuperscript{187} Rushdoony became one of the nation’s most significant champions of the homeschooling movement. Edgar recollects in 2001:

Rushdoony was often called upon as an expert witness to defend the rights of home-school advocates against their detractors. In 1983 the Home School Legal Defense Association was formed under the leadership of people inspired by Rushdoony’s attacks on secular education. By 1990 over fifteen thousand families in all fifty states belonged to the Association, and today home schooling is more popular than ever.\textsuperscript{188}

Another of Rushdoony’s legacies was the Chalcedon Foundation, founded in 1965 in California to promulgate his ideas. Mark Rushdoony described the mission of the foundation was “to perpetuate this vision of a distinctly Christian reconstruction of society, [to] address society’s problems from a distinctly Christian and biblical perspective.”\textsuperscript{189} In practice, Chalcedon focused upon the large scale—“to educate Christians to be more biblical in their thinking and in their activity”—without taking particular political stands or patriotic flag-waving.\textsuperscript{190}

The elder Rushdoony directly attacked the Enlightenment’s impacts upon areas such as politics, psychiatry, and biology that touched humans and their education. In 1961, he published


\textsuperscript{187} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{189} Mark Rushdoony, telephone interview by author, May 12, 2011.

\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Ibid.}
Intellectual Schizophrenia: Culture, Crisis, and Education, in which he addressed both John Locke and evolution. Locke was guilty of transforming education into a godless machine. His philosophy ran directly against the mind of a conservative Presbyterian who believed in presuppositions as the basis for worldview:

Accordingly, he gave to the Enlightenment its ideal weapon against God and the past, the concept of the mind as a blank piece of white paper…The mind is thus essentially passive and receptive, although Locke at times speaks of it, contradictorily, as active and free…

The marvels of this theory for educators of the Enlightenment are immediately apparent. Man was able to remake man and the educator to play the role of a god. The hated and despised past could be cancelled out and man be given in effect a new inheritance.

Evolution was guilty of subverting the nation when its philosophical dimensions were applied to society:

The erosion of cultural agencies was furthered by the concept of evolution. In terms of very popular and influential developments of this concept, the family, religion, and all smaller societal forms were relatively primitive forms in human evolution, the culminating form of man’s organized life being the cosmopolitan and ultimately world state. The more primitive forms of organization had to be self-consciously outgrown; at best they were to survive as subsidiary agencies of the State.

Hence Darwinism was being used as a justification for social control, in Rushdoony’s estimation. This theme of the conspiracy to establish state control was an essential part of the new creationism that Rushdoony supported. Rushdoony commented in 1965 that “the culmination of

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191 Mark Rushdoony commented that his father was opposed to the teaching of John Locke because Locke was a proponent of natural law and of the Enlightenment—quite different from Schaeffer’s view that Locke served as a bridge between Samuel Rutherford and the Constitution (Mark Rushdoony, telephone interview by author, May 12, 2011.)


193 Ibid., p.5. Emphasis mine.
the Enlightenment” came with the work of Freud, Darwin, and Marx. “But these three, even as they pushed the Enlightenment faith to its logical conclusions, were also the destroyers of that same faith and hope, and may be best remembered as its gravediggers in the future.”194

Mark Rushdoony gave detail about his father’s view of Darwinism:

First of all, he didn’t think it was in the Bible, [and] he thought it was contrary to what Genesis states. He believed that Genesis 1 through 11 was a historical account, [and] so he believed in a young earth and creationism. And he believed that really Darwin filled a need…He gave a scientific explanation for what men were ready for. Because by the time he wrote, men were becoming more secular but they were retaining God as a first cause…Darwin gave them a reason to abandon the need for God except in the personal sphere. They were able to put Christianity aside except as they needed it in their personal lives. Christianity was pushed into the personal pietistic area. The world of education could go on without the need for God even as a first cause. So he [Rushdoony] saw evolution as filling a need in the secular world.195

Regarding the consequences of evolution in a social sense, the younger Rushdoony commented that his father saw in the 1960s a generation of youths in revolt and the sexual revolution as evidence that evolutionary teaching had wrought social devastation. The Marquis de Sade, the eighteenth-century intellectual and politician notorious for his unbridled views of sex, became the epitome of what an evolutionary worldview created:

If you really believe in evolution, and that world and life view then there is no morality, there is no ethics…In one of his books that he published posthumously he talks extensively about the Marquis de Sade. He saw the Marquis de Sade as really a revolutionary thinker, way ahead of his time. He [de Sade] was persona non grata because of his sexual deviancy, but de Sade made the point that our real enemy is God, and the perfect crime would be to murder God. So he knew that God was his enemy [as well as Christianity].

And he [Rushdoony in conclusion] said that basically we’ve come back around to de Sade. We’ve so completely gotten rid of God and responsibility to God from our thinking, [that we’ve come to the idea] that morality itself is our enemy….Evolution has no basis for morality….It is completely arbitrary. I think he would to


195 Mark Rushdoony, telephone interview by author, May 12, 2011.
a large extent agree with the synopsis that evolutionary worldview leads to some very ugly things in our society. He didn’t think that was coincidental.\textsuperscript{196}

Rushdoony’s counterargument to the secularization and imagined horror of evolutionary thinking was a complete reversal of the processes that had generated theological liberalism and increased federal power.

**Christian Reconstructionism**

To respond to the growth of Enlightenment influences, R.J. Rushdoony’s worldview was “theonomic”, or alternatively, “Christian Reconstructionist”. Edgar and Frame provide insight as to the meaning of these terms.

Rushdoony’s Theonomy involves the application of the law of God, and the biblical law particularly, to all of life. It also requires that one appeal to the whole law of God—including the civil law of the Old Testament—as a necessary supplement to being saved by grace through faith. Some of Rushdoony’s followers prefer the term “reconstructionist,” because they believe it does a better job of conveying their positive outlook on life. Indeed their view of the future could be described as postmillennial, since they tend to believe that God’s Kingdom will eventually be established on earth through the faithful preaching of the gospel and the faithful application of God’s law to society. The result will be a Christian civilization and a thousand year reign of Jesus Christ.

Rushdoony’s most extensive and thorough treatment of the law can be found in his *Institutes of Biblical Law* [1973], a massive, two-volume work that includes an exhaustive study of the Ten Commandments followed by detailed treatments of taxation, government, virtue, oaths, penal sanctions, property, and nearly every domain of jurisprudence.\textsuperscript{197}

Frame agrees and adds some detail:

In the broad sense, Christian Reconstructionism is an attempt to use whatever influence we have to bring about changes in society that are acceptable to the Scriptures, based on biblical standards, and that includes government, but it also includes the arts and sciences and all the academic disciplines…

\textsuperscript{196} *Ibid.*

In the narrow sense Christian Reconstructionism is ‘theonomic’, that is to say, believing that the civil laws that God gave to Israel in the Old Testament should be maintained in modern society by modern governments, and that the penalties for crimes in the Old Testament law should be followed today by modern civil governments. So the death penalty for homosexuality, or adultery, and that sort of thing.  

It was Rushdoony’s demand that the civil law of the Old Testament be used in the American legal system that brought him notoriety. Nonetheless Edgar praises Rushdoony’s Institutes as “a work of Protestant casuistry”, which Gary North defined as “the application of biblical legal principles to real-world situations.” North, as a disciple of Rushdoony, affirmed that “The Institutes launched the Christian Reconstruction movement.” Mark Rushdoony confirmed that the Institutes were “the most important book that’s been published in the movement’s history, because it really gives the core of what we are trying to say and it gives the core of our position of how we address our problems”.  

Writing in 1974, Harold O. J. Brown, commenting for the most well-known evangelical periodical in America, gave an indication that the Institutes would gain a wide hearing among conservatives:

198 John Frame, telephone interview by author, January 27, 2011. Mark Rushdoony added that “Christian Reconstruction says the reason things aren’t working well [in American culture] is because we are violating God’s law…It sees things from a God-centered perspective…Theonomy means literally the ‘law of God’. Theocracy means the ‘rule of God’. Theocracy is not men ruling in the name of God, it is God’s law. And it’s man’s perspective on the fact that God is in fact in charge. My father did not believe in a powerful central government; a lot of people have assumed that his talk of theocracy is basically a rule by patriarchal men who will force people into compliance with God’s law. My father sometimes called himself a Christian libertarian….but he did believe in a very limited state. In fact he wrote as much about the state as he did about theocracy, because he saw the state was really the great impediment throughout history to man’s living in terms of God’s law…It’s God’s law or man’s law, and that’s very Van Tillian.” Finally, Rushdoony observed that his father respected Abraham Kuyper’s thought but did not use him as model. (Mark Rushdoony, telephone interview by author, May 12, 2011.)


200 Gary North, “R.J. Rushdoony, R.I.P.”.

201 Mark Rushdoony, telephone interview by author, May 12, 2011.
Without a doubt, the most impressive theological work of 1973 is Rousas J. Rushdoony’s *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Presbyterian and Reformed), a compendious treatment of a whole gamut of questions in governmental, social, and personal ethics from the perspective of the principle of law and the purpose of restoration of divine order in a fallen world….This is a monumental work that should give invaluable help for constructive thinking and practical conduct.202

**Rushdoony’s Views of Civil Rights and the Public Schools**

Reconstructionism was the application of theology to the political sphere; to understand how Rushdoony framed the context of the creation-evolution controversy specifically, it is first essential to grasp his view of civil rights issues and the public school, and then to address his conceptualization of America. As with Schaeffer and McIntire, the civil rights issue represented to Rushdoony an unlawful revolution in the power of the Supreme Court, and all three demonstrated the same committed refusal to bypass the will of the local majority. Mark Rushdoony explained that to his father the issue of civil rights dovetailed with the loss of a true republic:

Well, if we go back much further, he thought that the issue in the civil rights [movement] was the republic versus the centralized government…He was never really a Southern sympathizer, he was never a Southerner, and he never went there in idolizing the antebellum South or anything like that, but he did think the South at least was trying to perpetuate the idea of the republic, and he thought that the defeat of the South in Reconstruction really ushered in the era of centralized government and the power of Washington, D.C…Today the republic as a structure is to a large extent dead, at least as it was 200 years ago. So his view on a lot of these issues has to do with the central government taking initiative—regardless of the issue, right or wrong, one way or the other, he was very distrustful of centralized government and the increasing power of Washington and the federal structure.203

Mark Rushdoony believed his father held that state and local authorities had the responsibility to balance the scales for African Americans and should have been pressured to do so in the 1960s using standard political means rather than mass civil disobedience; regardless of

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203 Mark Rushdoony, telephone interview by author, May 12, 2011.
the difficulty in achieving that goal, the behavior of the Supreme Court to desegregate schools was an unconstitutional act of centralizing power much like those following the Civil War.\textsuperscript{204}

But on the matter of actually “rescuing” the public schools in a moral sense, the champion of Christian schooling was practically apathetic compared to McIntire, Schaeffer, and the mass of fundamentalist activists waiting in the wings for Republican presidential candidates. Rushdoony was “uninterested in the whole question of school prayer, because he came to be rather anti-public school, because the public schools were a manifestation of state power in an area where they didn’t really belong. He viewed state schools as government schools, not [as] public schools.”\textsuperscript{205} State usurpation of parents’ rights to control their families, in order “create” ideal citizens, was precisely the elder Rushdoony’s fear in the \textit{Messianic Character of American Education}. The side-by-side teaching of creationism with evolution in a “equal time” format was a “waste of time” in a public school context.\textsuperscript{206}

\textbf{Preserving Local Governmental Control}

While the \textit{Institutes} marked Rushdoony at the height of his influence, an earlier work, \textit{This Independent Republic} (1964), got the attention of Francis Schaeffer sufficiently to warrant analysis in his lectures at L’Abri. Frame described the book as “maintaining an originalism about the Constitution, wanting to go back to emphasize the Christian roots of America, [and] wanting to understand the Declaration, the Constitution and the other founding documents as developments from a biblical worldview”.\textsuperscript{207} Though differing in their attitudes to American

\textsuperscript{204} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{205} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{207} John Frame, telephone interview by author, January 27, 2011.
culture, Schaeffer and Rushdoony joined in the search for fundamentalist rights as they sensed their country leaving its religious roots behind.

Schaeffer’s son-in-law Udo Middelmann acknowledged the impact of Rushdoony’s book while maintaining a distance between the two men:

I do remember Schaeffer giving a lecture on Rushdoony’s book *This Independent Republic*. I remember his giving that and all of us reading the book and discussing it with him and arguing and so forth…

I don’t know if it was Rushdoony’s influence but certainly there are certain overlaps [between Schaeffer and Rushdoony] in understanding a position that Schaeffer held, that the founding fathers, though not all Christian, nevertheless worked within a Christian mindset. What modern man would call “embracing Christian values”…

That’s what Schaeffer believed, that what he taught, that what he wrote about…

But then I need to say that in terms of the contact with Rushdoony, that’s as far as it went. Schaeffer had no relation with Rushdoony over the Gary North things, and the Reconstructionists, and stoning adulterers and all that kind of thing…he’d nothing to do with that….

In the negative sense, it [Rushdoony’s name] came up when Rushdoony and Reconstructionists said therefore we’ve got to go back to the Old Testament law and become a Christian nation. Schaffer was very much opposed to the notion of a Christian nation. What he was all in favor of was that Christians participate in the nation.208

William Edgar recalls the same period while a student at L’Abri:

I first encountered Rushdoony at L’Abri, a Christian community high in the Swiss Alps. The year was 1964. Francis Schaeffer, the founder and director of L’Abri, had recently come across a little book by Rushdoony called *This Independent Republic: Studies in the Nature and Meaning of American History*,

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208 Udo Middelmann, telephone interview by author, January 13, 2011. Remembering the relationship more positively, Mark Rushdoony’s recollection included a meeting between his father and Schaeffer: “I believe they’ve met, I know they spoke at the same podium at some point. Again I only met Schaeffer shortly before his death. I was just at L’Abri for an afternoon, [and] had lunch with him [Schaeffer], and he expressed appreciation for my father. I do not know that they communicated a great deal.” Rushdoony added the disappointment his father felt with Schaeffer’s view of eschatology—“Schaeffer had no place to go with his cultural critique, he knew what was wrong with our culture but he didn’t have any answers…their theologies were somewhat different, because postmillennial eschatology was really crucial to my father’s thinking.” (Mark Rushdoony, telephone interview by author, May 12, 2011.)
and he made it the basis for a seminar with the students at L’Abri. We gathered in
the living room of Chalet les Mélèzes, where most of the community’s meetings
were held. It was before Schaeffer became a popular sage for many evangelical
Christians, and so we could study such a text informally, though we always did
so with care…

Though at the time I was too much a novice in history to judge the accuracy
of his thesis, I was drawn to the clarity and cogency of Rushdoony’s arguments.
Those were heady days at L’Abri, which in the sixties was a seedbed for ideas
that captivated our imaginations and sought to link every area of our lives
to a Christian worldview. A Christian historiography containing such a powerful
critique of the point of view most of us received in school was for me a great
stimulation. Rushdoony taught us that the American Constitution, with its eloquent
absence of references to Christian faith, was a secular document only in
appearance. In fact, it was deliberately fashioned as a minimalist document by men
of genius whose primary purpose was to ensure the vitality of local government.\(^\text{209}\)

The thesis of *This Independent Republic* was that the “origins [of America] are Christian
and Augustinian, deeply rooted in Reformation, medieval, and patristic history”—in other words,
its roots were essentially religious.\(^\text{210}\) “It is held, moreover, that the United States, from its
origins in the Colonial period on through the Constitution, represented a Protestant feudal
restoration.”\(^\text{211}\) Rushdoony’s feudal America was a system based upon the county: “the counties
were the basic and determinative unit of American civil government.”\(^\text{212}\) The American
Revolution was therefore “an anti-statist revolution”.\(^\text{213}\) Above all, there was in Rushdoony’s
mind a clean separation between the “political faith of the Enlightenment” on one side, and
America’s founding and the Reformation on the other.\(^\text{214}\) “The background to this distrust of


\(^{211}\) *Ibid.* Emphasis is Rushdoony’s.

\(^{212}\) *Ibid.*, p. viii. Emphasis is Rushdoony’s


sovereignty was both early medieval and Calvinist,” Rushdoony claimed, and the result was an experiment in nation-building:

The Christian, Western tradition in America was hostile to the doctrine of sovereignty and affirmed, with reference to the civil order, the doctrine of limited power. This meant first, a division of powers, which naturally implied, second, a multiplicity of powers, and third, a complexity of powers. Statism strives continually for a simplicity of government, assuming that the complexity of life is amenable to the mind of the planner and governor.  

Rushdoony’s political views were an outworking of these fundamental premises, and those views were primarily shaped as statements of distrust.

An overarching theme was a distrust of the Supreme Court and its use of the Fourteenth Amendment, which Rushdoony called “illegally ratified” and which “provided grounds for the interference of the federal government in the jurisdiction of state governments”:

These implications of the 14th Amendment were progressively utilized by the Supreme Court shortly after the beginning of the 20th century, and there began the court’s recession from its conception of America as a Christian country and its development of the thesis of a unitary State. As the court embraced moral relativism as its religious principle, so it established national sovereignty and absolutism as a corollary to its denial of higher law.

Rushdoony ended the book with comment that the moral decline of the Supreme Court was a byproduct of theological liberalism. The Court’s actions sat at the center of all Rushdoony opposed—the growth of federal power was concurrent with a national drift from orthodoxy. The upshot of this approach was to argue that the preservation of local sovereignty was actually a biblically-derived ideal. As a corollary, Rushdoony took great enthusiasm in the popularity of

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215 Ibid., pp. 33-34. Emphasis is Rushdoony’s.

216 Ibid., p. 37.

217 Ibid., p. 158-159.
Christian schooling, which he called the “greatest sign of health” and “an important restoration of local self-government”.  

Secondly, Rushdoony was deeply distrustful of the social revolution of his day known as the civil rights movement. He denied that equality was an achievable goal:

> Whatever the political or legal picture has been, the honest fact is that, for the most part, the white American has not felt much sense of unity or equality with the Negro. Compassion, charity, kindliness, friendliness, bitterness, resentment, hatred and exploitation, these things have all existed, but the sense of unity or “equality” has been virtually absent.

Using the New Testament’s Jewish and Gentile congregations’ choices to meet separately without prohibiting the other as a proof, Rushdoony claimed to support neither segregation nor integration, but freedom: “The pattern of state enforced segregation is clearly statist and a denial of free association, but the demand for coercive integration is no less statist”. Again the underlying concern is that the growth of the power of the state has been veiled as an extension of justice.

Finally, Rushdoony distrusted intellectual elites and experts. “The experts become thus a dictatorship of the proletariat, guiding them for their own welfare ostensibly.” But the real agenda was sinister and once again led to the power of the state:

> Total war must be waged against God, against all meaning, value, morality, law, and order, in short against everything that divides men in terms of an absolute standard. It is productive of political chaos by its attack on the idea of law. This planned chaos characterized the first step of both Russian and French revolutions and is the prelude to the new law of the total state.

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218 Ibid., p. 118.
219 Ibid., p. 83. Emphasis is Rushdoony’s.
220 Ibid., p. 88. Regarding the New Testament claim, see page 86.
221 Ibid., p. 132.
222 Ibid.
The theme of suspicion, as with the Supreme Court, rings loudly here: “This elite, moving in terms of reason or science, can remake man and society. It is seen, not as a power elite, but as the objective, selfless and supra-personal expression of scientific reason.” Consequently, Rushdoony took aim at Darwinism:

A more basic influence has been that of Darwin, whose evolutionary hypothesis provided a framework for assault on orthodox Christian faith and a free market economy to the Union League advocates of radical reconstruction in the South…

Evolution is a genetic faith and makes the prior, which is the primitive, determinative; the primitive is more basic, hence more vital and real. It follows therefore that sex is more important then [sic] religion, since sex appears early on the evolutionary ladder, and religion is a late-comer…

Rushdoony’s statement linked Darwinism to the generation of secular worldview and its catastrophic social results. He later stated that “the three major expressions of the philosophy of the Enlightenment” were the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and Darwinism. The coding of Darwinism with other forces that promote the tyranny of the state over the lives of traditional Christians was a major conclusion of Rushdoony’s work.

**Machen’s Three “Descendants” Respond to Three Decades of Revolution in America’s Power Arrangements**

The first chapter outlined J. Gresham Machen’s building frustration in the 1920s and 1930s over the growth of federal power and how basic he considered a doctrine of a limited federal government to be to the maintenance of a citizen’s freedom. Whether testifying against a federal department of education or excoriating President Roosevelt’s policies as dishonest, Machen set an example for his Presbyterian protégés. However, there is little evidence of anxiety.

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on Machen’s part about the Supreme Court’s power over the states. It is also noteworthy that the Scopes trial, in which Machen refused to participate in, did not involve a consideration of the Bill of Rights or the Fourteenth Amendment. The Fourteenth became a major issue only slowly and was not yet a major threat to fundamentalist interests by Machen’s death in 1937. But in the three decades from that point, Machen’s spiritual progeny, Carl McIntire, Francis Schaeffer, and Rousas J. Rushdoony felt compelled to decode a revolutionary situation.

It is important to remember that alongside Machen’s refusal to participate in the Scopes event, a certain liberty existed among fundamentalists regarding the origin of life and the age of the earth, as the narratives of George McCready Price and Harry Rimmer attest in Chapter 2. Furthermore, Price’s protégé Frank Lewis Marsh felt at ease corresponding with the leading evolutionist Theodosius Dobzhansky in the 1940s. And for all his feistiness in combating Communists, ecumenical forces, and evangelicals like Billy Graham, even as late as the 1950s Carl McIntire was virtually apathetic about the issue of countering evolution (Chapter 3). These historical facts remind us that while evolution was a matter of debate before the 1960s, it was not yet again a matter of culture war for fundamentalists in a manner similar to the Scopes era.

The sixties therefore represent a moment of convergence for several streams. Among these currents, the Neo-Darwinian synthesis and the subsequent crusade to re-insert Darwinism into textbooks only became a problem at the close of the 1950s. It is the proposal of the present chapter that the culture-war context in which the creation-evolution controversy became embedded did not emerge any earlier than 1962, when fundamentalists realized for the first time that their government was undergoing transformation and the Constitution’s meaning was evolving. In response to the shock of this realization, McIntire, Schaeffer and Rushdoony presented disparate solutions with strong commonalities about the proper power arrangement
between majorities and minorities and between federal and state governments. All three were strongly Calvinistic and influenced by Machen’s legacy. Furthermore, Abraham Kuyper’s call for recognizing the sovereignty of God in all spheres of activity had a direct impact upon Schaeffer and Rushdoony.

Lastly, for all three leaders examined in this chapter, civil rights represented a usurpation of power by the Supreme Court, and thus that instance provides important insights as to the Presbyterian coding of the Court’s worldview in other later contexts, that, like civil rights, depended on the exertion of the judicial prerogative through the Fourteenth Amendment.

Fundamentalists in protesting the Supreme Court’s actions in the 1960s were not marginal in American life as they had been during the Anti-Evolution Movement of the 1920s. In attacking the Court’s outlawing of school prayer, Carl McIntire had the cooperation of Congressman Frank Becker who proposed an amendment to the Constitution. But fundamentalist outrage was hardly isolated, as the numerous measures proposed by members of Congress demonstrate. Francis Schaeffer struck common cause with The Saturday Evening Post as well as with conservative attorney Sims Crownover in expressing shock at the perceived excesses of the Court. But McIntire provided a glimpse of the fundamentalist future in American politics when he allied with the ultraconservative wing of the Republican party embodied in South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond. The general outcry against the Court was eventually so great that Republican candidate for President Barry Goldwater made it part of his campaign. While the situation in the 1960s had qualitative differences from the Scopes era, McIntire and Schaeffer were in line with Machen’s conservatism, but the sudden offense of the Supreme Court and the issue of fundamentalist rights had not been a federal-level issue at the Dayton trial.
Certainly McIntire, Schaeffer, and Rushdoony coded the transformation of the Court’s power over the states as destructive of the America they knew. The use of vocabulary is particularly important here; coding played a vital role in how fundamentalists perceived the changes in their government. McIntire’s paper called for a counterrevolution to restore power, called the civil rights movement pro-Communist, depicted blacks’ civil rights as the stealing of others’ property rights, and went so far as to use rape imagery in its argument. Schaeffer in the beginning of his career mirrored McIntire’s fundamentalism; however, engaging with the non-fundamentalist and secularized people of Europe in the 1960s transformed Schaeffer’s communication patterns, a change exemplified by his creation of L’Abri. Schaeffer left McIntire’s separatism behind, but not fundamentalist thought patterns about the direct creation of America from the Reformation, with the Enlightenment excluded from any significant role. In Schaeffer’s coding, the Supreme Court’s actions were an usurpation of power at the expense of majoritarian democracy. The rights of blacks were illegally defended in a manner that ensured a future led by a morally relativistic Court; hence the 1960s represented the beginnings of tyranny, but the future totalitarianism would not be so much deliberately orchestrated by the justices as the result of a cultural drift away from a Reformation base.

At the root of Schaeffer’s worldview was an assumption that Bible demanded a maintenance of antitheses, instead of Hegel’s synthesis. Right and wrong had to remain separate, and power in government likewise had to be compartmentalized. Ideas of blending and creating new boundaries had been a problem for fundamentalists beginning with modernism and ecumenism, and now it was a problem with civil rights. Calvinism demanded the preservation of spheres and the idea of sphere sovereignty, as Abraham Kuyper maintained. The Supreme Court had violated the boundaries of its sphere in the view of the Reformed fundamentalists. This
theme became a core piece of the rhetoric of the later Religious Right, in part because of the alliance struck between these confessional Presbyterians and revivalistic Baptists, to be discussed in Chapter 7.

Schaeffer’s narrative about the Court is revealing. As an important sidenote, it is curious that Schaeffer pointed to the Hughes Court of the 1930s as the last bastion of orthodox decision-making from the nation’s highest bench, even though that Court had actually begun the process of re-invigorating the Fourteenth Amendment’s reach with the Stromberg case. Schaeffer’s sense of antithesis may have required a clean break rather than a gradual slide in the Court’s behavior. Secondly, Schaeffer ignored the many interest groups that were involved in the Court’s progressive incorporation of the Bill of Rights under the Fourteenth Amendment. Rather than acknowledge the need for some means to secure the rights of racial and religious minorities in a pluralistic nation, Schaeffer deciphered the Court’s record from the thirties to the sixties as a type of apostasy from a Reformation base. He then coded the future as dependent on nothing more secure than the Court’s whim—a terrifying prospect for a white Protestant fundamentalist in 1962 who had perceived his group as the national majority.

Automatically both McIntire and Schaeffer made proposals for vehicles through which fundamentalists could secure their rights in this new surprising context in which they found themselves. McIntire’s International Christian Youth was one such means, campaigning for school prayer and Bible reading in schools on the one hand, while arguing against civil rights (even by direct action, as in Mississippi) on the other. The Becker Amendment was another method of protest. Judicial activism represented an outrage of such magnitude to Schaeffer that state interposition was not only a legitimate response but absolutely necessary. States’ rights for both McIntire and Schaeffer were essentially God-ordained means that the Reformation had
promoted as a way of restraining the power of national governments. (Schaeffer’s agreement with Sims Crownover that the Fourteenth Amendment in no way restrains the States is important here).

Given that fundamentalists perceived the American scene had turned against them, new tactics were critical to survival. Of course as Christians both Schaeffer and McIntire struggled to develop a language that balanced Christian justice, their conservative views, and the protests of blacks; McIntire’s International Christian Youth plus his own trip to Africa highlighted this struggle; however, in the end, Schaeffer demonstrated what really bothered the Reformed. His hesitation to condemn civil rights concerns and his acknowledgement of the need for increased racial harmony was not enough to counter his outrage at the constitutionally revolutionary methods the Supreme Court used to achieve these goals.

R.J. Rushdoony was the most radical of the three Reformed leaders, but there were areas of overlap that demonstrate resonance in his thinking with the other two. Rushdoony did not promote a rights organization like International Christian Youth, but he was still angered by the liberty the Fourteenth Amendment gave the Court. Rushdoony, along with Schaeffer, served as prophet for the culture war to come. That is, Rushdoony was quick to condemn the Enlightenment as secularizing and as a worldview that led to national horrors such as the French and Russian Revolutions. His early linkage of Darwinism to these other events was a foreshadowing of the rhetoric creationists later employed in their public relations campaigns. Rushdoony was cynical about the notion of civil rights and enthusiastic about the nation’s past, which he imagined as rural and county-driven in its politics. That Rushdoony should reject government-led schools in favor of Christian schools and homeschooling should come as no surprise given his nostalgic vision of the nation.
Fundamentalism that supported the agenda of Henry Morris and the creation scientists he led, as well as the later intelligent design movement, began as a protest first against the higher criticism of the Bible and secondly against evolution between 1900-1925. The subsequent removal or downplaying of evolution in textbooks was due to the fear of publishers eager to sell their wares. But the early 1960s represent a pivotal reversal, when a Cold War environment and the simultaneous success of the Neo-Darwinian synthesis elevated the importance of teaching evolution as a means to compete with the Soviets. But at this very historical moment, conservative Presbyterians were struggling with a new enemy—the Supreme Court and its use of the Fourteenth Amendment. McIntire, Schaeffer, and Rushdoony represented the longest-lasting intellectual tradition fundamentalists in America had, one that began with Princeton Seminary and the legacy of Charles Hodge, B.B. Warfield, and J. Gresham Machen. In essence the Reformed tradition later came to provide the brain of the organism that became the Religious Right, while Baptist numerical and financial might would nurture its body. But it is only when considering the rights revolutions as a source of culture war with the political Left and as an additional matter of concern to fundamentalists, along with the Enlightenment view of the Bible, American history, and science, that the intensity of later creationists’ agitation makes sense. From the 1962 school prayer decision, ten more years were needed to turn the tide against fundamentalist Protestants—ten more years of rights revolution in the arenas of women’s and gay rights—just as simultaneously evolution was returned to the public schools. Francis Schaeffer’s alliance with men outside Presbyterian circles in the Baptist arena made him ready for the fateful 1970s, and Henry Morris benefitted from the host of new cobelligerents. But Schaeffer’s views of evolution were not focused upon defending a young-earth and a flood, as Morris’s were; instead, the next chapter will illustrate that at L’Abri Schaeffer utilized the
thinking of his day to build a philosophic objection to Darwinism specifically, in anticipation of the intelligent design movement of the 1990s.
“A Change in the Concept of Law” (1962) was only one of the many taped lectures Francis Schaeffer composed at L’Abri Fellowship in Switzerland. Schaeffer was a fundamentalist transformed into an intellectual guide to numerous college students, graduate students, and professors, including those of a Christian background. In the 1960s he appeared more and more the irenic evangelical, willing to analyze secular philosophy, art, and even rock music. His work influenced individuals who later became instrumental in the success of the intelligent design theory, which followed on the coattails of the 1987 Supreme Court defeat of equal time for Henry Morris’ creation science in the public schools. There was no domain of intellectual or artistic endeavor that did not interest Schaeffer in terms of its impact upon evangelism.¹

However, when Schaeffer spoke on the topic of evolution in 1968, the reputation of the theory had dramatically changed since the Scopes trial of 1925, just as the reputation of science as a whole had grown. First, the confidence of the evolutionary biologists in Darwinism’s explanatory power had greatly increased. Betty Smocovitis noted that the “eclipse” of Darwinism was still a problem in the first decades of the twentieth century—the idea that another mechanism beside natural selection could be the motive force behind evolution. But with the publication of Theodosius Dobzhansky’s *Genetics and the Origin of Species* in 1937, Mendelian genetics and Darwinian selection were reconciled. In short order, other specialists followed Dobzhansky’s lead and soon biology, which had languished as a collection of disciplines, by a 1947 Princeton conference demonstrated the integration and the rigor of chemistry and physics, with natural selection enthroned as the primary mechanism of evolution. This new confidence

encouraged biologists to demand a re-introduction of Darwinism into high school textbooks after the Scopes outcome had compelled textbook publishers to eschew evolution in order to avoid controversies that could affect sales. During the Darwin Centennial celebration at the University of Chicago in 1959, Hermann J. Muller’s paper was a call to teachers, entitled “One Hundred Years without Darwinism Are Enough.” Science in the late 1950s was on the upswing, and the era compelled religious leaders to adapt or to resist.2

But the external context in which the evolutionists’ celebration sat—American science as a whole—underwent a transformation between 1925 and 1968 as well. Edward J. Larson reflected upon the ease with which William Jennings Bryan and his allies silenced the voice of scientific authority in the Scopes scenario. “In such a milieu, scientists could exert little influence against anti-evolution sentiment. Their loud pleas against anti-evolution legislation in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas went unheeded, their expert testimony was barred from the Scopes trial, and the Scopes appellate brief of the Tennessee Academy of Science had no appreciable effect on the state supreme court.”3 But by the 1960s the number of American scientists increased by no less than a factor of ten, and the national investment in science had increased from tens of millions in the 1920s to several billion dollars. World War II and the Cold War were primarily responsible for these trends. The Russian launch of the Sputnik satellite which could potentially serve as nuclear-weapons platform jolted the American public into an emergency mindset about science education, and evolutionary biologists benefitted, as “the National Science Foundation began funding the Biological Science Curriculum Study (BSCS) in 1959” ending a “thirty-year truce in legal activities enveloping the anti-evolution


3 Larson, Trial and Error, p. 89.
issue". Numbers claimed that the 1963 launch of the BSCS texts “created a furious backlash” against evolutionary theory.

There was one final omen which worried America’s religious community and foreshadowed difficulties to come for creationists—the Supreme Court’s reinterpretation of the First Amendment in light of the Fourteenth Amendment (see chapter four). With *Everson vs. Board of Education* (1947) the Court had defended a strict wall of separation between church and state. With the 1962 and 1963 rulings against school prayer and Bible reading, the Court had further defined the limited domain according to the Fourteenth Amendment that Protestant religion could occupy without infringing on the rights of outsiders to the faith. As public schools were vehicles of the state and evolutionary science became identified with state interests, creationists faced the possibility that their children would be subject to a force-feeding of Darwinism if the parents could not acquire another means of schooling.

Therefore, in four decades a myriad of forces—the consolidation of biological disciplines around Darwinism, wars and the Communist empire of the Soviets, and the Supreme Court’s defense of the rights of citizens who did not participate in the Protestant majority—converged to make the defense of creationism in the public sphere increasingly difficult. However, sitting in Switzerland surrounded by young people of differing education, spiritual interest, and backgrounds, Schaeffer dispensed wisdom and showed hospitality (see chapter five). Among his many disciples were evangelicals and fundamentalists who found his willingness to engage secular trends thoughtfully to be a liberation.

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6 Larson, *Trial and Error*, pp. 93-95.
One of the liberated was Charles Thaxton (1939-), who had a conservative Texas upbringing and a deep interest in matters of science and faith. Born in Dallas, Thaxton grew up in nearby Grand Prairie. He attended a Southern Baptist church and a junior college in Arlington (now a branch of the University of Texas system). He completed his undergraduate training at Texas Tech and completed a master’s in chemistry there. At Iowa State he secured a Ph.D. in physical chemistry in 1970 with a dissertation on the X-ray diffraction studies of small molecules. Fascinated with the creation-evolution controversy even as a youth, he converted to Christianity at approximately thirteen years of age. Graduating from high school the year of the Sputnik flight (1957), Thaxton claimed that the launch also motivated his interest in science. A professor in his Iowa State years introduced him to the writings of the father of creation science, Henry Morris.\footnote{Charles Thaxton, interview by author, February 11, 2012.} Thaxton was a typical product of the huge evangelical subculture of the South, but the turmoil of the sixties dared to overturn the theological certainties of Thaxton’s generation, and a new voice that could speak the language of secular modernity was sorely needed.

Thaxton soon got word of a man in Switzerland capable of crossing the communication divide between the evangelical enclave and the outside world. Noting the profound chasm that came to light between American evangelicals and secular Europeans, Thaxton recounted his amazement at Francis Schaeffer’s ability to synthesize cultural fragments into whole worldview statements:

It must have been 1967 when a roommate of mine graduated from Iowa State and joined Campus Crusade. Campus Crusade in those years was going to have a team of seventy and they [the team] went to England….The whole purpose of going to England was to engage students in evangelism and do what could be done. But when they arrived in England, [people responded] “What are you guys doing? This is stupid. We know all about this Christian stuff. We have long since turned away...
from it.” Nobody had any idea how to present the claims of Christ in way that made sense to them [the hearers]. Over Christmas break in sixty-seven, [word came] about a man who was very effective in talking to the educated people. So he went to Switzerland.

Poring over Schaeffer’s writings was a turning point for the young academic. Thaxton continued:

If what Schaeffer is saying is right, then what I think affects everything in my life and I had never had that thought before ... Here was insight .... The more I read, the more I realized that what Schaeffer was doing was showing that all knowledge is related. Up to this time, I was not a student; I was just doing what the curriculum said I should study to get through a course.  

Impressed by this evidence, Thaxton joined the L’Abri community in Switzerland from the fall of 1970 to the summer of 1971.

Thaxton describes life at L’Abri as split between work detail and taking classes. The profile of the average attendee was striking. “There were very few people who were not in college, or out of college, or on their way to India to find a guru to work with.” Evangelicals from the Deep South were a “very small” percentage, and a high number were from European countries. Asians were also a noticeable group. Academics in different fields were another subset of the population, including scientists. Overall, the visitors were confronted with Schaeffer’s view of the relationship of Christianity to the modern world, and, in Thaxton’s estimation, were consistently surprised at Schaeffer’s success at making the ancient gospel message relevant to concerns of the day. 

A critical aspect of Schaeffer’s teaching method was to establish an apologetics framework, or a Christian’s possible answers to the basic philosophical questions, as the launching point for classes that centered around listening to audiotapes of lectures. Thaxton

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found this apologetics approach “electrifying…[because] it tied tons of things together…but it was done so that you didn’t have to be a philosopher [to understand it].” Thus everyone at L’Abri had one basic understanding of what Schaeffer’s sense of the Christian worldview was. Schaeffer encouraged the back-and-forth debate format during his lectures, and he would also invite philosophical opponents to present their views in a lecture. Schaeffer gave his opponents “the time of day”, in Thaxton’s words.¹⁰

Thaxton asked himself how one could explain the credibility of Schaeffer’s position to academics given that he lacked a formal doctorate and yet presumed to speak about vast segments of Western civilization?

[Schaeffer] worked very hard to educate himself. He read widely in many disciplines…He wanted to understand what was going on in the world. But [as for] how he found the books, he was an avid reader, from cover to cover, of Newsweek. He read every single issue of Newsweek. Every week it came out, he devoured it. And for years that’s what he did. He thought Time was okay, but Newsweek was the avant garde of newsmagazines.¹¹

In response to the claim of some that Schaeffer was never seen reading a book, Thaxton explained that he read upstairs in his apartment, that he was a very purpose-driven man, and that he seldom came down merely to socialize.¹² Thaxton, in fact, compared Schaeffer’s experience to that of Christ: both were written off by the elites of their societies as unlearned. Schaeffer “had a very unconventional education, and as a result of that he could relate to the common people the way these professors can’t often.”¹³

¹⁰ Ibid.
¹¹ Ibid.
¹² Ibid. Barry Hankins makes the statement on page 43 of Francis Schaeffer.
Thaxton also remembered that Schaeffer could speak the theological language of other evangelicals separated from the Presbyterian stream. The hearty reception Schaeffer received from both the staunchly Calvinistic Covenant Seminary (St. Louis) and the dispensational fundamentalist Dallas Theological Seminary needed explanation; Schaeffer stated to Thaxton that “They’re saying the same thing in different words but they don’t know it. I don’t change my message. I just change the terminology to appeal to one group or another.” Schaeffer saw so much terrain in common between these groups of Christians that differences in theology essentially sat in the background. This irenic spirit of Schaeffer’s proved to be essential to his argument for cobelligerence among parties during the late seventies.\(^\text{14}\)

Based on personal notes taken while listening to Schaeffer, Thaxton outlined principles Schaeffer identified which, when taken together, encapsulated his understanding of the biblical worldview.

A personal supernatural beginning in a personal environment, “in the beginning God”.

All else that exists outside of God is dependent and is created by God.

Man has a qualitative difference from the other created things, because man is made in God’s likeness.

The present situation is abnormal. In other words, there was a real space-time fall in history.

There was a completely non-humanistic solution that is needed. Something that does not start from man. From the God side, He initiates the solution.

A supernatural worldview, a cause and effect relationship between the seen and unseen.

History is going someplace….it is going to an end. The second coming of Christ.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^\text{14}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{15}\) Ibid.
In Thaxton’s words, the seven points formed the basis of how Schaeffer presented the Christian story to an audience. Thaxton understood that Schaeffer wanted groups, perhaps students who had a fragmentary knowledge of Christianity, to hear the list as a system in order to allow the Christian answer to have a total effect.

But how close was Schaeffer to fundamentalism? Thaxton would not acknowledge Hankins’s idea that Schaeffer’s last portion of his life was essentially a swing back into fundamentalism in the 1970s due to Schaeffer’s alliance with Jerry Falwell. The basic beliefs listed above were intended to present the biblical message in brief to anyone, and Schaeffer repeatedly warned about unwarranted narrowness, but the desire to bring his program to fruition coupled with Schaeffer’s terminal cancer diagnosis encouraged conceiving of Falwell as a cobelligerent. Only in these difficult circumstances did Schaeffer decide to join Falwell, a product of Southern American fundamentalist history. Schaeffer had come to know him primarily through reading while in Switzerland, and was in the main insulated from much of Falwell’s activity.16 Falwell did not automatically trust Schaeffer either (see chapter seven).

Schaeffer’s lecture, “A Change in the Concept of Law”, defended the idea, seen in the preceding chapter, that since America was a direct product of the Reformation. Since the notion that “law is king” persisted in American life, the legal system must not be changed as the Supreme Court had done in affirming the rights of African Americans on the matter of segregation and non-Christians on the matter of church and state. Thaxton noted that while he

16 Ibid. Nonetheless, Hankins was convinced that Schaeffer remained a committed fundamentalist even while he built a reputation at L’Abri as a cosmopolitan evangelical. The controversies of the 1970s encouraged the fundamentalist Schaeffer to re-emerge. “He remained part of the conservative mainstream of evangelicalism in many ways, insisting on the necessity of a literal interpretation of Genesis and the inerrancy of the Bible in all matters, including history and science.” (Barry Hankins, Francis Schaeffer, p. 136).
was at L’Abri Schaeffer sometimes discussed the actions of the Supreme Court without going in depth. At the same time Schaeffer reflected on the origin of the American system:

He was very much interested in how the Reformation influenced the founders. See, there’s been a long history of saying that the Reformation was minimized [in American historical study], but the Enlightenment was maximized. He would have resisted that, and he did resist that… All of that he was dealing with was in terms trying to understand what the Scriptures were trying to convey. That’s why he went back and put a lot of emphasis on Calvin…[He wrote *How Shall We Then Live?* in 1976] to understand this concept of sociological law. He thought that all these changes that were going on had deep roots, and that we better understand them and have a proper evaluation of them because they are sweeping away our understanding of the Scripture. Words are changing meaning. Just because someone says dignity, it doesn’t mean the same, depending on who’s using it and how they define the terms. So he was very concerned about all the changes that were happening in society that were a challenge to the historic understanding of Christianity. And so when the courts were making decisions that affected millions of lives, [he believed] that he had to deal with that.\(^{17}\)

Schaeffer conceived of the shift within a dualistic framework of good and evil on account of his worldview, despite the fact that a pluralism of groups acting each in its own interests came forward for very different causes.

Another dualism that characterized Schaeffer’s rhetoric dealt with theses and antitheses. Schaeffer discussed the concept of antithesis to critique the philosophy of Hegel, although Hankins evaluated Schaeffer’s treatment of Hegel and finds significant misunderstanding on Schaeffer’s part: he interpreted the Hegelian synthesis of thesis and antithesis as a middle ground between the two, while for Schaeffer himself antithesis involved setting Christianity against its opposite. Schaeffer saw Hegel’s synthesis therefore as an eradication of the differences, while for Schaeffer the difference was something necessary to preserve in order to avoid falling into Hegelian relativism. But Hegel, according to Hankins, was no modern relativist.\(^{18}\)

\(^{17}\) *Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

\(^{18}\) Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, pp. 41 and 99.
For Thaxton, Schaeffer in the 1960s spoke about and discussed evolution as part of a larger critique of changes in Western culture about the understanding of what humanity is and where it came from. Thaxton celebrated the fact that Schaeffer was especially known for his ability to converse with people whose worldviews were greatly at odds with his own. Schaeffer held that truth never changes but the packaging of truth can alter to meet the needs of targeted groups.\(^{19}\)

**Schaeffer on Evolution**

**Schaeffer’s response to Arthur Koestler**

Schaeffer gave a two-part lecture series in 1968 entitled “Chance and Evolution” in which he began with the radical proposals of Arthur Koestler. Koestler (1905-1983) a journalist and author best known for his depiction of communism in the novel *Darkness at Noon* (1940), wrote on a wide variety of topics.\(^{20}\) It was an essay Koestler published in the spring of 1968 that Schaeffer used to demonstrate that evolution had resulted in neurological chaos for humans. “Koestler puts forth the concept that the dilemma of man is that he has these three brains, and these three brains have come through the evolutionary process, and that the three brains work against each other”; Schaeffer ultimately simplified the matter to just two brains: “the higher brain works with intellect, and the lower brain works with emotions.”\(^{21}\) Koestler argued that there was an incomplete dominance of rational thinking in the human mind, because, despite “a transition from the domination of the old [\lower] brain toward the domination of the

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\(^{19}\) Charles Thaxton, interview by author, February 11, 2012.


\(^{21}\) Francis Schaeffer, *Chance and Evolution-Part 2*, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 12.1b (CD), Spring 1968.
new[/higher brain]” a dilemma remained.\textsuperscript{22} “But quite apart from emotional upsets and pathological conditions, the transition even in the normal person can never be complete. The \textit{schizophreniology is built into our species.”}\textsuperscript{23}

Schaeffer, who understood Darwin to have established progressive evolution, capitalized on the idea that evolution had actually created a fragmented personality rather than a higher form. Schaeffer deduced from Koestler’s argument that schizophrenic characteristics were not the result of illness but the ordinary brain and “the physical makeup of man” in its “normalcy”. “So now you find where this whole concept [of evolution] has come.”\textsuperscript{24} Thus Koestler’s concept of nature allowed for destructive products of evolution to emerge. Schaeffer could not reconcile humanity’s seemingly natural state to God’s will. “He [Koestler] sees our abnormality to be totally normal because of the evolutionary process.”\textsuperscript{25} Christian teaching instead stated that man’s abnormality resulted not from biology but from the Fall into sin in the Garden of Eden. But unlike the redemption of the gospel, Koestler’s vision of humanity’s possibilities was ultimately absurd and hopeless.

Regardless, one thing was certain for Schaeffer. The optimism of Darwin’s Victorian age about human potential had evaporated in the chaos of the twentieth century. Schaeffer noted that optimism rooted in a semi-Christian view had colored Darwin’s understanding: “Darwin had the dream. Darwin was still functioning, we would say, on the Christian mentality [the idea of upward progress].”\textsuperscript{26} Koestler’s conclusions cast aside Darwin’s hope for humanity.

\textsuperscript{22} Koestler, “Is Man’s Brain an Evolutionary Mistake?”, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid}. Emphasis is Koestler’s.

\textsuperscript{24}Francis Schaeffer, \textit{Chance and Evolution-Part 2}.

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Ibid}. 

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Nonetheless, Koestler offered a solution: create an artificial remedy for a natural flaw. What ancient man could not do, modern man would accomplish through the use of the new tool at his disposal—technology.

Our biological evolution to all intents and purposes came to a standstill in Cro-Magnon days. Since we cannot in the foreseeable future expect the necessary change in human nature to arise by way of a spontaneous mutation, that is, by natural means, we must induce it by artificial means. We can only hope to survive as a species by developing techniques that supplant biological evolution. We must search for a cure for the schizophysiology inherent in man’s nature, and for the resulting split in our minds, which led to the situation in which we find ourselves.\(^{27}\)

Schaeffer summarizes Koestler’s argument by stating that given evolution’s failure to produce sane human beings, humanity itself must take hold of its biological development to prevent its own self-destruction. In Koestler’s despairing conclusion, “To go on preaching sweet reason to an inherently unreasonable species is, as history shows, a fairly hopeless task. Evolution has let us down; we can only hope to survive if we develop techniques that supplant it by inducing the necessary changes in human nature.”\(^{28}\)

Schaeffer’s central point about Koestler’s article was that the narrative Koestler was writing about evolution, the human brain, and reason had elements a Christian could appreciate, but Koestler was ultimately moving away from any acknowledgment of a Creator and the Genesis fall. Therefore, Koestler’s pursuit was both futile and dangerous:

This would make a good Christian statement if he gave a Christian answer, because it’s like saying to man, “Be good.” And he says, “Well, it doesn’t work”….The Christian then says, “Well, there has to be another answer than ‘be good’”. And then you have to look at God’s solution. And the reason this makes sense is because man’s problem is not by biological schizophrenia. But it is rather because man is a rebel. So there is a possible solution….But now Koestler comes along and


\(^{28}\) Ibid., p. 41.
of course he says, “We’ve tried and we’ve tried to preach sweet reason, but somehow it doesn’t work.”

Koestler’s secular outlook was the cause for this frustration.

God is ruled out of all of this, so then now man has to find a solution. But what kind of great and high and wonderful solution is man going to do in order to solve this problem when you can’t preach sweet reason to an unreasonable species.

Schaeffer came to the climax of his criticism of evolutionary theory:

I rather love that…at the moment when we need evolution, it’s letting us down, but in the past we put complete faith in it. Evolution has brought us where we are, but now at our own moment of history when it’s open to observation and verification you can’t verify it. So interestingly enough, you have the same problem as the modern theologian, who removes the Bible from the area of verification and leaves then only nonsense. You have exactly the same thing here. That at just the moment if ever evolution could prove its point…but no. So the interesting thing is the very thing the modern theologian does by removing the Bible out of the verification [likewise] in reality this [evolution] is removed out of the area of verification at the exact moment when we could really look at it. So now at the present moment just when we really need evolution, somehow or other this good old evolution that brought us this far is letting us down. So now we are going to do something about it.

What Schaeffer meant by “verification” was not made clear, other than his comment that the process had an opportunity “to prove its point”, presumably meaning to create a higher form of life. Failing this, evolution had resulted in “nonsense”. Thus first Schaeffer dismissed evolution because he imagined it promised an advance in the development of living things and had instead resulted in chaos. Second, Koestler’s remedy for the dire situation of the human brain confirmed Schaeffer’s worst fears.

Koestler echoed the sentiment of scientists that mind-controlling drugs should be created to right the evolutionary imbalance in the brain. Schaeffer was shocked by Koestler’s hope that

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29 Francis Schaeffer, *Chance and Evolution-Part 2.*


drugs might “counteract misplaced devotion and that militant enthusiasm, both murderous and suicidal, that we see reflected in the pages of the daily newspaper.” Schaeffer replied:

If there has ever been a sentence that meant the death of man, that’s it. From now on, society is going to have a drug that’ll just keep you quiet and you won’t ever be militant in your enthusiasm again. The dilemma comes...[with the fact that] this is the glory of man, this is the difference between man and something else...In other words, can you really have the glory of man if you are going to use a drug to kill his enthusiasm? The answer is no. Christianity says, you see, there is nothing wrong with enthusiasm.

Schaeffer concludes that Koestler’s solution was effectively a super-tranquilizer. But then came the climax of Schaeffer’s review: the issue of authoritarian government loomed.

Koestler claimed to understand the risk his proposal entailed: “I am aware that ‘control of the mind’ and ‘manipulating human beings’ have sinister undertones. Who is to control the controls, manipulate the manipulators?” That was not enough for Schaeffer, who openly condemned Koestler’s proposal:

By this time, you ought to be really holding your hat. Now he says, “I see there is a danger,” but he never put forth an answer to the danger. Because of course this is a super weapon, this is the super weapon above all super weapons...Just think how Hitler would have loved to have had such a super-tranquilizer to put into the water system.”

Schaeffer in closing this particular section of his lecture noted that the optimism about evolution as a progressive force in the nineteenth century had evaporated by the time of Koestler’s writing.

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32 Koestler, “Is Man’s Brain an Evolutionary Mistake?”, p. 42. According to David Cesarani, in the 1960s Koestler attacked behaviorism, which “demeaned consciousness”. Thus Koestler became drawn to brain function, and this fascination led him into a relationship with the guru of LSD at the time, psychologist Timothy Leary. (Koestler speculated about developing a philosophy of drug use to eliminate aggression.) Leary had been in correspondence with Koestler since 1959; Koestler experimented with mushrooms at Leary’s house near Harvard in 1960 but came away from the experience disillusioned with power of drugs to affect creativity positively. Koestler’s commitment to hard empiricism was not altered by the mind-altering experience. See David Cesarani, Arthur Koestler: The Homeless Mind (New York: The Free Press, 1998), pp. 466-468.

33 Francis Schaeffer, Chance and Evolution-Part 2.

34 Koestler, “Is Man’s Brain an Evolutionary Mistake?”, p. 42.

35 Francis Schaeffer, Chance and Evolution-Part 2.
Importantly, Schaeffer did not exert his energy in presenting an alternative paradigm to natural selection, only in questioning Darwin’s idea. Schaeffer continued to add to the doubt with the help of a group of mathematicians, to whom he turned next.

**The Wistar symposium**

In a brief statement Schaeffer commented upon a recent challenge to evolutionary biology from the field of mathematics. He described the central concern as being “difficulty [that] chance produced the wonderful external universe” or the “problem that the modern mathematician is raising at just the point where Darwin was uncomfortable, and that was, could chance produce it [life’s complexity]?” An article from *Scientific Research* laid out the specifics:

> Philosophical and methodological objections to evolutionary theory have been well-voiced for several years now, and it is said that even Darwin himself remained troubled by the same questions currently preoccupying more and more biologists: can the complexity and diversity of life be understood simply as the result of *random variations* which are selected according to the criteria of “survival of the fittest” (Darwinism)—or “survival of those who leave the most offspring” (neo-Darwinism)?

Schaeffer had discovered an open attack against biology not from the sectarian world of fundamentalist Protestantism but from within the university culture. There was no need to resort to quoting Scripture as the final authority. He concluded “that in two and half billion years it is not conceivable that chance could produce the complexities of this world.”

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38 Francis Schaeffer, *Chance and Evolution-Part 2.*
appeared defensible after all. “I don’t think it’s the Biblical Christianity that requires the blind leap of faith. I think it’s quite the other way. I think Darwin’s basic mistake was intellectual.”

Thus here in the late sixties one discovers the basis for opposition to Darwinism divorced from the concerns of the Adventist George McCready Price and the Baptist Henry Morris. Four academics challenged the biological paradigm: Murray Eden, a professor of electrical engineering at MIT, Stanislaw Ulam, a research advisor at Los Alamos National Laboratories, Victor Weisskopf, professor of physics at MIT, and Marcel Schutzenberger, professor of mathematics at the University of Paris, undertook a “dialogue with geneticists”. The *Scientific Research* article reflected a developing debate that had begun informally and then took public form as a symposium at the Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology in Philadelphia in April 1966. The meeting was not a creationist vs. evolutionist confrontation but was celebrated by creationists like Schaeffer for poking holes in the edifice of Neo-Darwinism. Importantly, academic luminaries participated, including Loren C. Eiseley, professor of anthropology and the history of science at the University of Pennsylvania, Richard C. Lewontin, professor of zoology at the University of Chicago, and Ernst Mayr, professor of comparative zoology at Harvard University and well-known as a participant in the Neo-Darwinian synthesis.

39 Ibid.

41 According to the Institute’s website, it was named in 1892 for Caspar Wistar, a Philadelphia physician and was “the nation’s first independent biomedical research facility.” Beginning his practice in 1787, Wistar achieved eminence as a teaching professor, serving as “chair of the Department of Anatomy of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine” and collecting an immense number of preserved specimens for a museum. A great-nephew initiated and funded the building of the Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology in the 1890s. In the twentieth century, the Wistar Institute established a prominent place in research, delving into diverse areas, such as vaccine development, cancer research, and genetics. The 1966 engagement is not mentioned in the website history, but apparently by the 1960s the work of Wistar generated enough notice to be worthy of evolutionists’ attention. (Unnamed author, “The Institute—Our History,” http://www.wistar.org/the-institute/our-history [accessed May 25, 2012.])
The central question had to do with time: “Has there been enough time for natural
selection, as it is seen through the eyepieces of Darwinism or neo-Darwinism, to operate and
give rise to the observed phenomena of nature?” Eden attacked evolutionary theory for being
tautologous. “That is, they [biologists] only restate the fact that only the properties of organisms
which survive to produce offspring do survive.” “Such a conceptual system,” he continued, “is
vacuous and, as others have complained, is incapable of disproof.”

At the heart of the controversy were two clashing paradigms of how evolution and
specifically selection worked. The mathematicians imagined a blind floundering through
countless possible outcomes. At the heart of the mathematicians’ skepticism was a vision of the
development of life that made chance the primary force in natural selection. “Since we do exist,
there is some path by which we have arrived in this very small corner of a tremendous space of
possibilities in only a small number of generations.” Eden’s paradigm for evolution made a
farce of selection’s power:

If random point mutations along the DNA gene string is taken seriously as the
primary motivation of evolutionary change, then, he suggests, “the chance of
emergence of man is like the probability of typing at random a meaningful library
of one thousand volumes using the following procedure: Begin with a meaningful
phrase, retype it with a few mistakes, make it longer by adding letters, and
rearrange subsequences in the string of letters; then examine the result to see if the
new phrase is meaningful. Repeat the process until the library is complete.”

Eden’s natural conclusion was that billions of years was not sufficient to explain the complexity
life’s “library”. Schaeffer did not elaborate on the controversy—only making the statement that

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42 Bernhard, “Heresy in the halls of biology”, p.59.
43 Ibid., p. 60. Emphasis is Bernhard’s.
44 Ibid.
the computer results according to the mathematicians had yielded chance incapable of producing complexity in the given time of geological history.

Schaeffer ignored the opportunity to depict the biologists’ vision of evolution and its qualitative features that differed with the mathematicians’ understanding. Sewall Wright, a geneticist from the University of Wisconsin, presented an altogether different paradigm of natural selection, making the process a nonrandom journey through a forest of an immensely diverse and random collection of possible outcomes.

Sewall Wright…a founder of the classical, mathematical theory of population genetics, seize on the fact that natural selection only appears vacuous when only a single step is considered. “Considered over a long succession of little steps,” asserts Wright, “it is the only guiding principle that has stood up under experiments.”

Aiming at Eden’s contention of the implausibility of random variation having selected viable proteins from $10^{325}$ possible proteins, each consisting of 250 amino acids, he rejects this challenge with a “numbers game” of his own: “On the principle of the children’s game of twenty questions in which it is possible to arrive at the correct one of about a million objects by a succession of 20 yes-and-no answers, it would require less than 1250 questions to arrive at a specified one of these proteins. While this is not a perfect analogy to natural selection, it is enormously more like natural selection than the typing at random of a library of 1000 volumes with its infinitesimal chance of arriving at any sensible result.”

And though Schaeffer did not make comment directly upon the Wistar symposium—which predated his lecture by a year—there Ernst Mayr also warned against non-realistic computer modeling of the complexities of biology. In his conclusion Mayr stated:

What does all this mean to him who wants to simulate evolution with the help of the computer? I think it should mean one thing in particular, which is that the approach adopted should not be too simplistic. To be sure, one will have to start with a set of simplified assumptions and expand from them gradually; but in the end one would have to adopt for every set of factors a far greater range of extremes than was believed necessary or even possible only twenty years ago. Evolution, again and again, has resulted in unique phenomena and in startlingly unpredictable

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46 Ibid., p. 61.
phenomena. If we set up our programs in too deterministic a manner, I am afraid we will never be able to arrive at a realistic interpretation of evolution.\(^{47}\)

Schaeffer set aside these nuanced points and instead focused on the doubt Eden and his colleagues created about Darwin. This doubt was extended in a later L’Abri lecture (part of the same series entitled “Chance and Evolution”) that centered upon the arguments of Michael Polanyi describing the insufficiency of chemical and physical laws to account for the realities of biology. Schaeffer was ready to exploit another secular source for the cause of defending a conservative reading of Genesis. Nonetheless, it is striking that in the case of Eden and his colleagues one found a vastly divergent conception of evolution even within the academic world; clearly the task of the Darwinists in educating America had not even yet persuaded the university leadership completely. For this reason, Schaeffer had real cause to celebrate.

**The Influence of Michael Polanyi**

By the 1960s, Michael Polanyi (1891-1976) was already well-known in scholarly circles. Polanyi held two doctorates—one in medicine and another in physical chemistry—from the University of Budapest, and was best known for his work *Personal Knowledge* (1958) the title of which suggests its major theme: an individual’s perspective shapes his perception of truth.\(^{48}\) Schaeffer discussed Polanyi’s questioning of scientific certainties as the philosopher sought to re-position biology among the sciences in a 1967 article. “When I say that life transcends physics and chemistry, I mean that biology cannot explain life in our age by the current workings of physical and chemical laws.”\(^{49}\)


Polanyi set forth two examples—DNA and machines. Neither situation was comprehensible using merely the physical sciences; about DNA he commented that “the form and function of the resulting biological system cannot be explained by the laws governing its parts.” He drew a parallel with administrative hierarchies, in which the principle of a higher authority governing lower levels “while relying on the autonomous workings of these lower levels” was an architectural feature. Another illustration came from the world of machines, which demonstrated “irreducibility” in that “their design, shape, and operation are comprehensive features not due to physical and chemical forces.”

Polanyi’s premise was that the information content obvious in DNA had to be the result of something at work above the principles of physics and chemistry. He drew a parallel with literature: “A DNA molecule essentially transmits information to a developing cell. Similarly, a book transmits information. But the transmission of the information cannot be represented in terms of chemical and physical principles.” Any vehicle that transmitted information could be reduced to its physical properties—therefore some “higher” must be operative to enable the information transfer. Polanyi admitted that his conceptual framework ran counter to the opinion of most biologists and had been directly assaulted by one of the co-discoverers of DNA, Francis Crick, “who is convinced that all life can be ultimately accounted for by the laws of inanimate nature.”

One image guided Polanyi’s conviction. “By virtue of the principle of boundary control, mechanistic structures of living beings appear to be likewise irreducible [like machines].”

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50 Ibid., p. 55. The emphasis is Polanyi’s.
51 Ibid. The emphasis is Polanyi’s.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., p. 56.
Polanyi then discussed machines in a manner reminiscent of William Paley’s famous watch illustration as a proof of intelligent designer’s existence, but Polanyi did not go so far as to invoke the divine: “They [machines] do not come into being by physical-chemical equilibration, but are shaped by man. They are shaped and designed for a specific purpose, which they achieve by the interaction of their characteristic parts working in accordance with distinctive operational principles.”

Polanyi then organized his apology for boundary control in biological systems in two steps. First he stated an obvious objection: “But morphological structures are not shaped by man; could they not grow to maturity by the working of purely physical-chemical laws?” Polanyi immediately dismissed the notion that physics and chemistry themselves existed without boundary conditions, i.e., without laws that controlled their functioning and processes. Polanyi envisioned two levels of control in both machines and living things.

The boundary conditions of the physical-chemical changes taking place in a machine are the structural and operational principles of the machine. We say therefore that the laws of inanimate nature operate in a machine under the control of operational principles that constitute (or determine) its boundaries. Such a system is clearly under dual control.

The relationship between the two controls—the devices of engineering and the laws of natural science—is not symmetrical. The machine is a machine by having been built and being then controlled according to principles of engineering. The laws of physics and chemistry are indifferent to these principles: they would go on working in the fragments of the machine if it were smashed. But they serve the machine while it lasts; machines rely for their operations always on the laws of physics and chemistry.

Polanyi then explained the application to living things:

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54 Ibid., pp. 57-59.
55 Ibid., p. 60.
56 Ibid., p. 61.
57 Ibid., p. 61. Emphasis is Polanyi’s.
We must ask what the boundary conditions are within which physics and chemistry do explain biotic phenomena. The answer is found in the fact that biochemistry and biophysics are always concerned with processes that have a bearing on an existing organism. These sciences seek to determine the chemical and physical principles on which the organism relies for its operations…

Administrative hierarchies are common examples of a higher authority governing lower levels, while relying on the autonomous workings of these lower levels. Hierarchies formed by successive levels of the organism have been described similarly.58

Polanyi then reached a climax: biology was a higher-order principle that controlled “the boundary conditions within which the forces of physics and chemistry carry on the business of life. This dual action of a system is said to work by the principle of boundary control.”59

Polanyi then turned to DNA in order to prove the notion of boundary control applied to the genetic code. In relating DNA to the unfolding process of development, he stated that “it is DNA itself that introduces within its chemical structure a pattern that acts as a controlling framework to the ensuing generative process.”60 This connection occurred by DNA’s “transmitting to its [an organism’s] cells a quantity of information that induces in them an equivalent amount of organic differentiation.”61

Polanyi saw the relationship between DNA and an organism’s morphology as a transmission of information that transcended physics and chemistry. His extended argument represented the crux of the paper. The use of parallelism was at the heart of Polanyi’s case.

A written or printed text functions by its structure alone, without generating motion; it acts passively by being read. A plant or an animal, recognizable by its shape, its pattern, and its coloring may be said to transmit information likewise passively, by being seen. The boundary condition generating this function consists

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58 Ibid. Emphasis is Polanyi’s.
59 Ibid. Emphasis is Polanyi’s.
60 Ibid., p. 62.
61 Ibid.
in the case of such a plant or animal in its typical appearance, its morphology. If DNA is regarded as bearing a pattern that forms part of an organism and as transmitting information through this pattern, then such a pattern is to be classed likewise as a morphological feature of the organism, and hence be irreducible to terms of physics and chemistry.

By the same token, any chemical compound bearing a complex structure and transmitting thereby substantial information to its neighborhood must be irreducible to physics and chemistry in respect to this particular feature.62 Therefore, the form of an organism was a product of the transmission of information via DNA and could not be reduced to activity on the level of chemistry and physics, but involved a higher-level process, thence having an administrative quality. Without invoking a Creator, Polanyi emboldened creationists. Schaeffer recognized the potential of Polanyi’s argument quickly.

Schaeffer expressed a high level of enthusiasm for Polanyi’s ideas but also sought to extend the scholar’s conclusions into the realm of theology. First, Schaeffer noted the position of Francis Crick, a co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, as typical of the scientific community toward religion: “He has a simple proposition. He is completely atheistic. And as such, his work is all committed to an end. It is an end that he wants to reduce a simple form of life to a purely mechanical situation.”63 Schaeffer excitedly described Polanyi’s thesis that DNA is not reducible but is rather an instance of life “transcending” physics and chemistry. He called Polanyi “a tremendous force in the current intellectual world” though being relatively unknown outside the university.64

Schaeffer’s energy sprang from a mistake he believed Polanyi corrected in the history of science. Schaeffer called the period of the scientific revolution, with Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, “modern science” but the later period in which humanity was understood in naturalistic

62 Ibid., p. 62.
63 Francis Schaeffer, Chance and Evolution-Part 3, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 12.2a (CD), Spring 1968.
64 Ibid.
terms “modern modern science”. Polanyi’s paradigm promised to reestablish the barrier between humanity and the impersonal forces of chemistry and physics. Schaeffer pointed out how Polanyi rejected the idea of the reducibility of machines (given their information content) and then extended the significance of the point. Polanyi demonstrated that even machines were not explicable in purely mechanistic terms, as they had information content. Ruling out God as the information-giver in the natural sciences now made no sense if one took Polanyi’s conclusions into the realm of theology. The flaw of “modern modern science” was that “there is no place for God and there’s no place for man. God disappears, and man is included in the machine,” in Schaeffer’s words. Polanyi had overturned the naturalistic history of science through pointing out the role of information in living systems, and as theist Schaeffer exulted in making Polanyi a kind of champion. “And as far as I know—I have listened and listened—and all the arguments I have ever heard about Polanyi, [and] nobody has ever been able to disprove his proposition. I think it is one of the great propositions of the second half of the twentieth century.”

Schaeffer uses Polanyi’s image of DNA as a template to demonstrate that the information-encoding process did not result from the forces of physics and chemistry acting alone. Schaeffer however notes that Polanyi describes the purposive input of information of human designers in fabricating objects but did not follow this notion to its logical conclusion by making a direct parallel to a personal deity constructing DNA.

Schaeffer had no such hesitation. By blurring the relationship between Polanyi’s argument (and, for that matter, the mathematical challenges posed by Eden et al.,) and a generally anti-evolutionist position, Schaeffer secured for Protestant fundamentalists an

65 Ibid.
66 Francis Schaeffer, Chance and Evolution-Part 4, the L’Abri Audio Library at www.soundword.com (Sound Word, Chesterton, IN) 12.2b (CD), Spring 1968.
intellectually respectable alternative to merely quoting scripture to the academy. In Schaeffer’s mind, science originated and developed in western Europe under the influence of a Christian worldview: the Christian consensus assumed God’s reason had created the universe, which was discoverable using human reason, such as in the cases of Copernicus and Galileo in astronomy.\(^6^7\)

Crick and other naturalistically-minded scientists had hijacked science—and Polanyi made possible a redemption, in Schaeffer’s reading, though Polanyi himself failed to see the implications of his own language when he discussed the concept of design. Schaeffer capitalized on the opening Polanyi’s language afforded: references to design and personifying nature pointed to a Creator behind the scenes that Polanyi did not acknowledge but whose presence as the source of information content in biology his theories demanded. Schaeffer faults Polanyi for “semantic mysticism” in making conditions for a Creator’s role but not going far enough.\(^6^8\)

Thus Schaeffer questioned not only the naturalistic basis of biology but also the use of naturalistic categories in science as a whole.

Most importantly, his critique of the presuppositions the scientific intelligentsia took for granted was free of references to a young earth or a global flood. Schaeffer tried to be cordial to his fellow Christian conservatives but casual where he believed basic theological tenets were not vulnerable. His single book-length discussion of origins, *Genesis in Space and Time* (1972), was foremost a rebuttal of liberal theologians’ dismissal of Genesis as mythological rather than a direct polemic against Darwinism; however, in the midst of his arguments about the existence of a historical Adam and a real Fall into disobedience, Schaeffer commented that the genealogies of

\(^{6^7}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{6^8}\) *Ibid.*
Genesis did not amount to a chronology of the earth and that belief in a global flood ought not to be a test of orthodoxy.⁶⁹

Reflecting on Schaeffer’s lectures entitled “Chance and Evolution” in 1968, Thaxton enthusiastically spoke about Michael Polanyi and Murray Eden’s group of mathematicians for deflating Darwinists’ certainty. Thaxton already knew of Polanyi’s influence before dealing with Schaeffer. “I knew about Polanyi before going to L’Abri,” Thaxton said.⁷⁰ As early as 1967, Thaxton read Polanyi’s Chemistry and Engineering News article thoroughly before meeting Schaeffer. He also elaborated that Polanyi’s undermining the role of positivism in science had a profound impact upon him. “Polanyi was very, very influential…because he was one of the earliest [thinkers] I knew of who was talking about these kinds of issues [the origin of information].”⁷¹ The mathematicians who questioned Darwinism’s power were also well-known to Thaxton early. “Scutzenberger and Eden were equally famous on opposite sides of the Atlantic” before the 1966 symposium at the Wistar Institute in Philadelphia, which Thaxton was aware of also before meeting Schaeffer.⁷²

Schaeffer’s role in Thaxton’s experience was to mediate between the Christian subculture and the academic world. Considering Schaeffer’s analysis of Polanyi’s piece “Life Transcending Physics and Chemistry”, Thaxton reflected:

I think the fact that he [Schaeffer] was interested in those kind of things attracted me more than what he actually said…The fact that he was tuned in enough to see this was an important piece and he described it on that tape recording as one of the

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⁷¹ Ibid.
⁷² Ibid.
That is, Schaeffer’s cultural contextualizing of Polanyi and others was more important to Thaxton’s thinking than the particulars of Schaeffer’s analysis. But nonetheless, Thaxton was inclined to trust Schaeffer more broadly as a polymath.

The fact this man who was not really into all these different subjects, the fact he could talk about them as knowledgeably as he did I found very impressive. That gave me a sense of confidence that when he was talking about other areas I didn’t know about that maybe he really was on to something. I could take the level of confidence from the areas I knew and was willing to give the benefit of the doubt when he spoke about other areas I didn’t know about.74

Thaxton was a youthful product of Northern European evangelical Protestant culture who was facing the power of modern science in the 1960s as he entered the academy. In his words, the historic warfare metaphor applied to the science and religion relationship since the 19th century by defenders of Enlightenment naturalism making supernatural explanation superfluous was certainly in tension with Schaeffer’s teaching, which assumed the birth and first stage of science’s history to have involved many people of Christian faith, who brought a Christian worldview to their work without making science “Christian”.75 Many of Thaxton’s generation of theologically conservative young people came to Schaeffer to sort out the relationship of their Reformation faith to not only modern science but art, history, culture, and the issue of rights. As Schaeffer’s thinking evolved in the 1970s, the basic themes he had already developed gained broad appeal among evangelicals and fundamentalists through two books, How Should We Then Live and A Christian Manifesto.

73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Charles Thaxton, interview with author, October 26, 2013.
Schaeffer’s *How Should We Then Live?* (1976)

As we have already seen, Schaeffer deeply distrusted the growth of federal power over the states even for the cause of justice. We have already seen Schaeffer as a vehement defender of states’ rights in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1962 (see chapter five); in the 1970s however, he made public statements calling for improved race relations and the end of racial prejudice at the 1974 international missions conference at Lausanne, Switzerland.\(^76\)

Therefore, on the matter of race, Schaeffer made a separation between valuing *people* and controlling *process*—and above all he denied federal authorities power to control over the process of racial reconciliation. Schaeffer had a deep distrust of the growth of federal power in virtually any area of concern, like Machen his spiritual ancestor. Eventually Schaeffer moved from being an apolitical guide to seekers at L’Abri to a fully politically engaged fundamentalist shoulder to shoulder with the Religious Right, and supportive of the merger of religion and politics known as the Moral Majority, founded in 1979 under the leadership of fundamentalist Jerry Falwell. How did this transformation come about? Celebrity and controversy drew Schaeffer away from his Swiss chalet back to the United States, and he proceeded to expound about science, theology, and the nation, in a hour of turmoil for Christian conservatives unsure of their rights.

Taping lectures at L’Abri and an article in *Time* magazine (see chapter five) were means by which Schaeffer became well-known in certain circles. Increasingly sure he had answers for modern problems, Schaeffer overcame his wife’s initial resistance to travel outside Switzerland. He began to be well-known in American evangelical circles from 1964 when he spoke at

\(^76\) Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 131.
colleges and universities, beginning with Boston schools. In 1968, a young historian at Calvin College named George Marsden reviewed Schaeffer’s visit favorably, though Marsden did remark Schaeffer presumed to speak knowledgeably about large swaths of history that required several academic careers to absorb.

Schaeffer’s lecturing eventually translated into apologetics works, *The God Who is There*, *Escape from Reason* (both published in 1968), and *He is There and He Is Not Silent* (1972). Hankins argues that Schaeffer made too much of a separation between the Renaissance, which Schaeffer considered as purely secularizing, and the Reformation, which modern historians considered as mixed together with the thought development of the Renaissance. But such a narrative also later earned Schaeffer serious political points with fundamentalist leaders seeking to name an enemy primarily rooted in Enlightenment thinking, namely, secular humanism.

Nonetheless, Schaeffer appeared to be the irenic evangelical until the mid-1970s, a radically new voice on the fundamentalist landscape. Hankins called Schaeffer a “progressive prophet of culture” in this period. No better evidence of Schaeffer’s willingness to speculate and speak prophetically existed than *Pollution and the Death of Man* published in 1970. Of course, Schaeffer still revealed a theologically conservative worldview by attacking environmental pantheism. However, the foray into a topic little discussed by his religious community demonstrated Schaeffer’s attempt to make real contact with the culture outside the

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77 Ibid., p. 75.
78 Ibid., p. 77-79.
79 Ibid., pp. 79-105.
80 Ibid., pp. 97-98.
81 Ibid., p. 111.
fundamentalist orbit. Schaeffer appeared to have vestiges of his L’Abri persona in this period, interacting with the issues average college students might hear about as they constructed their worldview.

But as the 1970s progressed, Schaeffer resurrected his fundamentalist identity. “Schaeffer’s tenure as a progressive would be short-lived.” Issues such as abortion and the inerrancy of the Bible suddenly took a lion’s share of Schaeffer’s attention. Hankins comments that in this period “the developing culture war over human life issues pulled him into the conservative camp, where he became much less of an independent voice. His move to the right would be mirrored by a strong reaffirmation of his fundamentalist militancy. The old separatism re-emerged as he waded into what would become known among evangelicals as the ‘battle for the Bible.’” The timing of the “battle for the Bible” was significant. Schaeffer had battled theological liberalism in the past. By the 1970s, questions about the inerrancy of the Bible—the idea that God had essentially dictated the original autographs—arose at Fuller Seminary in California. The concept of dictation meant that divine control over the miraculous creation of the autographs was complete and free of human interference. Harold Lindsell, a former Fuller faculty member, attacked his former school for liberal tendencies in a 1976 book entitled The Battle for the Bible and received Schaeffer’s approval for his work. This was the first battle—in the realm of theology—science and nation were to follow for Schaeffer in overlapping sequence between 1976 and the early 1980s. The three strands united eventually in Schaeffer’s worldview, which soon became influential within the Religious Right.

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82 Ibid., pp. 118-122.
83 Ibid., p. 135.
84 Ibid., p. 143.
Schaeffer’s position that American history and modern science both had their roots in Christianity (especially Reformation Christianity) formed a basis for culture war, as his vision of humanism underwent transformation from its being merely a dangerous worldview to its empowering a human army actively infiltrating the corridors of power in America. With the aid of his son Franky, Schaeffer made his name known with evangelical circles nationally through two books and films, beginning with How Should We Then Live? in 1976. In Hankins’ words, “Anyone wanting to understand Schaeffer’s overarching argument about how western culture moved from a Christian worldview at the time of Aquinas to the relativistic secularism, or what he calls simply secular humanism, of the late twentieth century, need read only How Should We Then Live?”

In this work, Schaeffer’s view of history again became clear: the Reformation was an undiluted restoration of the first-century church. Schaeffer used the word “autonomy” to denote independence from divine rule and rejoiced in his belief that the Reformers were undoing the evils of the secularizing Renaissance. The Reformers denounced the idea that human reason could be autonomous and infinite and upheld the Bible as “the only final authority”; humanism had infiltrated the church in the centuries immediately after Christ, and “at its core, therefore, the Reformation was the removing of the humanistic distortions which had entered the church.”

Hankins summarized Schaeffer’s position as follows. “Early Christianity was pure and biblical; medieval Roman Catholic Christianity became increasingly corrupt; the Renaissance introduced humanism; then the Reformation recaptured true Christianity and held humanism at bay until the

85 Ibid., p.167.
86 Ibid., p. 169.
87 Francis A. Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live?: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976), pp.81-82. Emphases are Schaeffer’s.
twentieth century.” Hankins gave an addendum that is vital to understanding Schaeffer’s view of American law later: “the Protestant Reformation staved off full-blown secularism by reconstituting the Christian base in northern European countries.” In other words, God blessed northern European peoples to be the true inheritors of the legacy of the first-century Christians in terms of the correct interpretation of Scripture. This line of thinking was the bedrock for Schaeffer’s apology for Christian activism, *A Christian Manifesto*, as will be shown.

Schaeffer developed an idea that he nurtured as early as 1962. Hankins’ commentary on *How Should We Then Live?* stated, “In the book’s chapter on the Reformation the new element was the connection between the Reformation and American democracy.” But in fact, as chapter five demonstrates, Schaeffer was elaborating on the influence of Samuel Rutherford upon the founding fathers much earlier than the post-Roe-v.-Wade context of 1976, and the states’ rights argument compelled both Schaeffer’s resistance to *Brown v. Board of Education* as well as school prayer and the abortion ruling. In *How Should We Then Live?* Schaeffer presented a repeat of his earlier argument:

The clearest example of the Reformation principle of a people’s political control of its sovereign is a book written by a Scot, Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661). The book is *Lex Rex*: Law is King…Here was a concept of freedom without chaos because there was a form. Or, to put it another way, here was a government of law rather than of the arbitrary decisions of men—because the Bible as the final authority was there as a base…

Samuel Rutherford’s work and the tradition it embodied had a great influence on the United States Constitution, even though modern Anglo-Saxons have largely forgotten him. This influence was mediated through two sources. The first was John Witherspoon (1723-1794), a Presbyterian who followed Samuel Rutherford’s *Lex Rex* directly and brought its principles to bear on the writing of the Constitution and the laying down of forms and freedoms…

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89 Ibid.

90 Ibid., p. 170.
The second mediator of Rutherford’s influence was John Locke (1632-1704), who, though secularizing the Presbyterian tradition, nevertheless drew heavily from it. He stressed inalienable rights, government by consent, separation of powers, and the right of revolution. But the biblical base for these is discovered in Rutherford’s work. Without this biblical background, the whole system would be without a foundation.\(^9\)

Schaeffer also created a strict separation between the American and French Revolutions that mirrored a conflict he imagined put the Reformation and the Enlightenment at war with each other.\(^9\) Hankins called Schaeffer’s claims about Rutherford’s influence upon American history “a notion shared by few if any American historians”, which served to explain Schaeffer’s later conflict with historians Marsden and Noll (see the next chapter).\(^9\)

Naturalism was also a problem for fundamentalists. Schaeffer’s struggle with evangelicals coming into contact with the Enlightenment university resembled in some ways Henry Morris’ struggle with the American Scientific Affiliation in the fifties and sixties. Both Morris and Schaeffer were seeking a special place for divine revelation in relation to a human institution—in Schaeffer’s case, government, and in Morris’s, the sciences of origins.\(^9\) Schaeffer likewise claimed that the success of science had much to do with Christianity: “The basic argument was that modern science, like democracy, can be attributed primarily to Christianity. The Christian base gave the West the notion that there was an objective universe, created by God and external to humankind, that can be known through reason.”\(^9\) However, in a chapter entitled “The Breakdown in Philosophy and Science,” Schaeffer distinguished between modern science and what he termed the most recent science—“modern modern science”, which


\(^9\) Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, p. 171. See also Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?*, pp. 130-143.
he also discussed above in reference to Michael Polanyi. Schaeffer assumed the Scientific Revolution had a Christian outlook at its root. Science had progressed from a state where natural causes acted in an open system (where God’s intervention was possible) to a state when natural causes acted alone in a closed system, with no space for divine intervention (“modern modern science”). Schaeffer deduced by the eighteenth century God had been pushed out of scientific explanation—all was now a machine, and naturalistic thinking by the twentieth century contaminated the social sciences as well.  

Thus the Enlightenment-based sufficiency of naturalistic explanations—making supernatural causes superfluous to science—was the “breakdown” Schaeffer believed had destroyed the credibility of the scientific establishment.

Evolution was a target for Schaeffer’s attacks both for its philosophical implications and the scientific community’s misplaced confidence. Hankins summarized Schaeffer’s conclusions about the climax of Enlightenment-influenced biology, the work of Charles Darwin, noting that the film version of How Should We Then Live? made a connection between the philosophy of the survival of the fittest and the racist rhetoric of the Nazis. Furthermore, Schaeffer was quick to mention Darwin’s doubters like mathematician Murray Eden: “Statistical studies indicate that pure chance (randomness) could not have produced the biological complexity in the world out of chaos, in any amount of time so far suggested.” Schaeffer therefore foresaw a new tyranny based upon science done without reference to God.

Relativism undergirded this coming world order. “As we have seen, there is a danger that without a sufficient base modern modern science will become sociological science; so civil law has moved toward being sociological law...The only absolute allowed is the absolute insistence

96 Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live?, pp. 146-147.
97 Hankins, Francis Schaeffer, p. 172. See also Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live?, p. 151.
98 Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live?, p. 148.
that there is no absolute.”\textsuperscript{99} The base for both law and science had been Christianity, according to Schaeffer, but since that foundation had disappeared by the 1970s, the society itself was in jeopardy, as the meaning of human life no longer had a fixed definition.

Thus, within a wide range, the Constitution of the United States can be made to say what the courts of the present want it to say—based on a court’s decision as to what the court feels is sociologically helpful at the moment. At times this brings forth happy results, at least temporarily; but once the door is opened, anything can become law and the arbitrary judgments of men are king. Law is now freewheeling, and the courts not only interpret the laws which legislators have made, but make law. \textit{Lex Rex} has become \textit{Rex Lex}. Arbitrary judgment concerning current sociological good is \textit{king}.\textsuperscript{100}

Schaeffer’s case in point was the 1973 \textit{Roe v. Wade} ruling which created wide latitude for women to seek an abortion.\textsuperscript{101} Then Schaeffer asked his pivotal question.

\begin{quote}
And (taking abortion as an example) if this arbitrary absolute by law is accepted by most modern people, bred with the concept of no absolutes but rather relativity, why wouldn’t arbitrary absolutes in regard to such matters as authoritarian limitations on freedom be equally accepted as long as they were thought to be sociologically helpful? We are left with \textit{sociological law} without any certainty of limitation.\textsuperscript{102}
\end{quote}

Rejecting the possibility that the New Left would fill the vacuum of leadership, Schaeffer foresaw instead “an elite composed of intellectuals (especially the academic and scientific world) plus the government.”\textsuperscript{103} Schaeffer believed that elites’ manipulation was possible in multiple ways—three of the most important being through mass psychology, the deification of nature in biology, and the media.\textsuperscript{104} Schaeffer’s vision was a call to immediate action: the prospect of an

\textsuperscript{99} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 217. Emphasis is Schaeffer’s.
\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 218. Emphasis is Schaeffer’s.
\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 218-220.
\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 222. Emphasis is Schaeffer’s.
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 224.
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 228-245.
Authoritarian government ruled by nonbelievers loomed all the while Christians were asleep in their affluence and complacency.\textsuperscript{105}

Schaeffer concluded \textit{How Should We Then Live?} with an image of two worldviews at war for the soul of America and world: “first, imposed order [presided over by the authoritarian elite] or, second, our society once again affirming that base which gave freedom without chaos in the first place—God’s revelation in the Bible and his revelation through Christ.”\textsuperscript{106} Thus he laid the basis for waging a culture war to save the nation without proposing detail as to how such a campaign ought be carried out.

Evolution continued to play a role in Schaeffer’s thinking about the spread of secularism in his next project. In 1979 Schaeffer continued his argument begun in \textit{How Should We Then Live?} in the book and film \textit{Whatever Happened to the Human Race?} which gave biblical arguments against abortion and euthanasia. Working with future Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, Schaeffer successfully persuaded some evangelicals, including the Southern Baptist Convention conservatives whose Convention had lacked a firm position about abortion until Schaeffer made his appeal.\textsuperscript{107} Returning to a familiar theme, Schaeffer made a parallel between abortion and the Nazis’ purge of undesirables.\textsuperscript{108} He added that a certain scientific view of human beings led to their demotion to mere matter, and the Enlightenment was ultimately to blame.\textsuperscript{109} Enlightenment biology had produced evolution, which erased human beings’ status as separated and superior to other life-forms, and the devaluing of people Schaeffer understood to

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 245.

\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 252.

\textsuperscript{107} Hankins, \textit{Francis Schaeffer}, p. 182.

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 186.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 187-188.
result in the promotion of abortion.\textsuperscript{110} Evolution’s structure provided no comfort for the modern person:

Evolution makes men and women feel superior and at the top of the pile, but in the materialistic framework, the whole of reality is meaningless; the concept of “higher” means nothing. Even if, within the humanist world view, people are more complex than plants or animals, both “higher” and “lower” have no meanings. We are left with everything being sad and absurd.

Thus, the concept of progress is an illusion. Only some form of mystical jump will allow us to accept that personality comes from impersonality. No one has offered to explain, let alone demonstrate that it to be feasible, how the impersonal plus time plus chance can give personality. We are distracted by a flourish of words—and lo, personality has appeared out of a hat.\textsuperscript{111}

Thus, with \textit{How Should We Then Live?} and \textit{Whatever Happened to the Human Race?} Schaeffer laid a foundation for culture war between the forces of the Reformation and forces of the Enlightenment, which included academic science. In \textit{A Christian Manifesto}, Schaeffer translated these principles into political and legal action just as the Religious Right came to the public’s attention.

\textbf{A Christian Manifesto (1981)}

Schaeffer foreshadows the subject matter in his dedication, where he described those including the Apostles, the Reformers, and Samuel Rutherford, Presbyterian author of \textit{Lex Rex} who have confronted “oppressive authoritarian civil and church power”.\textsuperscript{112} He mentioned in the preface the input of Christian lawyers, first and foremost of which was John Whitehead, the author of \textit{The Second American Revolution} (1982), a work that warned of secular humanism spread in government and particularly the judiciary.\textsuperscript{113} And as if warning of a general conspiracy,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110}Ibid., pp. 189-190.
\item \textsuperscript{111} Francis A. Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, M.D., \textit{Whatever Happened to the Human Race?} (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979), pp. 140-141.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Francis A. Schaeffer, \textit{A Christian Manifesto} (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), pp. 5-6.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid., pp. 10-11.
\end{itemize}
Schaeffer listed the publication dates of the Communist Manifesto (1848), Humanist Manifesto I (1933) and Humanist Manifesto II (1973).\textsuperscript{114}

His thesis declared that American Christians have failed to see the whole pattern behind things that bother them, such as “permissiveness, pornography, the public schools, the breakdown of the family, and finally abortion.”\textsuperscript{115} These diverse phenomena have a unitary cause—the shift from a Christian worldview to one “based upon the idea that the final reality is impersonal matter or energy shaped into its present form by impersonal chance.”\textsuperscript{116} “These two world views stand as totals in complete antithesis to each other in content and also in their natural results—including sociological and governmental results, and specifically including law.”\textsuperscript{117} Therefore, Schaeffer saw a naturalistic explanation of nature as tied to a relativistic concept of law. The nation’s moral decay found its cause in a naturalistic worldview, which included evolution.

Schaeffer defined the humanistic view opposed to the traditional Christianity as placing humanity at the center of reality instead of God, and the Enlightenment was the historical event at the root of humanism.\textsuperscript{118} Schaeffer was absolutely convinced that the humanist view possessed the minds of those in control of American media, education, and “much of the arbitrary law being produced by the various departments of government.”\textsuperscript{119} Noting that naturalism included Darwin’s theory of survival of the fittest, Schaeffer assumed this to mean a government of “brute

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid., p. 13.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p. 17.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 17-18. Schaeffer singled out astronomer Carl Sagan of the 1980 PBS television series Cosmos for special attack for making that comment that the material universe was the totality of reality (Ibid., p. 44).
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 18.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p. 23-24.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 24.
\end{itemize}
force” which he equated to tyranny. Humanism did not intrinsically value the individual but only the collective—Schaeffer imagined a totalitarian state as the ideal end product of the humanist agenda.

The antidote to ward off this coming secular catastrophe was recollection of the Reformation basis for America’s founding—an argument made in the 1962 lecture “A Change in the Concept of Law” and How Should We Then Live?. Through John Witherspoon, John Locke, and Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Rutherford’s teaching Lex Rex, that law is king and that no one in government stood above biblically derived law, was Schaeffer’s guide to the 1980s scene.

Schaeffer attacked the Supreme Court’s reinterpretation of the First Amendment, which in his mind had only two purposes. The Establishment Clause meant that no federally-sponsored church could dominate over other groups, and the Free Exercise Clause that no federal interference with practice of religion should occur. (Schaeffer noted that early in America’s history, individual states had state churches without violating the Amendment, in an allusion to states rights.) Schaeffer was convinced that humanists controlling America had made the notion of separation of church and state to mean the automatic silencing of Christians when they demanded their rights. He called this situation “totally reversed from the original intent.” He added that the horrific outcomes of the French Revolution were precisely the result of the separation humanists were clamoring for.

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120 Ibid., pp. 26-27.
121 Ibid., pp. 29-30.
122 Ibid., pp. 31-33.
123 Ibid., pp. 34-36.
124 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
The legal ramifications of secular humanism worried Schaeffer most of all. “We live in a secularized society and in secularized, sociological law. By sociological law we mean law that has no fixed base but law in which a group of people decides what is sociologically good for society at the given moment; and what they arbitrarily decide becomes law.”¹²⁵ What Schaeffer called “unfixed, situational ethics” was the basis for sociological law, the epitome of which was the *Roe v. Wade* decision, and the basis for situational ethics was a naturalistic view of science: “But of course! What would we expect? These things are the natural, inevitable results of the material-energy, humanistic concept of the final basic reality. From the material energy, chance concept of final reality, final reality is, and must be by its nature, silent as to values, principles, and or any basis for law.”¹²⁶ Schaeffer believed that the federal judiciary had the power to shape public opinion through its rulings; thus, the government was secularizing America from the top down.¹²⁷

But the court system was not the only problem for defenders of America’s Reformation heritage. Schaeffer also worried openly about pluralism—the nation had grown into a diversified entity and the proportion of citizens revering figures like Rutherford had decreased substantially since 1776. Schaeffer argued that “after about 1848 the great influx of immigrants to the United States meant a sharp increase in viewpoints not shaped by Reformation Christianity.”¹²⁸ A process of dilution was occurring. Schaeffer added that these immigrants enjoyed the freedom the Reformation worldview created and that their own worldviews that they had inherited was

inadequate to create such a free nation.\footnote{Ibid., p. 134.} Thus the Northern Europeans of Reformed background had gifted the other groups without receiving acknowledgement or thanks. Barry Hankins commented that Schaeffer’s attitude appeared prejudicial.\footnote{Hankins, \textit{Francis Schaeffer}, p. 199.}

For all of these reasons, Schaeffer called for culture war, beginning with protesting the Supreme Court’s transformation: the evidence of secular humanism was manifest, and no better evidence existed that the 1961 Supreme Court ruling \textit{Torcaso v. Watkins} acknowledging humanism’s place on the religious landscape. “It shows that within the span of twenty-eight years [from 1933 to 1961] the Supreme Court turned radically from a Christian memory to the humanistic consensus.”\footnote{Schaeffer, \textit{Christian Manifesto}, pp. 54-55.}

Writing in 1981, Schaeffer was eager to join in cobelligerence with any fundamentalist party resisting secular humanism, and the greatest such entity at this time was the Moral Majority, whose public face was Lynchburg, Virginia pastor Jerry Falwell. The Moral Majority had been instrumental in the successful campaign of Ronald Reagan to win the White House in 1980. Schaeffer zealously defended the dualistic vision of good and evil Falwell’s organization imagined:

\begin{quote}
They have carried the fact that law is king, law is above the lawmakers, and God is above the law into this area of life where it always should have been. And this is a part of true spirituality.

The Moral Majority has drawn a line between the one total view of reality and the other total view of reality and the results this brings forth in government and law…But you must understand that all Christians have got to do the same kind of thing or you are simply not showing the Lordship of Christ in the totality of life.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 61-62.}
\end{quote}
Schaeffer returned to the theme of worldviews at war, stating that abortion legalization was the direct manifestation of a materialistic, chance-driven view of science.\textsuperscript{133} However, he celebrated Reagan’s election as a greatest opportunity Christians had to roll back humanism’s impact.\textsuperscript{134} Schaeffer saw the primary battle to be a legal one, as the sociologically-based rulings of the Supreme Court were allowing it to dominate the other two branches of the federal government.\textsuperscript{135}

Schaeffer gave a list of pending court cases involving the rights of Christians. A sampling of the categories will serve to illustrate the increasing demand for public interest law of behalf of the Religious Right: the right of assembly on a high school campus for religious discussion or right of teachers to assemble for prayer, the right of parents of students in religious schools to be exempt from prosecution under truancy laws, the right of a church to fire an employee who was a practicing homosexual, the legality of having a nativity scene in front of city hall or the Ten Commandments in public school room, whether an unborn fetus has constitutional rights, whether singing Christmas carols was permissible in public schools, and whether the State could set academic standards for religious schools.\textsuperscript{136} Citing Samuel Rutherford, Schaeffer went as far as to conclude that Christians always had the right of revolution if their demands were not met: “When any office [arm of civil government] commands that which is contrary to the Word of God, those who hold that office abrogate their authority and they are not to be obeyed.”\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 70.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., p. 73-74.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., p. 81.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., pp. 83-86.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., pp. 90-91. Emphasis is Schaeffer’s. On Rutherford, see pp. 99 and 103.
Ultimately, Schaeffer’s book was a strident defense of states’ rights and of the will of local majorities over the power of federal influence. Approximately at the same time *A Christian Manifesto* was published, a new law guided by the notion of giving equal time to both creationism and evolution in Arkansas schools was being debated as the state of Arkansas faced a challenge from the ACLU on the grounds that the law violated separation of church and state.

But it must be stressed that this concept is entirely new and novel from the viewpoint of the original intent of the First Amendment and the total intent of the Founding Fathers. This new separation concept is a product of the recent humanist dominance in the United States and is being used in this case to destroy the power of a properly elected state legislature’s “sovereign” ruling.

The ACLU is acting as the arm of the humanist consensus to force its view on the majority of the Arkansas state officials…

Under the guise of “civil liberties” it [the ACLU’s action] is tyranny, and not only the individual states should resist but the people should resist. The Humanist forces have used the courts rather than the legislatures because the courts are not subject to the people’s thinking and expression by the election process—and especially they (the courts) are not subject to reelection. This is also related to the courts increasingly making law and thus the diminishing of the Federal and state legislatures.¹³⁸

Schaeffer linked states’ rights to the Reformation, referring to “the checks and balances in government which resulted from the Reformation” that once controlled the growth of federal power in the United States but no longer.¹³⁹

Schaeffer thus provided an ideological framework for fundamentalist protest in *A Christian Manifesto*. From his irenic incarnation at the Swiss L’Abri in the 1960s, Schaeffer transformed back into a warlike stance with the nonbelieving and secular world, as he believed the Bible, the Reformation, and America were linked and secularists sought to dissolve those links. Schaeffer preached a doctrine of cobelligerence in the 1970s among Christian


conservatives. His influence touched many leaders of the Religious Right, and the network of activists is the subject of matter of the next chapter, as the 1970s context of creationist protest occurred in a milieu where right to be antievolutionist came first as it was part of a stand against humanism’s spread and the details of creationist teaching were a distant second.
CHAPTER 8
ANTIEVOLUTIONISM AND THE RIGHTS BATTLE OF THE 1970S

An Arkansas Courtroom, 1981

The Arkansas “Balanced Treatment” trial of 1981 that debated the validity of giving equal time to creationism in the public schools was, as noted in chapter six, a matter of intense concern for Francis Schaeffer. He understood the ACLU’s attack of the principle of equal time as an act of tyranny—a boost of the cause of secular humanism. But the trial was more than merely a confrontation between fundamentalists and humanists. On the matter of evolution and creation, the trial represented the first meeting of several communities and people of diverse disciplines since the Scopes trial.

First, there was the creationist leader Henry M. Morris and the network of fundamentalist pastors that supported him.¹ As the father of the new young-earth creationism, Morris had published The Genesis Flood with the theologian John C. Whitcomb, Jr. in 1961. Ronald Numbers has characterized Morris’s contribution as an updated version of George McCready Price’s New Geology of 1923. “In arguing for a worldwide flood that deposited most of the fossil-bearing rocks, he followed Price in discarding the principle of uniformity.”² After attending a liberal Baptist church in Blacksburg, Virginia while a professor of civil engineering at Virginia Tech in the late 1950s, Morris made contact with fundamentalists destined for national prominence. He left the liberal church after seeing the controversy over origins unfold there and helped found another local congregation. He invited Jerry Falwell (1933-2007) from Lynchburg, Virginia to

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¹ Fundamentalism itself was little understood by the academy until the publication of Fundamentalism and American Culture in 1980, written by George Marsden, himself a participant in the Arkansas trial against the creationists and the final contributor to this chapter’s set of interviews.

speak in the new church. Morris himself had spoken from the pulpit of Falwell’s large Thomas Road Baptist Church beforehand. ³ Falwell went on to found the Moral Majority, a political organization tying religious cobelligerents together prior to the successful election of Ronald Reagan to the White House.

Another participant in the network of fundamentalist pastors was Timothy F. LaHaye (1926-) a co-founder of the Moral Majority along with Falwell and likewise a pastor of a large congregation at Scott Memorial Baptist Church in El Cajon, California (near San Diego). LaHaye was, like Falwell, deeply involved in the culture war of the 1970s over the definitions of family and sexuality; his wife Beverly was instrumental in the creation of the counter-feminist organization Concerned Women for America. LaHaye also gave direct assistance to Morris by allowing the creation of the Institute for Creation Research to be affiliated with his own Christian Heritage College in the early 1970s. ⁴

A critical individual in making Morris’s creationism a national issue, however, was a young lawyer named Wendell R. Bird (1954-), who bridged the gap between the fundamentalist subculture and the legal domain. Bird, along with Francis Schaeffer’s friend and coauthor of A Christian Manifesto John W. Whitehead (1946-), was a member of a new generation of Christian attorneys readying themselves for culture-war conflicts against secular humanism. Bird, Whitehead, and their cohort of lawyers came to national attention in the years surrounding 1980 with the conservative counter-revolution against the political Left that Reagan’s ascendancy, propelled by the Moral Majority, symbolized. Speaking for the Religious Right, Bird proposed in 1978 that only by giving equal time to creationism in science classes could

³ Ibid., p. 237. Elmer L. Towns, who worked directly with Falwell since 1971, provides insight into Falwell’s worldview in this chapter.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 313-315.
Christian students’ free exercise rights under the First Amendment be respected. This threw the
scientific establishment into a quick marriage with the ideological Left’s ACLU in the Arkansas
case.

The wedding was not a foregone conclusion, but it seemed like an inevitability given the
history the ACLU had had in defending evolutionary teaching beginning with the Scopes case.
First, the structure of the showdown in Little Rock illustrated how local and national forces
aligned in a culture-war battle. Sociologist Dorothy Nelkin has noted the significance of McLean
v. Arkansas as “the first judicial test of an act [Act 590, which advocated balanced treatment]
that was specifically designed to meet the constraints of the First Amendment.” The spectators at
the Arkansas trial were diverse, including some fifty journalists from the major networks,
newspapers, and magazines, Reverend Roy McLaughlin, leader of the Arkansas branch of the
Moral Majority, and Duane Gish of the Institute for Creation Research. The ACLU and the
Moral Majority tended to polarize a complex issue—the origin of life—into a framework of
political opposites. The Left was intent on fighting creationism in all its forms, including the
nascent intelligent design movement, being championed on college campuses in the late 1970s
and early 1980s by Charles Thaxton while the Right decried attacks on creationism as a denial of
fundamental rights under the Constitution.

In Arkansas, the ACLU sought to demonstrate that people of reason, whether in the
religious or scientific communities, discounted creationism. Nelkin noted that the ACLU had
organized two groups of expert witnesses. For the religious team, there was a Methodist bishop

5 Dorothy Nelkin, The Creation Controversy: Science or Scripture in the Schools (New York: W.W. Norton and
Company, 1982), pp. 139-140.
in Arkansas, a Roman Catholic scholar, a historian of fundamentalism, George Marsden, theologian Langdon Gilkey, a theologian, philosopher of science Michael Ruse, and Nelkin herself, as a sociologist of science. From the scientific community came geneticist Francisco Ayala, paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, geologist Brent Dalrymple, and biophysicist Harold Morowitz. Nelkin reports that several teachers and school administrators presented their concerns about actually implementing the act in the classroom. Even on the level of the community high school, the ACLU appeared to have its creationist opponents surrounded.

But creationists saw their task to create doubt that one theory of origins was adequate. Their slate of witnesses included Norman Geisler, apologist and theologian from fundamentalist stronghold Dallas Theological Seminary, who “created a stir when he expressed his belief in demonic possession, exorcism, occultism, and UFOs as ‘a satanic manifestation in the world for the purpose of deception.’” But also speaking on behalf of the state of Arkansas was astrophysicist Chandra W. Wickramasinghe, whom Nelkin saw as the most credible witness [for the creationists] in terms of scientific reputation. He was critical of conventional evolutionary hypotheses while not supporting creationist rejection of an old earth and common ancestry between humanity and apes. In such a witness creationists saw an ally who could poke holes in the certainties of Enlightenment naturalism. The convergence of these multiple communities

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6 George Marsden, as author of *Fundamentalism and American Culture* in 1980, was among the first products of the fundamentalist movement to enter the world of higher education with the goal of interpreting fundamentalism and evangelicalism for mainstream scholars. By deciding to aid the ACLU, Marsden experienced a stern backlash from Francis Schaeffer, who also engaged in a prolonged disagreement with Marsden and fellow historian Mark Noll about America’s founding.

7 Nelkin, *The Creation Controversy*, pp. 140 and 146. See footnote 5 on page 146.


into a two-sided battle between Protestant fundamentalists/creationists on the one hand and established science, liberal religion, and education on the other created a sense of distortion. Unraveling the interconnected issues of biological origins, interpretation of the Bible, and American history requires a review of the political, legal, and academic aspects of the controversy generally known as the “culture war” of the 1970s that entered a new phase after President Carter’s inauguration in 1976. Creationism persisted inasmuch as it became a symbolic counterpoint to the “other side”, which fundamentalists came to refer to as “secular humanism”, in part to due to Schaeffer’s impact. Creationism vs. evolution as a controversy began to be contextualized within larger battles, between Religious Right vs. New Left and Republican vs. Democrat. This contextualization of an old battle in a new era is primarily what breathed new life into creationism as a matter of rights in a period dominated by rights vocabulary.

**Background to the 1970s**

Understanding the genesis of the Religious Right that gave creationism its practical support requires a review of both history and political science. Historian Frank Lambert noted that “from the birth of the republic, religion and politics have operated most of the time in separate spheres.” As late as 1965, Jerry Falwell, later the public face of the Moral Majority and friend of Francis Schaeffer, agreed with this arrangement. But by the 1970s, Falwell was singing a different tune, organizing the Moral Majority to “‘take back’ the country from secular humanists who ran the government.” Lambert concluded:

Falwell’s Moral Majority became the heart of what Richard Nixon had envisioned as a “Silent Majority” of Americans who were fed up with “liberal” social policies that trampled on traditional family values. Much of the GOP’s recent success,

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12 Ibid., p. 3.
beginning with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, can be accounted for by the Religious Right’s energetic participation.\(^\text{13}\)

In his estimation, ideology not religious denomination, defined the battle lines of the new conflict.\(^\text{14}\)

**Stages of Cultural Displacement of Conservative Protestantism**

The religious and political scene of the 1970s drew on historical traditions. The origins going back to the Founding Fathers, pitting James Madison’s argument against the state establishment of religion and for religious pluralism, against Patrick Henry’s case for a “Christian America,”—while Madison’s view became enshrined in the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment,\(^\text{15}\) the origins of the Religious Right had roots in a Protestant response to the new pluralism of the second half of the nineteenth century as non-Protestant immigrants came to these shores as well as “new ideas about human origins, biblical authority, and the question of sin.”\(^\text{16}\) In science, Darwin imagined a humanity created by impersonal laws; in economics, Marx saw a society generated by class warfare, not God. Freud dismissed sin and pointed to “unresolved issues from the individual’s early development” as the source of human behavior. Finally, there was yet another invasion by European intellectuals that Lambert identifies as “the new higher criticism emanating from German universities that examined the Bible as literature and raised serious questions about its authorship and even the truth of its claims.”\(^\text{17}\)


The birth of Christian fundamentalism was an attempt to counter these changes in the dominant American worldview, a “rejection of and hostility to modernity”. Caught between rural fundamentalism and the modernist forces at Princeton Theological Seminary, J. Gresham Machen and his heirs wished for a fundamentalism that “reasserts its claim that it is defined by a set of changeless beliefs grounded in an authoritative text that transcends the ebb and flow of time.” This resistance to change meant a resistance to revolution—in society, in science, and in biblical interpretation that undergirded all fundamentalist understanding.

Though Machen declined to aid William Jennings Bryan at the Scopes trial, Machen’s predecessor at Princeton Seminary, Charles Hodge, stood firmly against Darwin in an open clash between Reformation ideas of design in nature versus the Enlightenment notion of chance. “What made Darwin’s theories particularly disturbing to Hodge was that the denial of intelligent design led to the denial of God as designer.” Citing Hodge’s 1874 work What is Darwinism?, Frederick Gregory notes how slowly theologians like Hodge were to respond to the novel challenges Darwinian theory created. But when Hodge responded, he characterized the situation as deep polarization—“religion and Darwinism were locked in a life and death struggle.” The key problem for Hodge was the anti-teleological implications of natural selection. Jon H. Roberts calls Hodge’s statement against Darwinism highly influential in that “Hodge trained some three thousand clergymen, more than any other American theologian in the nineteenth

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18 Ibid., p. 105.
19 Ibid., p. 106.
20 Ibid., p. 114.
“century”; *What is Darwinism?* proved to be nothing less than “his most complete indictment of the transmutation hypothesis.”

Hodge focused upon what Christopher Toumey notes (see the introduction), i.e., the stochastic features of evolution only, leaving out the nonrandom aspects of natural selection:

Here is another demand on our credulity. The apex is reached when we are told that all these transmutations are effected by chance, that is, without purpose or intention. Taking all these things into consideration, we think it may, with moderation, be said, that a more absolutely incredible theory was never propounded for acceptance among men.

However, according to David N. Livingstone, Hodge was willing to entertain the notion of evolution with teleology as a possibility, but a direct conflict existed between natural theology, which Hodge prized, and natural selection. Hodge embraced Scottish Commonsense thinking and its precept that facts accessible to all about nature were more important that speculative theorizing such as that which Darwin employed.

Mutability was the central issue at stake. “If Holy Scripture was not the immutable, indisputable Word of God that provides a bedrock for faith, then all the doctrines and teaching resting on it became less certain as well.” Fundamentalists sought above all to maintain old certainties; modernists and secularists sought first to adapt to waves of progress.

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The culture war had thus begun as the twentieth century opened. Lambert noted that “until the 1870s Protestants exercised ‘cultural hegemony’ in higher education.”\(^{26}\) He cited two forces that destroyed that dominance by the 1920s: “secular interests, especially those of science and industry, [which] insisted on modernizing American universities to meet the demands of a public life that had undergone significant change over the past fifty years” and modernists’ ability to accommodate their faith to “a scientific, liberal, capitalist society.”\(^{27}\) Christianity underwent two changes: first, in public status, as it more and more appeared superfluous to a professional life, and secondly, in its role in Americans’ lives, eventually reduced to a compartment in a weekly schedule rather than an all-integrating force.\(^{28}\)

In the decade of the 1920s the cultural marginalization of the fundamentalists began. The university world was at odds with fundamentalists’ view of the unchanging authority of scripture and the very idea that the Bible’s code of ethics was as relevant in the present as it had been during the age of the Old Testament—a hopeless argument in the face of modernity. Universities were becoming secular entities, divorced from church concerns.\(^{29}\)

The response of fundamentalists was to create an alternate civilization with alternate views of history, exemplified in the birth of the Bible college system and the spread of premillenial dispensationalism, which broke all of history into providentially organized

\(^{26}\) *Ibid.* Though George Marsden dated the extent of Protestant influence in universities somewhat later, his thesis echoes Lambert’s: “In the late nineteenth century, when American universities took their shape, the Protestantism of major northern denominations acted as a virtual religious and cultural establishment. This establishmentarian outlook was manifested in American universities, which were constructed not, as is sometimes supposed, as strictly secular institutions but as integral parts of a religious-cultural vision.” (See George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], p. 3.)


\(^{28}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{29}\) *Ibid.*, p. 120.
episodes. The result was a long-term divide between fundamentalists on one side and modernists and the Enlightenment university on the other. “By the 1920s, these two worlds offered little opportunity for discussion and exchange.”

A Sophisticated Antievolutionism?

The Scopes trial exacerbated this schism in 1925. On the one hand, fundamentalists led by William Jennings Bryan appeared to fit the caricature of backward yokels. Opponents found their voice in Clarence Darrow and claimed “that fundamentalists were unable to adjust to the social changes that had transformed America into a modern, scientific, urban, pluralistic, industrial nation.”

Even the visuals of the trial signaled the end of a Protestant-dominated era. “More than one commentator noted that sleepy, rural Dayton was the perfect stage for Bryan’s defense of a way of life that had passed.” However, Clyde Wilcox and Carin Robinson noted antievolutionism in the 1920s demonstrated considerable political savvy, given the immense energy of fundamentalists in fighting evolution manifested in the plethora of organizations devoted to the cause, the personal persuasion of state legislators, and the staging of large rallies to engage public opinion. “This mixing of quiet persuasion and public pressure marked the antievolution crusades as one of the most sophisticated of the various waves of Christian Right activity.”

Moreover, Bryan had carefully measured philosophical reasons for opposing Darwinism: “in leading the campaign, Bryan was fighting social Darwinism and, more important, the teachings of the German philosopher Nietzsche, which he believed had been the

30 Ibid., p. 121.
31 Ibid., p. 122.
32 Ibid., p. 125.
33 Ibid.
impetus for German expansion in World War I.”\textsuperscript{35} The hillbilly image of fundamentalism was a construct of their opponents in the urban media and the universities, one that filled the popular mind but yet would be challenged later in the political astuteness of the Religious Right in the 1970s.

The Great Depression and World War II changed the balance of power as the federal government’s and science’s importance grew exponentially in the public eye. “With the atomic bomb’s success in bringing the war against Japan to an end, Americans increasingly believed that science and scientists could solve all sorts of problems, from fighting disease to making daily life easier and more convenient.”\textsuperscript{36} Furthermore, in Lambert’s words, the federal government “mushroomed in size and scope” during this period, and federal spending increased tenfold from 1930 to 1960. “Citizens increasingly looked to the federal government and the welfare state that the New Deal helped create for a wide range of vital services, including employment, unemployment relief, health care, education, and old-age assistance.”\textsuperscript{37} The power of states was challenged by problems both economic and military that were greater than single states could solve, so yielding to federal authority was the natural result, to the alienation of conservatives such as J. Gresham Machen, Carl McIntire, and Francis Schaeffer. “Conservatives…viewed much of the New Deal as ‘creeping socialism’ that threatened the moral fabric of society by making individuals dependent on the state for basic services.”\textsuperscript{38}

Finally the growth of federal influence was also the product of the United States being thrust on to the world stage as the opponent of the Soviet Union. Conservatives lost control of

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., pp. 37-38.

\textsuperscript{36} Lambert, \textit{Religion in American Politics}, p. 131.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., pp. 131 and 133.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 134.
public education when the Soviets’ 1957 Sputnik satellite succeeded in making Americans anxious to update science curricula—including the reintroduction of Darwinism into biology textbooks after three decades of nervousness on the part of textbook publishers following the Scopes trial. “Americans sought to catch up to the perceived Soviet lead in science and technology.”39 Nelkin claims that the reform of science curriculum “was an effort to enlist the public education system in the resolution of the problems of the cold war” and that matching the Soviets in science expertise was a matter of national security.40 Though the primary issue at stake involved satellite technology and missiles, evolutionists’ campaign to reinstitute Darwinism in American schools benefitted—Smocovitis notes that outcry of Neo-Darwinist Hermann J. Muller to schoolteachers in 1959 in a paper entitled “One Hundred Years without Darwinism Are Enough.”41 Forces beyond fundamentalists’ control were setting the stage for a new showdown with evolutionists.

**Fundamentalists Shift to Anticommunism**

Wilcox and Robinson see a transition among fundamentalists from antievolutionist protest to anticommunism between the 1930s and the 1960s.42 This move occurred as Christians were generally forced to adjust to domestic and international pressures upon faith communities. Among white Protestants the world after World War II forced a choice among three attitudes toward modernity: resistance, accommodation, and assimilation. Liberals were motivated to assimilate progressive thinking and “willing to embrace secular instruments to advance their

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vision of a just society in a rapidly changing age."43 The National Council of Churches, born in 1950, was the coalescence of liberal Christian streams in America, whose broad vision included embraced diversity and an ecumenical approach that was highly pragmatic and focused upon “applying the principles of their faith to the problems confronting the nation.”44 This approach involved adapting biblical interpretation to the demands of modern science, redefining sin as an imperfection that could be overcome through human exertion, a general attitude of support for the big-government ideas of the New Deal and Franklin Roosevelt and for the United Nations as a global peacekeeper.45

Willing to negotiate and accommodate after the humiliation of the Scopes trial, evangelicals, as cousins of fundamentalists, desired greater cultural relevance and stood in between the assimilationist approach and the attitude of resistance to modernity fundamentalists like Carl McIntire and the youthful Francis Schaeffer took.46 The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was born in 1942 and organized “neoevangelicals”. In contrast, McIntire organized a separatist organization committed to resistance: the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC). Wilcox and Robinson elucidate the harsh demeanor of the ACCC in relating to outsiders compared to the gentler ways of the NAE:

The ACCC was vehemently anticommunist, and it even attacked leaders of mainline Protestant denominations for their alleged ties to communists. Its extremism alienated many moderate fundamentalists, who in 1942 formed the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and launched a movement that has been referred to as neoevangelicalism. The neoevangelicals took orthodox doctrinal positions, but were more moderate than the fundamentalists, both in religion and politics. Their religious moderation was evident in their rejection of

43 Lambert, Religion in American Politics, p. 132.
44 Ibid., p. 137.
45 Ibid., pp. 138-140.
46 Ibid., pp. 136.
separatism, their political moderation in their unwillingness to label their political opponents as communists.\textsuperscript{47}

As has been described in chapter three, McIntire’s relationship to the NAE and its nationally famous champion, Billy Graham, swiftly deteriorated; Lambert also noted McIntire’s antipathy for the United Nations, which he feared was “a prelude to one-world government.”\textsuperscript{48}

The tendency to repudiate progressive ideas forms a bridge between the anticommunist focus of fundamentalist protest, which Wilcox and Robinson claimed essentially lost its public audience after the Goldwater campaign of 1964, and the next phase, the rise of the Religious Right in response to civil rights and the New Left, which led to the climax of Reagan’s election in 1980.\textsuperscript{49} The 1960s were a period of strong Reformed hostility to revolutionary change, embodied in the civil rights movement and the defense of the separation of church and state in the Supreme Court, as chapters four and five have explored in examining the responses of McIntire, Schaeffer, and R. J. Rushdoony. But there was a set of missing pieces to be discovered—white Southerners who were Baptist—before the Religious Right could unite the Reformed to a larger national cause.

Only in the 1970s did the lion’s share of America’s theologically conservative white Christians awaken politically to join the battles others like McIntire and Schaeffer had been warning about—until this decade fundamentalism and evangelicalism were relatively unknown to the national media except in terms of Scopes-type caricatures. George Marsden commented that

\begin{quote}
one of the most important cultural developments between the 1930s and the 1970s was the rise of the South from a self-consciously separate region to more of an
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{47} Wilcox and Robinson, \textit{Onward Christian Soldiers}, p. 40. Boldface is the authors’s.

\textsuperscript{48} Lambert, \textit{Religion in American Politics}, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{49} Wilcox and Robinson, \textit{Onward Christian Soldiers}, p. 41.
integral part of the national culture. That transformation was not possible until the
upheaval of the civil rights movement receded and the South formally joined the rest
of the nation in accepting racial integration, at least in principle.\textsuperscript{50}

Interestingly, Marsden added that the flight of white Democrats to the Republican party (in light
of the Democrats taking up the civil rights cause) made possible “a truly national movement of
political conservatives”, which seems to counter his own statement that the issue of race had
“receded” in American politics.\textsuperscript{51} Race in fact became one of many bases for claiming rights into
the 1960s and beyond, along with other demographic labels such as gender, sexual orientation,
and religion. The entire mindset of a culture and the new vocabulary of rights came to dominate
the worldview of the opponents of the Religious Right but eventually the Religious Right as
well. How this transformation in American thought came about had its roots in the coalescence
of streams known as the New Left. Evolution in biology came to be identified with the Left in
politics as both came to represent Enlightenment university culture and the demand of autonomy
from God against the forces of tradition, of which fundamentalism was one.

\textbf{The New Left, Rights, and Interest-Group Politics}

The demand for rights by many parties—of which the civil rights cause was foremost and
earliest in the national discourse—had a direct impact upon the creation-evolution debate. The
Religious Right essentially became aware of the right to be creationists by observing the protests
of others, including its ideological opponents. Learning rights language was therefore a form of
schooling, and the transformation of the controversy over evolution was a result both of the
transformed context in which the case for a creator was being made—the context of rights.
Creationists defined the rights many of their adversaries argued for, especially in the domain of
feminism and gay rights, as connected to evolutionary teaching via the unifying theme of secular

\textsuperscript{50} Marsden, \textit{Fundamentalism and American Culture}, pp. 236-237.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 237.
humanism. Hence understanding the New Left of the 1960s and its rights orientation is vital for comprehending the success of the Religious Right in the 1970s.

The essence of the New Left consisted of groups of people seeking justice and finding their voice in the streets.

Voices long silent in the religious marketplace demanded to be heard in the 1960s. And when once again they were denied a fair hearing by the religious establishment, they took their message directly to the country and sought a hearing in the court of public opinion. Blacks, students, women … and the poor denounced the cultural and political elite dominated by white, middle- and upper-class, Protestant males. These protesters charged the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) establishment with perpetuating a morally bankrupt society that promoted greed, war, racism, and sexism.52

The religious modernists of past decades now responded in the National Council of Churches, which openly endorsed the civil rights movement in 1963.53 Van Gosse has described the broader context of civil rights in the growth of the New Left and the embrace of both causes by the Democratic Party. The success of the New Left was a total surprise to many Americans, since as the 1960s opened, the social order appeared to be a permanent fixture of American life. Black Americans, feminists, and especially homosexual men and women “barely existed as a recognized social group until after World War II.”54

As we have seen in our consideration of Carl McIntire, the backlash was immediate: McIntire’s American Council of Christian Churches “railed against civil rights agitation as part of a communist plot to subvert American values.”55 These developments encouraged Republicans to promote Ronald Reagan as a champion for a pre-1960s mentality. Under Reagan there

53 Ibid., p. 179.
was a period of attempting to roll back cultural revolution. “With Ronald Reagan’s election, the United States took a major shift rightwards for the first time since the 1920s.”\textsuperscript{56} In other words, conservatives, opponents of big government control reminiscent of Machen and McIntire, took charge of the country in 1980 for the first time since the Scopes era—the period of wilderness wandering and hillbilly caricature was over. Reagan’s agenda was to recreate “the vanished world of the Fifties.”\textsuperscript{57} Because his work was not focused upon religious history, Gosse’s conclusions ignore the fact that the fundamentalist subculture had grown and thrived in the background of American life for the six decades before Reagan’s rise to prominence and provided a fertile seedbed for a new conservative movement. Carl McIntire, for example, was not alone but rather represented an overlooked community that included Francis Schaeffer, R. J. Rushdoony, and many Baptists.

Gosse did provide valuable definition to the term “New Left”, noting that conservatives believed more consistently than liberals that the New Left, “from black power to women’s and gay liberation to the antiwar coalition” endured into the 1990s.\textsuperscript{58} The term “the Left” he defined three ways: 1. The voting bloc of black Americans within the Democratic Party, 2. The labor movement, and 3. Organizations that dealt with reproductive and civil rights, environmental and consumer protection, and social justice, plus their congressional allies in the Democrats’ ‘progressive’ wing.\textsuperscript{59} Radicalism became part of the country’s political structure. “The least-told story of U.S. history in the late twentieth century is how the social movements of the Sixties

\begin{itemize}
\item Van Gosse, \textit{The World the Sixties Made}, p. 8.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p. 12.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p. 24.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 24-25.
\end{itemize}
institutionalized themselves. Among many organizations that functioned as extensions of these past movements, Gosse listed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Planned Parenthood, the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, the National Organization for Women, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the American Civil Liberties Union, and People for the American Way, and environmental groups such as Greenpeace. These institutions defended the gains staked out by the New Left between 1964 and 1976 and then attempted to expanded them. 

Finally, he was careful to link these forces into one mass of overlapping causes.

Among them, they have millions of supporters, many of whom not only support a “single issue” but also share a larger commitment to civil and human rights for all people, women’s rights to control their own bodies, the preservation of the natural world from corporate despoliation, social justice for working people and the poor, and opposition to militarism. However hedged with qualifications, these overlapping constituencies constitute the Left in U.S. politics, the “radical liberalism” that so enrages the Right.

Gosse’s thesis grew out of these propositions America in the twenty-first century was “more democratic than any America that came before.”

The New Left had a wide-ranging impact. J. Brooks Flippen describes how the feminist movement in particular began to irritate and alarm conservative Christian leaders who supported a patriarchal home and eventually turned their backs on President Jimmy Carter’s attitude of compromise with the Left after 1976. Finally, the New Left impacted higher education.

Flippen notes that many leading scholars in social science and humanities disciplines identified

60 Ibid., p. 25.
61 Ibid., p. 25.
63 Ibid., pp. 4-5. Emphasis is Gosse’s.
publicly with the Left. With the university arrayed with the Left and the conservative pastors with the Right, by the mid-1970s another chapter in the culture war over evolution was about to unfold.

**Melding a Fundamentalist Worldview to Interest-Group Politics**

The creation of a Religious Right community did not eradicate major doctrinal and denominational differences among the participants. George Marsden, in looking at the early stages of fundamentalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, called it “a loose, diverse, and changing federation of co-belligerents united by their fierce opposition to modernist attempts to bring Christianity into line with modern thought”. For the Religious Right, as descendants of the first fundamentalists, America itself was in peril in the 1970s as the forces of the New Left threatened to introduce a new vocabulary about rights and the family, a situation that touched upon parents’ rights to control the education of their children. Nonetheless, as Wilcox and Robinson observed, “no one organization or spokesperson represents the movement…the Christian Right has no single agenda, but rather a collection of overlapping agendas.” Flippen provides an overview of the Religious Right’s makeup, noting that Catholics, Mormons, and other non-fundamentalists constituted parts of the whole, so that the Religious Right could not be correctly characterized as a movement solely comprised of conservative Protestants. Although it did draw heavily from the Southern Baptist Convention and the growing number of independent Bible churches [which included Moral Majority leaders like Jerry Falwell] the movement still

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66 Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 4.

had “a rather nebulous description.” Lambert’s observation that ideology dominated the Religious Right more than affiliation appears correct.

What follows is an examination of the contribution of the Moral Majority’s perspective to the Religious Right and the impact of the sub-movement and the larger movement upon the national discussion of creation and evolution after Reagan took office in 1980. The evidence will show that although the academic world of the university was essentially lost territory to creationism, in political and legal realms fundamentalists, unwilling to yield the local high school, were capable of partial victories in the field of rights on the national scene that shocked their opponents. America’s politicians and judges were more divided about Darwin than evolutionary scientists realized, and the Religious Right proved its point.

To fundamentalists like Jerry Falwell the nation was in a horrific state in the 1970s. According to Marsden the spread of federal governmental influence caused a great deal of offense. It was not doctrinal erosion in major denominations, which played a relatively smaller role in the new fundamentalism, but opposition to the expansion of the powers of civil government that caused alarm. This was because the decades after 1945 were a time of expansion of government, especially the federal government, in a way the 1920s were not. He cited as evidence of this new situation “secularizing trends accordingly focused on governmental intrusion on people’s lives, as the national trends were toward creating a more pluralistic and inclusive, and hence more secular, society.” Racial integration through school busing, Great Society programs, enforced separation of church and state in schools, courts’ greater permissiveness toward pornographic media, the Roe v. Wade ruling, and finally the campaign


69 See footnote 4.

70 Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 244.
for the Equal Rights Amendment, all sparked a counteroffensive that “grew naturally out of well-established resentments against governmental attempts to alter essential basic patterns of American life.” One leader, Francis Schaeffer, emerged to articulate the worldview that held to a supernatural origin of the Bible, which was a mark of pride for conservative Christians and touched their notions of American history as well. “‘Secular humanism’ came to be the shorthand framework for understanding the convergence of these cultural and political trends…[and] Schaeffer was the key person in articulating this new comprehensive yet simple paradigm.”

William Martin echoes Marsden’s analysis but focuses specific attention on interpretation of the Constitution. “Hard-line conservatives in this period were almost uniformly critical of the Supreme Court, disagreeing not only with the substance of some of its more famous decisions, but also with what they took to be a disregard of the original intent of the Constitution and a dangerous usurpation of power from Congress and the individual states.” These rulings included the school prayer and Bible reading decisions of 1962 and 1963, which fundamentalists believed led to immediate chaos among America’s youth, resulting in “rampant drug use, sexual promiscuity, high crime rates, disrespect for authority, and widespread loss of a sense of right and wrong. Though the causal connection may have been tenuous, the undeniable appearance of all the predicted phenomena not only convinced critics of the Court that they had been right, but made the restoration of school prayer an evergreen item on the conservative agenda.”

Furthermore, the Roe decision exacerbated political right-left tensions to the breaking point. The states’s rights positions of Francis Schaeffer described in the previous chapter meshed easily

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71 Ibid., pp. 244-245.
72 Martin, With God on Our Side, p. 192.
73 Ibid.
with the political aspirations of fundamentalists’ to rescue the meaning of the Constitution and reestablish their idea of order in the country.

Several scenarios touching upon the rights of blacks, women, and gays created furor among the future leaders of the Religious Right and specifically of the Moral Majority. Men of different denominations became cobelligerents as they realized the political and religious worlds were coming into close contact. For one, schools were always close to home for fundamentalists. A major conflict erupted in 1978 when the Internal Revenue Service threatened to revoke the tax-exempt status of Christian schools for being “segregation academies” that sidestepped civil rights for blacks. Several key figures of the Religious Right claimed that their eventual victory in this confrontation played “a pivotal role in bringing together conservative Christians and creating a genuine politically effective movement.”

A textbook controversy that erupted in 1974 in Kanawha County, West Virginia centered around conservatives’ accusations that English texts for the public schools were obscene and destructive of traditional American family values. The controversy brought both violence and national attention. Although the particular texts in question were later adopted, a new screening procedure for books gave more power to parents.

In Dade County, Florida, gay rights became a public conflict in 1977 when gay leaders persuaded the county commission to pass an ordinance that prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in housing, employment, and public accommodations. Leading the

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74 Ibid., pp. 172-173.

75 Most notably, the conservative think tank Heritage Foundation offered its expertise to the protesters, and its operative Paul Weyrich was later connected to the IRS/Christian School battle on behalf of fundamentalists.

protest against the ordinance was Anita Bryant, a TV personality and conservative, who fed fears that the new rule would compel the public schools to hire gays as teachers. A successful referendum did away with the ordinance.\footnote{Wald and Calhoun-Brown, Religion and Politics in the United States, p. 207.} Martin notes that Jerry Falwell gave Bryant public support not only by inviting Bryant to appear on the Old-Time Gospel Hour, televised from Falwell’s Thomas Road Baptist Church, but by staging an anti-gay rally at the Miami convention center.\footnote{Martin, With God on Our Side, pp. 197-198.}

Finally there was the Equal Rights Amendment which was a direct product of the feminist movement. Wald and Calhoun-Brown point out that its “seemingly inevitable path to constitutional status was interrupted by the formation of two powerful organizations: Stop ERA, founded by Phyllis Schafly, and Concerned Women of America, the brainchild of Beverly LaHaye.”\footnote{Wald and Calhoun-Brown, Religion and Politics in the United States, p. 207.} They conclude that these protests (Kanawha and Dade Counties, and the ERA) were the result of what the protesters saw as “a godless society that had replaced firm moral standards with a system of relativism”.\footnote{Ibid., p. 208.} The Religious Right, according to Flippen, would not have flourished as it did without the issues of gender and sexuality that exploded during the Carter era.\footnote{Flippen, Jimmy Carter, the Politics of Family, and the Rise of the Religious Right, p. 19.}

Clearly, by the mid-1970s a mass of American conservatives had become angry at what they saw as the transformation of their federal government. The question then became how to channel their collective outrage. Three things were necessary to mobilize the evangelical masses—disillusionment with the Democratic Party’s worldview, a new network, and a narrative

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\footnote{Wald and Calhoun-Brown, Religion and Politics in the United States, p. 207.}

\footnote{Martin, With God on Our Side, pp. 197-198.}

\footnote{Wald and Calhoun-Brown, Religion and Politics in the United States, p. 207.}

\footnote{Ibid., p. 208.}

\footnote{Flippen, Jimmy Carter, the Politics of Family, and the Rise of the Religious Right, p. 19.}
about America’s future. William Martin has detailed how religious conservatives embraced the Republican agenda in the 1970s by outlining a network of new relationships between political operatives and pastors.\(^{81}\) First, Christian conservatives saw their trust in “born again” President Jimmy Carter betrayed after the 1976 election, as Carter showed his liberal stripes over time: “Carter’s inability to hold on to the evangelical constituency that had helped elect him in 1976 was pointedly illustrated in a breakfast he held for a small group of prominent conservative ministers that included Jerry Falwell, Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard, Jim Bakker, D. James Kennedy, Charles Stanley, and Tim LaHaye.”\(^{82}\) Carter waffled when asked about his stand on abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment. It marked a decisive moment in the pastors’ thinking about the future.

Afterward, LaHaye recalled, while waiting outside for a limo to take him back to his hotel, “I stood there and I prayed this prayer: ‘God, we have got to get this man out of the White House and get someone in here who will be aggressive about bringing back traditional moral values.’ And little did I know that several others prayed essentially the same prayer. We got into this limousine, and here were some of the leading ministers of America, and they were stone silent.”\(^{83}\)

Both Tim LaHaye and Falwell’s close colleague Elmer Towns agreed that Carter’s behavior was the ignition switch that sparked the activism of the Religious Right (see below). Towns expressed the deep sense of threat felt by many fundamentalists during the seventies about the future of their country, prompting a “fortress mentality.”\(^{84}\)

A new network of conservatives was forming. The Moral Majority was born in June 1979 with a pastoral leadership that showcased a mixture of denominations: three independent

\(^{81}\) Martin, *With God on Our Side*, pp. 191-220.

\(^{82}\) *Ibid.*, p. 189

\(^{83}\) *Ibid.*. Martin quoted Tim LaHaye but provided no citation.

fundamental Baptists—Falwell of Lynchburg, Virginia, Greg Dixon of Indianapolis, and Tim LaHaye of San Diego; one Southern Baptist conservative, Charles Stanley of Atlanta; and D. James Kennedy, from the denomination that Schaeffer eventually joined, the Presbyterian Church in America.  

Schaeffer provided the unifying narrative of secular humanism vs. traditional Christianity and others expounded upon it. Martin commented that Schaeffer “popularized the idea of secular humanism as a destructive, anti-Christian religion in his twenty-plus books, which sold an estimated three million copies before his death in 1984.” Men with much larger audiences such as Falwell and LaHaye did even more, with LaHaye’s best-selling 1980 book *Battle for the Mind* being an important example. Marsden observes that secular humanism “became the code word for enemy forces in the dichotomized world of the emerging mentality of culture wars” and that Tim and Beverly LaHaye “were among the most effective of fundamentalist promoters of the new political consciousness. According to Tim LaHaye, secular humanism was not so much a cultural trend as an organized conspiracy.” Vocabularv in the 1970s was difficult to pin down, and Thaxton took issue with Martin’s use of the term “secular humanism” in connection to Schaeffer.

When Schaeffer talked of humanist worldview, he was not [merely] talking about the specific points of secular humanism [as defined by bodies such as the American Humanist Association] but something much broader [and commonplace in modern culture]. For Schaeffer humanism was that view where man starts from himself, defines his own reality without use of or need of anything outside himself, and sets out to provide answers to any problems without relying on anything from outside like God or the Bible.

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85 Ibid., p. 200.
86 Ibid., p. 196.
87 Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, pp. 245-246.
88 Charles Thaxton, email to author, October 9, 2013.
The Political Story: The Battle for the Mind and the Moral Majority

LaHaye’s book was one of the clearest unifying statements of how the dangers of secular humanism touched many spheres of human thought and activity, from the intellectual realm to politics and the media. Rights were central to the humanist agenda: “The church of Jesus Christ is the last obstacle for the humanists to conquer. The 1960s saw the battle for racial rights. In the 1970s, it was sexual rights. But the 1980s have been designated for the battle against religious rights.”89 Humanism was essentially about autonomy: “Simply defined, humanism is man’s attempt to solve his problems independently of God.”90

LaHaye echoed Schaeffer’s fears that the entire university system was suspect, as was its perceived partner, government. “Gradually the humanists literally took over most of the colleges and universities of the continent and became the high priests of education. With missionary zeal they taught their philosophic prejudices of ‘No God—no absolutes—self-sufficient and self-indulgent man’ much to the consternation of the students’ parents.” LaHaye concluded that humanism would take over the world if Christianity did not stand in the way: “Our contemporary world would have completely lost the battle for the mind and would doubtless live in a totalitarian, one-world, humanistic state.”91 This contrast LaHaye believed had its root in the completely Christian and completely benevolent history America possessed compared to other countries: Unsurpassed freedom and wealth were the fruit solely of a Bible-based form of government and a unique Bible-based educational system.92 All of this success was dependent on rights that emerged from a belief in God, not human wisdom.

91 Ibid., p.35.
92 Ibid., p. 37.
Therefore, our government of law was based on a respect and reverence for God and the realization that man was His special creation. Such expressions as “Divine Providence” and “nature and Nature’s God” appear in the Declaration of Independence as the source of man’s inalienable rights. (By contrast, humanism contends that man and the state are the sources from which man’s human rights originate.)

Citing Schaeffer, whom LaHaye praised in his dedication as “the renowned philosopher-prophet of the twentieth century”, and Schaeffer’s associate John Whitehead, LaHaye observed the humanist takeover of America had begun approximately in 1940.

LaHaye then described the central contrast between historic Christianity and the secular humanist worldviews through two illustrations. He depicted two views of human identity at war—the servant of God versus the autonomous self. Philosophical and theological ideas were the foundations of each, from whose roots differing sciences of origins grew. The two contrasting identities were generated from differing social moralities that grew out of the origins narratives, resulting in different views of the world and government. Christianity—and presumably America’s founding—had its origins in the divine revelation provided in the books of the Bible. “The Bible, which contains that portion of the wisdom of God that He has chosen to share with mankind, not only produces the intellectual base for a morally sane society but gives man clear answers to the major questions of life.” LaHaye concluded that “the intelligentsia largely rejects it [divine revelation].”

The belief in divine revelation made possible LaHaye’s belief in instantaneous creation as explicated by Henry Morris, founder of the Institute for Creation Research and in civil morality. The Bible gave rise through its commands to the Judeo-Christian ethic: “These precepts are

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93 Ibid., pp. 38-39.
94 Ibid., p. 38. The dedication is on page 5.
95 Ibid., p. 49.
absolute: not subject to revision or deletion by any earthly potentate or Supreme Court, without resulting in the destruction of society."96  The next step was the creation of servants of God, guided by the Bible, doing good deeds and active in the nation. The final component was the development of a compassionate world-view that seeks to deliver the gospel message to the whole world.97 Thus LaHaye constructed a narrative of young-earth creationism and redemption that questioned the authority of the federal government.

The other option was humanism, whose foundation stone was atheism. LaHaye pointed his finger at the Age of Reason, a deification of man, that “was picked up by French skeptics, primarily Voltaire and Rousseau, and was then developed by German rationalists like Georg Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Friedrich Nietzsche, until they reached the verdict, ‘God is dead.’”98

Resting on its atheistic base, evolution grew and infiltrated the university:

The theory of evolution, although ancient, was catapulted into world prominence by the publication of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*. “Darwinism,” as it came to be known, swept through the atheistic- or agnostic-dominated academic community of the Western world like wildfire. Today it is the primary foundation upon which all secular education rests. Psychology, the most influential single discipline of modern education, is totally dependent on the theory of evolution, as are such fields as sociology, political science, biology, and many others. It has had a drastic influence on art, music, and literature. Some informed educators admit that it is the most powerful influence in education today—even though not one of Darwin’s “scientific” theories can be proved 120 years later.99

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LaHaye defended giving equal time to creationism as a logical consequence. Humanists feared that if evolution was disproven, the right to have autonomy from God would disintegrate; hence, attacking the Institute for Creation Research was a must for humanists.100

For LaHaye, evolution was could not be separated from morality and worldview since it permitted autonomy from accountability to a divine being. He found verification for his constructed view in the fact that the Humanist Manifesto made evolution the basis for its claims: “this unscientific theory is a major part of official humanist doctrine.”101 LaHaye then joined a chorus of protest against evolution led by a politician and a lawyer, John Whitehead, who later developed a working relationship with the Schaeffers. “It is impossible to overestimate the influence that evolution has exercised upon our society. Former Congressman John Conlan and attorney John Whitehead recognized this when they stated, ‘Evolution has altered the course of history by shifting the base of moral absolutes from traditional theism to Secular Humanism.’”102 LaHaye then began to connect evolution to a whole host of evils that resulted from its elimination of the Bible’s God and his commands regarding the ordering of human relationships and societies.

Relativism now ruled in the field of morality, an outcome that for LaHaye had a sinister meaning. Much of what LaHaye protested fell into the domain of rights battles and stood on the side opposing the biblically based good that had come forth from Western civilization.

The humanistic doctrine of evolution has naturally led to the destruction of the moral foundation upon which this country was originally built. If you believe that man is an animal, you will naturally expect him to live like one. Consequently, almost every sexual law that is required in order to maintain a morally sane society

100 Ibid., p. 62.
101 Ibid., p. 63.
has been struck down by the humanists, so that man may follow his animal appetites...

It certainly has not been the Bible-believing churches of our nation that have advocated sexual permissiveness; trial marriages; easy divorce; abortion-on-demand; inflammatory sex education forcibly taught our school children from kindergarten through high school; coed college dorms; homosexuality as an optional life-style; and free access to pornography, marijuana, and occasionally, hard drugs. This country’s leading humanistic educators, lawmakers, and judges have consistently liberalized our statutes in these areas. They are committed to doing away with every vestige of the responsible, moral behavior that distinguished man from animals...

Such an assault on young, impressionable minds flies in the face of revealed truth: 3,500 years of Judeo-Christian morality, the Reformation, and everything that is good and wholesome in Western culture.103

Evolution’s dominance in American culture had brought about the legalization of animalistic behaviors.

As is clear from the above quotation, LaHaye saw humanism’s mark everywhere—in the sexual revolution, the feminist movement, and the issue of children’s rights. Such an outlook permitted him to bifurcate a complex nation into only two parties: Bible-believing Christians and humanists. Ultimately a major goal of humanists, in LaHaye’s understanding, was to take away children from their parents and put the children under the supervision of all-powerful state. “By the state, of course, they mean bureaucrats and social-change agents who have been carefully trained in amoral, humanistic philosophy and who will use the government’s power to teach sexual activity, contraceptives, birth elimination, and permissiveness to children, whether parents want it or not! Of course, government-financed abortions will be provided for those who fail to follow instructions.”104 This language directed toward the fundamentalist subculture was intended naturally to generate action guided by anxiety. LaHaye warned of the idea of law made

103 Ibid., pp. 64-65.

104 Ibid., pp. 66-67. Emphasis is LaHaye’s.
based upon immediate sociological needs rather than on the immutability of the Ten Commandments. He concluded that humanism had made sociological law the new norm in America.\textsuperscript{105}

The result of LaHaye’s vision of an amoral society was the individual autonomous from God, a “self-centered, godlike person with unlimited goodness and potential” needing only “the liberty and freedom...to express himself.”\textsuperscript{106} Again LaHaye attacked the Enlightenment, particularly Jean Jacques Rousseau, whom he described as “the French skeptic, a most influential writer-philosopher for today’s college youth” but who was “a moral degenerate” and “a major factor in producing the French Revolution”.\textsuperscript{107} Here LaHaye cited Schaeffer, who “points out that autonomous thinking historically leads not to world betterment, or even human improvement, but to chaos.”\textsuperscript{108}

LaHaye took one final step—imagining that humanistic autonomy led to big-government socialism politically and economically. “They [humanists] overlook or reject the premise that freedom has always been in inverse proportion to the size and power of government. The less government, the more freedom—and vice versa. Anyone familiar with humanist writers is struck by their consistent hostility toward Americanism, capitalism, and free enterprise.”\textsuperscript{109} The key point was that the teaching of evolution had led to this end, the death of capitalism. LaHaye was so suspicious of humanism’s power that he imagined humanists ready to commit acts of violence.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 68.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., pp.68-69.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p. 70.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., pp. 72-73.
and that they were favorable to Communistic thinking.\textsuperscript{110} He feared the power of the United Nations as an agent of humanistic one-world government and noted that humanist Julian Huxley, one of the architects of the Neo-Darwinian synthesis, served with UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization).\textsuperscript{111} LaHaye called his readers, as patriotic Americans and as Christians, to political action: “No humanist is qualified to hold any governmental office in America…Over 50 percent of our legislators are either committed humanists or are severely influenced in their thinking by the false theories of humanism.”\textsuperscript{112}

Needless to say, LaHaye was deeply troubled by the nation’s universities and other secular organizations campaigning for the rights for different segments of the population. The basic connection between the teaching of evolution and the campaigns for rights fostered in his mind the growth of the federal government and support for socialism.

New York became the capital of the humanist movement, which then spread across the United States. The recognized liberalization of the East Coast can be traced largely to these early humanist organizations and the concentration of educational institutions located there. No doubt the rapid expansion of such societies to positions of influence was due to the many colleges and universities in the area.

The humanists soon found that establishing a myriad of organizations and societies would give them access to many more special-interest groups throughout the nation. One of the early organizations was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (founded in 1909-1910)…

Since then, scores of organizations have been spawned or assisted by these societies such as…the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU); and, more recently, the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) and National Organization of Women (NOW).\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p. 73.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p. 74.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p. 78.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p. 163.
LaHaye’s update to *The Battle for the Mind*, called *Mind Siege: The Battle for Truth in the New Millennium* (2000), included a list of enemies that included the National Academy of Sciences; the National Center for Science Education (a watchdog organization battling creationism on the local level); the National Association of Biology Teachers; the National Education Association; major television networks, high-profile newspapers, and news magazines; the U.S. State Department; the Department of Education; the left-wing of the Democratic Party; Harvard University; Yale University; University of Minnesota; University of California (Berkeley); and two thousand other colleges and universities.”

In *The Battle for Mind*, LaHaye provided two major illustrations of the contrasting sides—One cartoon depicted the servant of God (with an “S” on his chest) standing upon God/theism, creation, and morality. He is thus enabled to have a “compassionate world view”. The basis for all is the divine revelation of the books of the Bible. The humanist perspective is depicted with a man bearing “AS” on his chest, standing for “autonomous self”. He is standing on atheism, evolution, and amorality, and is empowered to hold up a worldview of one-world socialism. Most interesting here are the books understood to be humanistic, which include Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato as well as Enlightenment thinkers whom LaHaye mentioned in his text.

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Figure 8-1. LaHaye’s depiction of the Christian world view.
Figure 8-2. LaHaye’s depiction of the secular humanist world-view.
As a leader of the Moral Majority, LaHaye’s commentary carried significant weight among fundamentalists. However, LaHaye’s commentary in 2012, as well as that of his friend and Falwell lieutenant Elmer Towns, demonstrate different levels of importance each man gave to Schaeffer’s and Morris’s influence upon Moral Majority decisionmaking. Both LaHaye and Towns were agreed that in the 1970s beginning with Jimmy Carter something was going terribly wrong in America, and ideas of “liberalism”, “humanism” and the Left had much to do with the problem. From these two interviews, one can see a pattern emerging: antievolutionism was more significant as a stand against humanism primarily rather than a defense of the particulars of Morris’s young-earth views.

**Timothy F. LaHaye (1926-)**

Timothy F. LaHaye was born in Detroit, Michigan on April 27, 1926. He came into the Christian faith as a child. “My parents took me to the First Baptist Church of Farmington, Michigan, where my uncle Dr. Elmer Palmer led them to Christ. About 4 years later, when I was eight, a Sunday school teacher led me to Christ.”

His working-class father lost his job at a Ford plant in Michigan during the Depression and died when Tim was only ten. LaHaye was a product of the fundamentalist subculture. On graduating from Bob Jones University he took a low-paying pastorate in South Carolina and later he attended Moody Bible Institute for one semester. After serving in the Air Force in World War II, he attended a Christian college on the GI Bill, and then went into the ministry. He eventually earned a position at Scott Memorial Baptist Church in San Diego in 1956 and served there for twenty-five years, while he also earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Western Baptist Seminary, and he later received several

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115 Tim LaHaye, email message to author, April 9, 2012.
honorary degrees, including a doctorate of literature from Liberty University, a Falwell-led institution.  

The two historical facts for which LaHaye is nationally known are his participation in the Moral Majority with close friend and ally Jerry Falwell in 1979 and his co-authorship, with Jerry B. Jenkins, of the 1990s *Left Behind* series, a marriage between end-of-the-world prophecies in the Bible and a fictional narrative placing characters in the midst of events culminating in the second coming of Christ. *Newsweek* in 2004 called the LaHaye-Jenkins duo “the most successful literary partnership of all time” with—at that point—62 million copies of the series sold.  

LaHaye provided the biblical ideas and Jenkins constructed the narrative. LaHaye claimed to have been profoundly inspired by the end-times work of a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, John Walvoord. “Dr. Walvoord had little influence on my early life, but after reading many of his excellent books and meeting him personally as we spoke together at prophecy conferences I came to hold him in highest esteem. His books and ministry influenced me greatly.” LaHaye’s premillenialism linked neatly eventually to Henry Morris’s interpretation of Genesis when the two joined forces. Ronald Numbers comments that “Morris offered a compelling view of earth history framed by symmetrical catastrophic events and connected by a common hermeneutics. ‘If you take Genesis literally,’ reasoned Morris, ‘you’re more inclined to take Revelation literally.’” LaHaye did both.

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118 Tim LaHaye, email message to author, April 9, 2012.

119 David Gates, “Pop Prophets,” *Newsweek*, p. 45-46. In 2012, LaHaye put the figure at 70 million. (Tim LaHaye, email message to author, April 9, 2012.)

120 Tim LaHaye, email message to author, April 9, 2012.

The context of LaHaye’s activism within a larger group is important. LaHaye’s associations with other leaders of his generation of Christian conservatives seeking both to evangelize America and rescue it politically were also favorable. He called Bill Bright, president of the world’s largest evangelical parachurch organization, Campus Crusade for Christ, “one of the two greatest men of faith I ever knew” and “an incredible servant of God”. He qualified his endorsement of Pat Robertson, religious broadcaster of *The 700 Club*: “Pat Robertson and I are friendly acquaintances with a lot of core beliefs in common except for his extreme charismatic beliefs and activities, and he holds to the post-Tribulation theory of our Lord’s second coming, which I think is unscriptural and not conducive to producing an evangelistic church in the last days.” For Falwell, LaHaye reserved his highest praise, calling him “the greatest Christian leader of faith in my lifetime”.

Personal relationships between nationally known pastors constituted a later political force the power of which shocked the academic world. In the 1970s, LaHaye found in Falwell a co-belligerent, a fellow member of a new generation of fundamentalists willing to shake off the habits of their elders in renouncing political engagement. “Jerry came and was impressed with my biblical philosophy of why America was declining. He is reputed to have claimed that I was the first fundamentalist who believed we should jettison non involved passivism [sic] and get our followers registered, informed on the issues and out to vote on election day.” Missing in the present academic literature is a treatment of the context of relationships—such as LaHaye’s and

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122 Tim LaHaye, email message to author, April 9, 2012.
Falwell’s—from which Francis Schaeffer and Henry Morris benefitted as they spoke about the decline of Western civilization as a result of the perils of Darwinism.

LaHaye, Falwell, and their compatriots who celebrated Morris and Schaeffer had to overcome an inward-looking attitude among their audiences first. LaHaye claimed a “fair” treatment of creationism had yet to be published:

To my knowledge there has never been a book written that gives the historical truth about the rise of Creationism, the Moral Majority and the important motivation of the Evangelical church beginning in the 70s, [and] gaining steam in the 80s, and even the ultra liberal media today recognizes that we represent the largest minority view in the nation, only half of which get out and exercise their free franchise to vote. If we can motivate 20% more we can fulfill my lifetime political dream of seeing the same percentage of members in government as are in the population. It has never been our goal to control America. It is our goal to elect enough members to government to have the same influence on our country as our Founding Fathers.126

LaHaye admitted simultaneously that fundamentalists were not engaged in the political process in the 1970s before the Moral Majority’s creation. Thus America’s destiny was in the hands of others demanding their rights.

Unfortunately, we are still suffering the results of the unscriptural pietistic movement that taught (as did my godly pastor under whose ministry I was called to the ministry), “that politics is a dirty business, we Christians should never get involved in politics, we should leave that up to the nice civic minded people while we spread the gospel at home and around the world.”

In the 50s I began to realize those “nice civic minded people” were neither nice nor civic. Today that can easily be seen in that they don’t want freedom for everyone as we do, they want the freedom for themselves and the organizations they dominate to impose their will on others. Their call for “tolerance” is for others, not themselves, and the public school is a good illustration of that! Their tolerance imposes the unscientific theory of evolution as scientific on young impressionable minds. When in truth it is a religious belief about a godless world which spontaneously sprung into existence and over millions of years of “evolution” produced a man and woman on the same continent with complimentary reproductive capabilities to produce over 6 billion people. THAT IS

126 Ibid.
NONSCENCE [sic]! Calling it “scientific” millions of times does not make it scientific.\textsuperscript{127}

LaHaye’s Vision of America

Pinpointing the root of secularism in American thought was not an easy matter, given the diversity of opinions LaHaye entertained simultaneously. On the one hand, the threat appeared to be domestic. “Personally I think the secularizers, freethinkers, atheists, socialists and liberal Unitarians plus other anti-Christianity thinkers had their start as early as 1826 when Socialist Robert Owens founded the first socialist city in America in New Harmony, [Indiana].”\textsuperscript{128}

Education was furthermore taken over by the anti-God. “John Dewey and many other God haters…gravitated to their plan to take over education from K thru Ph.D., which is why the academics love evolution and will lie to our children and call evolution Science, when it is an unproven theory.”\textsuperscript{129} LaHaye acknowledged Dewey as “the most influential man on education in the last 100 years” but quick to add that Dewey’s \textit{Humanist Manifesto} was “anti-God, anti-Christianity and anti-morality”.\textsuperscript{130} The linkage between Darwinism and Dewey’s humanism was a critical component to the fundamentalist uproar over evolution in schools—evolution appeared to be integrated into a worldview indoctrination process.

On the other hand, LaHaye argued that the root of this secularizing process came from Europe and then tainted a pristine America. “[There was] the growing atheism of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century (and only God knows when it started, probably in the days of Nimrod or before) and hit the graduate schools of Europe in the “Dark Ages” (dark toward God and His Word).”\textsuperscript{131}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Ibid.}
\item\textsuperscript{128} Tim LaHaye, email message to author, March 6, 2012.
\item\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid.}
\item\textsuperscript{130} Tim LaHaye, email message to author, April 9, 2012.
\item\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
LaHaye added that “the liberal socialists and atheists want to destroy America as we know it in preference for a one world government, which is the master plan of Satan, otherwise they would not advocate changing our laws to conform to UN or European laws and teachings. I have been to Europe and found nothing they have is what we want for America.”

With regard to the United States, LaHaye described a second fall—as if the fall of humanity in Genesis had repeated itself in American history. In the 1700s, the values of the Reformation were culturally secure among the newcomer colonists; LaHaye celebrated “the Judeo-Christian philosophy of the colonists when the educational learning level was much higher than it is today.”

**Totalitarianism Looms**

LaHaye believed scientists taught evolution with sinister intent toward the trusting young. “I have found that evangelists of evolution will lie, cheat and steal to advance their anti-Christian, anti-biblical assault on Biblical Creation.” LaHaye questioned the assurance of evolutionists and their moral integrity at the same time:

> Just because Micro Evolution, within the known species is provable does not make it factual to move [prove] the macro evolution, (migration of the species) factual. In fact it is an evil lie to con innocent children into thinking it is a fact because the teacher or scientist says so. That is intellectual and educational dishonesty. As I said in my previous letter, dogs can be interbred hundreds of times but the result is always dogs…never are there dog/cats or dog/chimps. We are still limited to the species God created and that Noah took on the ark.

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132 Ibid.

133 Ibid.

134 Tim LaHaye, email message to author, March 6, 2012.

135 Tim LaHaye, email message to author, April 9, 2012.
Furthermore, LaHaye referred to the compromise of theistic evolution as a “blasphemous theory”.\(^\text{136}\)

LaHaye warned about the governmental context in which evolution was being defended and promulgated. Again, he saw sinister intent and hints of conspiracy against Bible-believing people. He did not see the success of Christian schools in California, for example, to be an illustration of the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment at work, but instead as an illustration of the lengths Christian parents must go to educate their children in a world increasing in its hostility to faith, and where “the ‘theory’ of evolutionism that is godless” is taught in public education.\(^\text{137}\) In addition, LaHaye coded the government’s actions as essentially evangelistic in a secular sense and as supporting autonomy apart from the Bible. “The anti-God or a-God philosophy of public education is destroying our nation’s morals and the greatest proponent is public education and their brainwashed product in the secular dominated media and entertainment fields.”\(^\text{138}\)

**The Carter Betrayal**

LaHaye believes a momentous transition awakening fundamentalists to political action occurred with the presidency of Jimmy Carter. He holds that a disproportionately small number of secularists controlled the thought of the vast majority of Americans (including Bible-believing Christians) from the centers of the culture in politics, law, education, the media, the arts, and in the academic realm. Fundamentalist Christians were politically asleep until 1976 when a supposed defender of the faith, Jimmy Carter, appeared on the political scene and conservative Christians became mobilized and united—only to be shocked to learn quickly that Carter was

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\(^\text{136}\) Tim LaHaye, email message to author, March 6, 2012.

\(^\text{137}\) Tim LaHaye, email message to author, April 9, 2012.

openly sympathetic to liberals and secularists. It was then that these fundamentalist Christians realized they would have to systematically recapture the sectors of American life themselves. They would have to participate in the new national language of rights by fighting for their own. LaHaye comments:

Jimmy Carter woke up millions of Christians that being a “born again” Christian did not guarantee a person had a Christian world view. He caused many southern democrats in the Bible belt to realize the Democratic Party had left them philosophically and was not following scripture or their savior or the founding principles of America but was a secular humanist dominated political party…

The Democrats have moved on from just being secular liberals to being rabid secular socialists who hate the traditional America we knew and instead want us to become part of the one world government that the UN is working tirelessly to establish. If it had not been for the overpowering liberal media, totalitarian unions and … socialists in the entertainment business the fast conservative minded citizens would have voted them out of office.\textsuperscript{139}

Every rights revolution has its moments of ignition when disparate parties coalesce for a common cause, e.g., civil rights history demonstrates the galvanizing power of the Emmett Till killing in Mississippi and the Montgomery bus boycott. Other rights movements have pivotal moments as well, such as the Stonewall protest in 1969 that sparked the gay rights movement. Carter’s betrayal was a pivotal moment for fundamentalist Protestants. Rather than reading the outrage as “reactionary” merely, it is important to understand LaHaye’s point that this demographic was politically asleep until this moment.

But as fundamentalists began to awaken and participate in the rights mindset that so many other constituencies had embraced for years, they constructed a dualistic narrative about America that was a good-vs.-evil story rather than acknowledge pluralism. And of all the parties they could have chosen to blame for their discontent, they pinpointed atheists and secular humanists. Among an army of rescuers, LaHaye celebrated Jerry Falwell as the foremost:

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
That [the late 1970s] was when I realized Jerry was tapping into the growing need to get ministers involved in educating their congregation on the moral and anti-Christian attacks by liberal secular humanists or those influenced by them on limited government who were seeking to destroy the Judeo-Christian principles on which our nation was founded and that has made America the greatest nation on earth. The time was right and we had no small impact on getting a conservative governor of California elected [Ronald Reagan] and four years later reelected in a landslide. [And it was in this period] during which the MM [Moral Majority] was growing and becoming a great influence in America.\textsuperscript{140}

As will be seen, the Carter betrayal and the rise of the Religious Right in reaction likewise transformed the activity of Henry Morris and his fellow creationists by putting antievolutionism into the framework of a national battle—a culture war—that had not occurred in the 1920s with the Scopes conflict. “It is the obsessive liberal socialism taught in public school that produces a hatred for America by Americans who want us to apologize for all the good things we have done to produce a free world, like ours use to be.”\textsuperscript{141} Neither William Jennings Bryan nor his allies made the sweeping claims about the opposition’s intent that LaHaye made about the foes of the Moral Majority.

In this context, Henry Morris—like Falwell—was a savior, not just an apologist. Creationism suddenly had meaning for the future of the country, not just for the faith of nervous Christian students of biology. Creationism’s success or failure would have an impact in the varied realms of American life—the media, sexuality, rights, etc. The context of the creation-evolution controversy exploded into domains that Morris, William Jennings Bryan, or George McCready Price could not have foreseen, as now neighbor strove with neighbor in the forum of the public school. LaHaye called Morris “the most brilliant and humble Christian I ever knew and I knew him as a personal and close friend.”\textsuperscript{142} LaHaye rated Morris’ book \textit{The Long War}

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Ibid.}
Against God—a manifesto for young-earth creationists—“# 5 or better of the over 2,500 books I have read in my life,” adding

that book shows this battle [the creation-evolution controversy] has been going on for thousands of years. Essentially he posits that evolution is a religion, based on faith…NOT science, that Satan was the first evolutionist and he has inculcated that false religious doctrine into every false religion in the world. Dr. Morris was a giant of faith.\textsuperscript{143}

Naturally a dichotomy that paints the other side as demonically inspired did not allow for measured dialogue in the heat of culture-war battle. Obviously, for fundamentalists the new political environment made a hero of the scientist Morris.

As Morris and LaHaye were co-belligerents against the secularization of America, the Reformed leaders Francis Schaeffer and R. J. Rushdoony likewise entered the sociopolitical fray of the late seventies. LaHaye acknowledged that Schaeffer had a limited but significant influence on him but denied Rushdoony had any place in his worldview formation.

I read several of Francis Schaffer’s excellent books, in the late 70s, attended with my wife and daughter his seminar in Indy [Indianapolis], spoke with him at a second humanism conference in Amsterdam but did not know him personally very well. I was given a series of his tapes (reel to reel) which I enjoyed. But I had almost no contact with him. His books and videos were his greatest contribution to the MM [Moral Majority] leaders.

Rushdoony had little impact in my circles and I didn’t read his books. He was from the Reformed Church branch of Christianity which had a strong emphasis on Christian schools.\textsuperscript{144}

LaHaye added a reason for this position: “Most of us in the MM were not from the Reformed movement, but Baptists, Evangelical Free, Bible churches, and Calvary Chapel followers who agreed with our views on reaction and Bible Prophecy.”\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{143} Tim LaHaye, email message to author, March 6, 2012.

\textsuperscript{144} Tim LaHaye, email message to author, April 9, 2012.

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.
But even co-belligerence did not involve overlooking theological differences. Therefore, Baptists like LaHaye and Falwell differed strongly with Reformed ideas. LaHaye took serious issue with Calvinism and attacked the theology of predestination as well amillenialism. Therefore, the tenuous nature of the Republican coalition that elevated Reagan to the presidency became apparent—even the Religious Right showed signs of factionalism. An informative but somewhat misleading article from *Newsweek* in February 1981 shows a tendency to lump the Religious Right into one mass rather than see it as a pluralism of co-belligerents—labeling Rushdoony’s Chalcedon Institute as the official think tank of the Religious Right and *The Moral Majority Report* its key publication. But in retrospect, it is fair to conclude at minimum that clearly Reagan was the champion of antievolutionism many had hoped for. The *Newsweek* piece also defined the priorities and bugaboos of the Religious Right—abortion, school busing, school prayer, homosexuality, sex on TV, the Equal Rights Amendment, and the U.S. Department of Education—the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, control by big government, and the rights revolutions were still on Christians’ minds. Creationism and antievolutionism were contextually transformed in this new era of rights.

In 2012, LaHaye held to his past convictions and looked dimly upon the Obama administration as a fulfillment of his predictions.

I wrote the BATTLE FOR THE MIND over 32 years ago. Nothing has happened to cause me to change my view on the secular control of thought thru media, education and liberal Democrats. They are helped by the entertainment industry, the very socialistic unions and political parties except they have become so apparent that more people realize it. Hopefully enough will wake up and go to the polls to defeat the favorites of the tightly controlled media mafia that are

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147 David M. Alpern, Howard Fineman, and James Doyle, “The Right: A House Divided?” *Newsweek* 97, issue 5 (February 2, 1981): p. 60. The authors describe the success of Reagan as the result of a coalition of five major parties, of which the Religious Right is but one—neoconservatives, GOP establishment, Old Right, New Right, and the Religious Right.
deliberately trying to use their influence to change this nation for the worse… [and] you would find that Jimmy Carter and President Obama have the same naive ideas—or worse.\textsuperscript{148}

The tone of conspiracy in LaHaye’s words is obvious—and such a framework made Morris’s crusade for young-earth creationism and Schaeffer’s antievolutionism of national consequence. The 1970s in LaHaye’s estimation was a period that demanded a dualistic interpretation of events—actors either on the side of good or evil, with no option in between. The two-party system of American politics reinforced this line of thinking, as the above discussion of \textit{The Battle for the Mind} demonstrates.

\textbf{Academic Evaluations of LaHaye}

LaHaye’s belief system has been the subject of scholarly reflection. The notion of “secular humanism” became a narrative tool for clustering a host of complex social phenomena under one umbrella. In the growth of Religious Right activism on a national scale, Henry Morris remained a dependent and junior player: Ronald Numbers noted that LaHaye supported Morris’s dream of building a creation-science institute and also enthusiastically endorsed Morris’s books, but the relationship between the two men stimulated little additional comment from the scholar.\textsuperscript{149} All of this should also be understood in light of those who discount Morris as an influential leader on his own merits. So it is to LaHaye’s perspective that we must focus to understand the popular support for Morris’s success rather than Morris’s own efforts. The network that undergirded Morris lifted him to prominence.

According to Michael Lienesch, to LaHaye the disaster that was to become secular humanism was significantly linked to the thought of Thomas Aquinas and afterward, “when European thought divided dramatically into two lines, the humanism of the Renaissance and the

\textsuperscript{148} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{149} Numbers, \textit{The Creationists}, pp. 312-316.
biblical theism of the Reformation.”\textsuperscript{150} Secondly, the Reformational influence was the guiding vision of America’s Founding Fathers. The Enlightenment was uniformly a disaster for Christianity. “Far from the conventional descriptions, which celebrate the Enlightenment as an era in which Europeans emerged from the darkness of superstition into the light of rationality, these writers [including LaHaye] see it as a period of retrogression, a return to paganism”.\textsuperscript{151}

LaHaye believed that European-style secularism only invaded the United States after the deaths of the Founding Fathers; the early colonies had been designed to promote the Christian way of life and the creation of a new nation was a direct product of religious revivals. The Founders themselves were in the main devoted, Bible-believing Christians.\textsuperscript{152} The dualistic nature of LaHaye’s worldview was sharpened by the Cold War as humanism and communism were seen to be virtually synonymous. Humanists, LaHaye believed, had vastly disproportionate social, political, and psychological power compared to their actual numbers, which he estimated to be approximately 275,000 in \textit{The Battle for the Mind}.\textsuperscript{153} Lienesch noted that LaHaye’s deep concern about secular humanism limited his view of how democratic rights could be extended: “LaHaye makes clear that there are limits to his pluralist vision. Assuming that secular humanism is in fact a religion, it would seem to follow that humanists would share the same political rights and responsibilities as others, including the right to elect their own to office. Not so, argues LaHaye.”\textsuperscript{154} Finally, in describing the leaders of the Religious Right, including

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\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 161, 144-145, and 147.
\textsuperscript{153} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 162 and 164. See also Tim LaHaye, \textit{Battle for the Mind}, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{154} Lienesch, \textit{Redeeming America}, pp. 168-169. Lienesch goes on to quote pp. 45-46 of \textit{Battle for the Mind}, which blasts the notion of a humanist being qualified for public office: “Whether he is a politician, government official, or
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LaHaye, Lienesch concluded that the very notion of rights for all was highly problematic in the late twentieth century context:

Most of the time, however, they are more cautious about rights, and sometimes they seem altogether ambivalent about them. Thus they warn that in asserting their rights, citizens can sometimes be guilty of asserting their own self-interest to the detriment of the greater good. Moreover, they are aware that rights imply equality, or at least equality before the law. This presents the problem that rights can be claimed by others as well as themselves, including those with whom they disagree. Complicating the issue even more is the fact that many of them see rights as belonging to majorities as well as minorities.\textsuperscript{155}

The idea of equal protection of the rights of all presented LaHaye and the Religious Right with a difficult problem in a pluralistic America. Clearly, white evangelical Protestant male heterosexuals were facing pluralism head-on in the courts and in society, and a dualistic narrative with a simplified atheistic enemy served them well in making sense of the national melee over rights but also in reassuring their audiences that God and trustworthy politicians were still on the side of those who defended historic Christianity. As will be shown, Elmer Towns at times resonated with and at times differed from LaHaye’s perspective of the overall scene, but no disagreement existed about the spread of liberal thinking and humanistic ideas.

\textbf{Elmer L. Towns (1932-)}

Elmer Towns was born in Savannah, Georgia and grew up in a Presbyterian church. He converted to Christianity at age 17. He eventually attended Dallas Theological Seminary and Southern Methodist University for simultaneous master’s degrees. He went to teach for three years at Midwest Bible College in St. Louis and aided that school in getting accredited. He became president of Winnipeg Bible College in Canada, then went to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois (1965-1971) while also attempting to earn his doctorate

\textsuperscript{155}Ibid., p. 182.
from Garrett Seminary (named Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary as of 1974), which, he noted, was the most liberal of all United Methodist seminaries at the time. He was quickly identified as the “fundamentalist” and was rejected for the doctoral program and was given a master’s degree instead. He then came to Lynchburg, Virginia, to help Jerry Falwell in the 1971 founding of Liberty Baptist College (later to be known as Liberty University) and earned a doctor of ministry degree from Fuller Seminary in 1982. In 1969 Towns had published a book about the largest Sunday schools in America and recognized Falwell’s Thomas Road Baptist Church on the list. Towns immediately recognized how future-oriented Falwell was, by building up a church he himself founded into a multi-building ministry with a television outreach around the nation. “I recognized the greatness of who this man was.” He saw himself as Melanchthon to Falwell’s Luther—an educational leader serving with a pastoral one.156

Guided by Public Opinion Spikes

Towns emphasized that creationism was not ever a major plank in the agenda of the Moral Majority. Fundamentalists worried about the national scene in the 1970s first and Darwinism after. “Moral Majority had about three or four premises…the abortion issue, the family or the homosexual issue, the Israel issue, and a strong military preparedness…We called those the four planks in the platform. Everyone tried to add other issues, but Jerry always resisted any other issue.”157

Furthermore, the timing of Falwell’s and the Majority’s activism is important. Towns comments that Falwell had strong opposition to the Supreme Court’s outlawing school-

156 Elmer L. Towns, interview by author, February 27, 2012.
157 Ibid.
sponsored prayer as well as initial support for the continuance of racial segregation. In both regards, Falwell was a typical white Southern fundamentalist of his times:

The Supreme Court issue on [school] prayer hit him, and basically he preached against it. His first response [was] the bully pulpit, to preach against the vote against prayer…He was speaking about it when I first came in contact with him in 1968…Whatever the issues were, he spoke on them. He was very vehement [and] spoke against the integration issues in the fifties. And later he went to the black community and apologized.  

Towns highlighted a meeting between Falwell and Martin Luther King’s former associate and later presidential candidate Jesse Jackson circa 1979. Falwell apologized to a local Lynchburg church Jackson was speaking at, and gave Jackson the opportunity to speak to Falwell’s television audience. Towns claimed lastly that states’s rights never had anything to do with Falwell’s segregationist views. “I never heard him talk about it [states’s rights]. It was an individual thing.”

The other rights revolutions generally stimulated a slow response from Falwell as his audience first became agitated. As far as the feminist revolution went Falwell did not immediately speak publicly against abortion following the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973. According to Martin, Falwell’s first sermon on the abortion issue was a full five years later.

Towns agreed:

\[158\] Ibid.

\[159\] Ibid. However, in Falwell’s 1997 autobiography, he admitted a strong states’s rights position as a young pastor confronting civil rights demonstrations in the South. See Jerry Falwell, *Falwell: An Autobiography* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty House Publishers, 1997), pp. 312-313. “I felt bullied and unjustly attacked by the army of white Northerners marching into the South, demanding that we follow their dictates in the running of our community and in the ordering of our lives. I was angry that suddenly the Supreme Court, the Congress, and the President had assumed rights once granted to the states, and I protested loudly the arrogant, disruptive, and often violent wave of demonstrators arriving daily in the South. I was determined to maintain the right to decide for ourselves how we would live together, black and white.”

He did not focus [on abortion] from the pulpit until [nineteen] seventy-eight. I think that is a true statement. But when Falwell would get into the pulpit he would talk about the drift of the nation, and he would talk about sin, and he would talk about more drun-keness, and more cursing on television, and he would mention the abortion issue, but it was just in passing, [it was] not a focus.¹⁶¹

On this point, Towns was candid—Falwell was guided by opinion polls, by spikes in public concern first and foremost.

Jerry realized the spikes come…he knew that when he talked about values and ethics and getting America back….when he talked about praying in public schools, boy, the spike went up—the money spike. I remember because I used to sit in these financial meetings, fundraising meetings,[where] we’d talk about it [the spikes]…and I’d come home and I’d write his sermons for him…The spikes told him what he needed to preach on…that’s where the public opinion [was]. You tell how much the people are interested by how much they give [financially]…and so the spikes told him that the prayer, the Bible reading [in schools]…this was a nerve.

Interestingly, the particulars of Henry Morris’ creationism did not cause a “spike” worthy of Falwell’s concern:

Creation was not the driving issue…the driving issue was to return America to her historic core values. We are a nation under law, under God. ….It was not so much the creation process, but the fact of a creator.¹⁶²

Towns’s estimation of an “influence maker” curiously did not include Henry Morris and his agenda, though Towns acknowledged Morris came to Liberty University and preached several times. Nonetheless, the Moral Majority did not elevate the creation-evolution controversy as a priority for its national program. “In essence, Jerry Falwell didn’t make creationism his number one battle. Abortion was his number one battle, and homosexuality was his number two battle…but he didn’t make all of the other the liberal things in the public schools his main battle.” Towns appreciated Morris’ efforts but in the end concluded the creationist leader was too

¹⁶¹ Elmer L. Towns, interview by author, February 27, 2012.

¹⁶² Ibid.
divided in his ambitions to be effective, that he repackaged others’ ideas and failed to achieve his potential. “I don’t see him as an influencer. I see him as a good friend, great man, did a great work for God… [but] he did not come up with anything new. You’ve got to come up with something new to be different. Jerry [Falwell] came up with saturation evangelism. That laid a foundation for building churches. Then he came up with Moral Majority.”

Towns defined an influence maker as someone who affected a mass of Christians directly through his life. He praised Princeton theologian Charles Hodge for his scholarly work but did not consider him a man of influence; however, Hodge’s intellectual descendant J. Gresham Machen deserved this label for being the origin of multiple Presbyterian denominations. Towns also illustrated how influence was passed on from the older generation of fundamentalists to the next by telling the story of how Jerry Falwell obtained a mailing list of 100,000 pastors from Sword of the Lord publisher John R. Rice. Falwell sent Towns to Rice’s farm to request the list, and Rice’s horse MacArthur took a liking to candy in Towns’ pocket, which was a sign to Rice to yield. In Towns’ words, “Ronald Reagan got in office because MacArthur liked Milky Ways.” This was a power structure naturally unknown and invisible to America’s evolutionary biologists, who would later feel its wrath. But Henry Morris was not in Towns’ estimation significant in the genesis of the Moral Majority: “I would not bring Henry Morris into it---I think he is a non-player in this whole field…the whole field of [the] Moral Majority.”

Carter and Cobelligerence

Towns pointed to President Jimmy Carter’s policies as the ignition switch for the Moral Majority movement. Calling Carter a liberal “to the core”, Towns saw Carter’s “greatest betrayal

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163 Ibid.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
was what he did to Israel” and “Israel was the thing that uncovered the other two or three issues…the abortion issue, the prayer issue [et cetera].” Here Towns responded to William Martin’s argument that the White House Conference on the Family was actually an important motivator for the Moral Majority rebellion by saying the Conference shed more light on Carter’s liberal tendencies (to allow definitions of the family beyond a two-parent-led unit for example), but foreign policy on Israel “was the alarm” in Falwell’s mind. Premillenial dispensationalism guided Falwell here, and the sovereignty of Israel was a therefore a major concern.166

Cobelligerence for the sake of saving America required something beyond a fundamentalist coalition—it required a Judeo-Christian alliance, one that was forged at personal cost for Falwell. In Towns’s words Falwell absorbed the cobelligerence idea from Schaeffer and decided that the late seventies was a time for war, a battle in which one’s comrades’ religion should not matter—Baptist and Catholic and Mormon could co-labor side by side: “We [the Judeo-Christians] have a common heritage of law, we have a common heritage of truth, we have a common heritage of the Protestant Puritan ethic.”167 At the same time, Towns was careful to describe the degree to which the cobelligerents actually agreed. For example, he admitted he was influenced by R. J. Rushdoony’s argument that the federal government was showing a messianic attitude in its control of the public school but rejected the basic premises of Rushdoony’s Reconstructionism.

Towns was consistent in his conservatism religiously and politically. Referring to 2012, he stated, “We’ve moving strongly toward socialism”, claiming that the courts have been making laws rather than interpreting them and separating himself from President Obama.168 While

166 Ibid. See Martin, With God on Our Side, pp. 168-190.
167 Elmer L. Towns, interview by author, February 27, 2012.
168 Ibid.
Towns expressed deep concern about secular humanism and defined its spread as being another critical spark for the creation of the Moral Majority, he acknowledged that Falwell was guided more by the Christian writer Watchman Nee’s books on prayer and by public opinion polling than by Francis Schaeffer. In fact, a matter of style was enough to cause friction between the two men: “Jerry was not really high on Schaeffer because he dressed in gypsy clothes [referring to Schaeffer’s European lederhosen and knickers].” Towns had actually never heard of Schaeffer until the late seventies, suggesting the creation of the Moral Majority in 1979 was a rushed affair. But the Moral Majority was conceived as vehicle to unite religion and politics in a unique way in Towns’s mind. “Moral Majority was a political and not a religious movement. It was a political movement based on ethics and core values.”

The Academic Life and The Lord of the Flies

Towns explained his understanding of Darwinism’s impact on society in two steps. First he shuddered at the direction public education had taken, adopting liberal thinking about the nature of humanity:

Let me tell you what I am going to write one of these days. I am going to write a book and it’s going to be called Out of the Mind of a Liberal. Let me tell you, if you understood the presuppositions of liberalism, if you could ever look at them, they would horrify you. If you look at the presuppositions of a Christian and the presuppositions of a liberal, they are two opposing forces, and both forces want to destroy the other. [In America] we were dominated by a presupposition of the force of law, and now we are dominated by a presupposition of the force of liberalism.

Among those presuppositions of liberals appeared to be Darwinism and moral relativism, leading to a horrific vision of secular humanism let loose in society:

The Lord of the Flies is the epitome of humanism. If humanism is left without law, if humans are left so that each man does what he wants to do, each man does truth as he sees truth, what are they going to do? Violence to one another, raping

\[169\] Ibid.

\[170\] Ibid.
one another, killing one another. You know *The Lord of the Flies* is a picture of life without controls.\footnote{Ibid.}

Finally, Towns painted a dualistic image of academy versus the Bible-believing church. He assumed the two greatly differed on their histories of America, claiming that academic departments in universities see with the eyes of sin rather than the eyes of divine revelation, the result being that they fail to see sin’s impact on society:

> [Academic historians do] not believe people came to America for the freedom we hold dear. They think they came for other reasons….for wealth, and for money, and for conquering, and for political power. They don’t see the real Puritan thrust, and they don’t see the real Pilgrim thrust for coming here…One of the premises that fundamentalists make is that man has a tendency toward evil, a tendency to non-law, a tendency towards rebelling against whatever the standards are… and so they [historians] do not see the conflict within themselves and so they do not see the conflict within society.\footnote{Ibid.}

The political and legal domains became therefore the realms in which Moral Majority leaders and other social conservatives saw their greatest victories, though on a limited scale; the academic realm remained lost to fundamentalist influence. Schaeffer knew the divide firsthand between the conservative Protestant church and the university from his time in Switzerland, and spent the end of his life communicating to both evangelical academics like George Marsden and politically active fundamentalist pastors like Falwell. But Schaeffer entered the legal realm as well and encouraged the development of a new category of law in the public interest of evangelicals seeking to undo the moral relativism around them. Schaeffer worked directly with attorney John Whitehead in attacking secular humanism, and Whitehead had many colleagues—cobelligerents—including Wendell Bird, defender of antievolutionist rights, with legal expertise to fight the Religious Right’s court battles.

\footnote{Ibid.}
The Legal Story: Public Interest Law for the Religious Right

A community of lawyers rose up for the first time in the late 1970s to defend the rights of the Religious Right. John Whitehead was one of the most influential, as founder of The Rutherford Institute in 1982. A second individual of equal significance was Wendell Bird, who made a 1978 argument as a Yale law student that creationism ought to be taught on an equal basis with evolution in schools to respect the rights of free exercise of religion of creationist students. As the NAACP and ACLU defended African Americans and free speech advocates respectively, so fundamentalists sought to secure their own rights. These events demonstrated that Americans were thinking more in terms of demographics and interest groups than ever before. Whitehead and Bird collaborated with each other and other Christian lawyers. By the 1990s, public interest law on behalf of the Religious Right had become commonplace.

John W. Whitehead (1946-)

John Whitehead was born in Pulaski, Tennessee. He earned undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Arkansas, graduating from law school in 1974. Reflecting on the tumult of his youth, Whitehead remembered open cheering among his fellow students upon the news of Martin Luther King’s assassination in 1968 as well as meeting a young law professor named Bill Clinton. As a young attorney Whitehead maintained a counterculture and atheistic worldview until he came across Hal Lindsey’s The Late Great Planet Earth, which led to his Christian conversion. He moved his family to California, in the words of R. Jonathan Moore, “so that he could attend Lindsey’s Light and Power House Seminary.”

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Whitehead’s decision to turn his legal skills to the service of the Religious Right quickly gained the attention of Rushdoony. The network originated through personal relationships around a common cause of restoring America. While in California in 1976, Whitehead met Rushdoony and began attending the church in Los Angeles Rushdoony pastored, and, according to Hankins, “at the same time began to read Schaeffer’s views concerning the relationship of Christianity to the American founding.”

Hankins claimed that Whitehead never fully embraced the extremism of Rushdoony’s Reconstructionist views, but still Whitehead “did come to believe with Rushdoony that the American founding had much deeper Christian influence than secular academics and media figures believed.” He used Rushdoony’s library for the research on his first book, published in 1977, The Separation Illusion: A Lawyer Examines the First Amendment, which attacked the “wall of separation” between church and state defended by the Supreme Court of his era. Rushdoony provided “an enthusiastic foreword” to The Separation Illusion and, in Moore’s analysis, his Reconstructionist theological influence was ever present.

Whitehead wrote with the passion of a young zealot, attacking secular historians for suppressing America’s religious roots. He characterized the federal “state” as “a sundry cast of characters who had somehow insinuated themselves into the corridors of elite power”. Pure democracy as contradicted the Puritans’ and founding fathers’ intentions since they were “all aristocratically inclined, much more predisposed to hierarchy than to pure political equality.”

175 Hankins, Francis Schaeffer, pp. 193-194.

176 Hankins, Francis Schaeffer, p. 194; Moore, Suing for America’s Soul, pp. 40-41.

177 Moore, Suing for America’s Soul, p. 57.

178 Ibid., pp. 45-46. On the federal state, Whitehead naturally reserved a special blast for the Supreme Court: “Since the Civil War, Whitehead contended, the Court more than any institution had been responsible for denuding American identity of its essential Christian character.” (Page 47).

179 Ibid., p. 47.
Whitehead concluded that democracy was the enemy of the family, which was designed by God as a hierarchy and logically beyond the reach of the autonomy for the individual that rights thinking created. “A thoroughly egalitarian society, in fact, denies both Christianity and the Bible” and leads to totalitarianism.\[180\]

The sorry state of affairs that the present represented was in Whitehead’s calculation a direct result of the growth of federal power (really Northern power) over the states (especially the Southern states) in the aftermath of the Civil War. The North represented the egalitarian values of the Unitarian and transcendentalist and support of the Fourteenth Amendment, while the South represented the God-favored monarchist, the Calvinist, and states’s rights. The Northern forces had wielded the issue of race deftly to insert federal authority where it had never been before and to diminish states’ power. “The North’s diabolical tool for accomplishing this transformation…was the Fourteenth Amendment.”\[181\] According to Moore, Whitehead’s mythology of America’s decline continued into the twentieth century with the Warren Supreme Court’s rulings against school prayer and Bible reading in 1962 and 1963. The Court had taken the place of God himself as supreme authority over state governments by using the Fourteenth Amendment to enforce a twisted and new interpretation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.\[182\]

It is therefore easy to see how Whitehead’s trajectory stimulated enthusiasm from Rushdoony, given the evidence of Chapters Four and Five. Francis Schaeffer likewise found common cause with Whitehead after the lawyer’s fame increased substantially in Christian circles when he defended an Orthodox Presbyterian Church in San Francisco in 1980 from the

\[180\] Ibid., pp. 48-49.
\[181\] Ibid., pp. 50-51.
\[182\] Ibid., p. 54.
charge of discrimination emanating from a gay organist who, on the basis of a local ordinance protecting homosexuals in employment cases, had filed suit. A judge sided with Whitehead’s clients and ruled that churches were exempt. Whitehead had discovered his “legal niche,” fighting for Christians in discrimination cases, and Schaeffer’s son Franky introduced Whitehead to a world of Christian leaders that needed his services. Franky encouraged Whitehead to write a book documenting America’s peril to be, called *The Second American Civil War*. It was later published in 1982 as *The Second American Revolution*. Whitehead also gave Francis Schaeffer substantial help in the writing of *A Christian Manifesto*, which, as Chapter Six has shown, included a long list of legal battlefronts that gave Schaeffer immense concern.  

*The Second American Revolution* essentially mirrored Schaeffer’s arguments in *How Should We Then Live?* about Samuel Rutherford’s role in America’s founding and the subsequent decline of God-ordained order, extending the argument into the field of law. In the acknowledgements Whitehead thanked both Schaeffer and Rushdoony, the former of whom wrote the forward and celebrated the book for laying “the foundation and framework for fighting the tyrannical, secularist, humanistic power, which has separated our country from its Judeo-Christian base and now dominates this nation and its courts.” Whitehead made brief reference to the Fourteenth Amendment in an appendix, noting that the Supreme Court had used the amendment in ways far beyond guaranteeing the rights of African Americans and essentially curtailed states’ rights severely on the assumption the best interests of the citizenry required a

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broad interpretation of the amendment as establishing a second Bill of Rights against the states power.\textsuperscript{186}

Although Darwinism did not play a major role in \textit{The Second American Revolution}, it sat in the background as an essential underpinning to the secular humanism that caused the severity of the condition. “By making man the product of ‘natural selection’ rather than God’s direct handiwork, he [Darwin] helped to rob man of a sense of responsibility to his Creator and of all obligation to heed the Creator’s laws.”\textsuperscript{187} The influence of Darwinism altered the legal discipline, by using the arbitrary will of man as random chance became lord of the universe instead of the Bible as its reference point. “Law must be a changing, developing process,” Whitehead concluded. “Law is what the courts say it is.” But since God has been removed as an agent of control, the “all-directing totalitarian state” must step in to prevent social chaos.\textsuperscript{188} This was the unifying narrative Whitehead constructed, despite the fact that the Supreme Court’s recent interpretations had more to do with sociological change than with Darwinism. The latter served as the basis for the shift in worldview in Whitehead’s analysis, which essentially assumed the fall of a Christian America.

Leaders of the Religious Right welcomed Whitehead as a legal savior. Schaeffer introduced him to Pat Robertson, and Whitehead also met three leaders of the Moral Majority—Tim LaHaye, D. James Kennedy, and Jerry Falwell. Whitehead appeared on television speaking on behalf of the Religious Right and Schaeffer directly supported the creation of Whitehead’s The Rutherford Institute in 1982.\textsuperscript{189}

\textsuperscript{186} Whitehead, \textit{The Second American Revolution}, pp. 212-213.

\textsuperscript{187} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 188-189.

\textsuperscript{189} John W. Whitehead, interview by author, July 23, 2012.
By the time *The Second American Revolution* was published, Whitehead was one of the most famous lawyers in evangelical circles because of his association with the Schaeffer family. But there were so many legal battles to fight that in reality a whole army of attorneys rose up to meet the challenge. Wendell Bird became the creationism specialist, having written a defense of equal time for creationism while at Yale Law School, and Bird and Whitehead collaborated in the 1980s. Because Bird sits at the intersection of the story of creation science and Francis Schaeffer, the detail of Bird’s argument is worth noting, as well as the surprising successes he had in persuading federal judges and two Supreme Court justices.

**Wielding the Constitution and Bypassing Enlightenment Science**

Wendell R. Bird (1954-) was a hybrid personality and the product of two communities—fundamentalism and Ivy League culture—and thus he became a symbol of the new relevance of conservative Christianity in a secularizing America. Edward Larson described Bird’s goal as “securing a place for creationism in the classroom.” Bird proved that fundamentalists could bypass the debate with Enlightenment scientists altogether and appeal directly and solely to the legal community using the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment. In 1978 Bird described the legal strategy he envisioned in a student note in the Yale Law Journal. A survey of Bird’s argument will illustrate how he sought legitimacy in the public square for Henry Morris and the Institute for Creation Research’s brand of creationism.

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191 See Chapter Six and Schaeffer’s defense of equal time in the case of the Arkansas litigation of 1981.

192 Larson, *Trial and Error*, p. 147.

193 *Ibid.*., p. 147. Larson notes that his efforts brought him a school prize.
He opened his argument by stating that this time, as compared to William Jennings Bryan’s crusade in 1925, antievolutionists did not seek to do away with evolution in schools or even introduce the Bible into science classes.

Leading advocates of the creationist perspective do not endeavor to proscribe discussion of the general theory of evolution, as did the law involved in the Scopes trial. Nor in most areas do they attempt to introduce biblical creation into public schools. Instead they support “scientific creationism,” a theory of the origin of the earth and life that employs scientific argument and not a sacred text in its challenge to the general theory. *Cast in this form, the conflict is not between science and religion, but between two theoretical models that build upon scientific observation and criticism and that harmonize with some religions and have overtones contrary to others.*

Bryan sought to eliminate conflict by doing away with evolution; Bird sought to organize a new conflict. His goal was to equalize opportunity for creationists in the courts by leveling the playing field using the Free Exercise Clause and by suggesting that rational people accepted creationism and deserved to have their theory heard in the schools. “The Note will argue that exclusive public school instruction in the general theory of evolution … abridges free exercise of religion.”

Bird first demonstrated that some students emerge from religious communities with a long history of antagonism against evolutionary theory and that there were legal precedents that protect their right to object and defend their worldview. “Many individuals adhere to religions that affirm divine creation as a cardinal tenet of faith.” The supernatural creation of life, the special creation of humanity apart from animals, and a worldwide flood Bird claimed were

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essential foundation stones of the worlds that spawned creationist students.\textsuperscript{197} On the other side stood evolution, linking humanity and apes with common ancestry and purporting that uniformitarianism was sufficient to create the earth’s features as well as life.\textsuperscript{198} To Bird, the conflict for religious students going to public school was obvious given the stark contrast between the two approaches to origins. Christian students might be forced to attend public schools for various geographical and economic reasons—but even within those schools their constitutional right to free exercise could not be impinged.

Three types of burdens on free exercise can arise in the public school classroom: undermining of religious convictions, violation of religious practices, and compulsion of unconscionable declarations of belief. These burdens can interfere with religious exercise because of certain coercive features of public education: requirements of the academic program, conditions on enjoyment of public school instruction, and influence of teachers and peers.\textsuperscript{199}

The accuracy of Enlightenment science was not Bird’s primary concern, but rather the preservation of the creationist students’ worldview inherited from the religious communities from which they originated. Bird’s argument was in essence an acceptance of the tribal warfare between creationists and evolutionists rather than an amelioration. His desire was limited—to get creationist students through the governmental schools with their faith intact.

Bird’s use of legal precedents demonstrated that the American legal system could rule in favor of fundamentalist Christians if their lawyers argued well. To address the problem of the undermining of belief, Bird presented a parallel situation in which a court ruling upheld Wisconsin Amish communities’ right to separate their children from compulsory public

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., p. 520.

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., pp. 521-522.

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., p. 523.
schools. On the matter of the school’s violation of separatist practices central to religious belief, Bird pointed out that “many religions require that their adherents be separate from teachings and practices that conflict with religious tenets” but “a large number of religious groups are more moderate in this practice; they oppose subjection to views biased against their beliefs, but permit participation in a balanced presentation of both antagonistic and supportive teachings in a nonreligious forum, such as a public school classroom.” This moderate option pointed the way for the remainder of Bird’s argument, but nonetheless he again pointed out the case of the Amish and how “the Supreme Court implicitly acknowledged that public schools abridged separatist practices integral to the Amish way of life.” Bird’s America included the right to separate from teaching considered offensive to one’s worldview.

Finally there was the issue of the subordination of one’s convictions, or what Bird termed “compulsion of unconscionable declarations of belief”. Here he cited a Supreme Court affirmation of the rights of students not to pledge allegiance to the American flag if such behavior contradicted their religious convictions. “The Supreme Court ruled that the First Amendment protects individuals from state-compelled statements contrary to religious principles.” Declaring evolution to be true logically violated a child’s belief system if that system was rooted in fundamentalist Christianity.

Bird moved on to the problem of coercion in the public schools. He underscored how schoolchildren felt compelled to set aside their own convictions for the sake of academic gain,
that is, setting aside religion for the sake a grade in science. Moreover, a teacher’s authority to declare creationism wrong along with potential ostracism by the creationist student’s peers increased the coercive environment. “The Supreme Court has implicitly recognized the coercive effect of the public school on religious exercise,” Bird noted, citing cases in which the Court overthrew religious instruction that occurred on school property in a released-time program but upheld the same when classes occurred away from the school. Bird’s conclusion was direct: “exclusive public school instruction in the general theory [of evolution] burdens free exercise.”

Bird then proposed to referee a solution among the competing demands of the school’s curriculum, the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses, and the student’s needs as a member of a religious community. About to create a novel solution, he was optimistic. “The state’s interests in teaching biology and in presenting the general theory can be served by means less burdensome than exclusive presentation of that theory in the public schools.” He contemplated three options: exempting creationist students from the offending course altogether, neutralization of the offending material, or completely eliminating course requirements that included the offending material. He ruled out the first and third options swiftly: exemption would still not

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203 Ibid., p. 531. He referred to the situation as “a choice involving educationally important material such as biology may be tantamount to a direct requirement of subjection to objectionable instruction and abandonment of religious precepts.”

204 Ibid., pp. 532-534.

205 Ibid., pp. 534-535.

206 Ibid., p. 537.

207 Ibid., p. 542.
eradicate the coercion and ostracism of others, and elimination placed too much of a burden upon the state and its interests in teaching a standard curriculum. 208

Bird reached a climax—neutralization was therefore the best option. “Public school instruction found to abridge free exercise of religion can be neutralized by incorporation of countervailing viewpoints”. Bird was quick to acknowledge that the principle of no state establishment of religion had to be upheld while any alternative was designed. “Approaches to removal of an abridgement of religious exercise must not contravene the establishment clause of the First Amendment.”209 To adhere to the requirements of the Establishment Clause, what was needed was a form of creationism that was devoid of religious content. “Presentation of biblical creation would contravene the establishment clause and thus could not be employed to neutralize a public school course…Instruction in scientific creationism, however, would serve to neutralize a public school course that exclusively presents the general theory of evolution.”210

Bird then cited the 1974 book edited by Henry Morris, entitled Scientific Creationism. Bird claimed that creationists “do not seek to ban” evolution from public schools and sought only to defend the “special creation” of life, the “stability of original plant and animal kinds” (no macroevolution), and “catastrophism…as the underlying principle of geologic history”. Meanwhile they also denied “common ancestry of human beings with apes”. Living things were not evolving but rather decaying from an original created ideal according to the law of entropy; lastly, “the world and life came into existence relatively recently.” Bird called this new generation of creationist authors “highly trained in science”, with “at least 14 creationists who hold doctorate degrees from nonsectarian universities in various fields of science” among those

208 Ibid., pp. 544, 547, and 570.
209 Ibid., pp.550-551.
210 Ibid., pp. 553-554.
responsible for *Scientific Creationism*.\(^{211}\) Morris and his group had provided Bird with the weapon he needed to break into the biology classroom.

Bird went on to discuss the matter as to whether creationism automatically and unconstitutionally advanced the cause of religion. He turned the tables on evolutionists by claiming that evolution also resonated with religious teachings—the teachings of secular humanism and the *Humanist Manifesto I* and *II*. “Although scientific creationism does harmonize with the teachings of many faiths, the general theory of evolution also coincides with the tenets of some other religions.”\(^{212}\) At this point, Bird was fighting to secure a space for creationism by warding off every contradicting argument. He argued that “reference to a creator or a designer does not contravene the establishment clause, nor is teleological discussion excluded from public schools.” He noted that God had a place on American coinage and in the pledge of allegiance, that even Darwin made reference to a creator, and that religiously oriented scientists can still legally write textbooks.\(^{213}\) Bird was attempting to flatten the playing field, to make creationism and evolution both scientific and both religious, even as creationists at certain times openly professed their faith in a biblical God:

> It is true that the authors of the major scientific creationist textbooks are Christians representing a variety of denominations or fellowships, and that in other places some have written in support of biblical creation. The personal beliefs of the authors do not render their works religious in nature, or the contents religious doctrine. The establishment clause does not ban use in public schools of literary works authored by individuals holding strong convictions about religion, whether *Moby Dick* by Melville or *Candide* by Voltaire.\(^{214}\)


Bird thus opened the constitutional door to creationism on paper. The next decade gave him the opportunity to see these principles tested in the public eye.

Ronald Numbers and Edward Larson have detailed the trajectory of Bird’s career to its dramatic apex when in 1987 he presented the equal-time argument before the Supreme Court of the United States on behalf of the state of Louisiana in Edwards v. Aguillard—but they have not discussed Bird in relation to the Religious Right’s new concern over public interest law in the 1980s. The events surrounding the fate of Bird’s argument and the larger context of legal activism showed the Religious Right was gaining partial victories and constitutional ground similar to the past successes of other interest groups and their legal arms, such as African Americans and the NAACP.

The secret of the coming creationist success was teamwork, specialization, and division of labor, under a shared vision of restoring America. “Upon graduating from law school, Bird went to work for the Institute for Creation Research, where he put his legal skills to use improving an equal-time resolution that Henry M. Morris had drafted for adoption by local school boards.” But one zealous Catholic creationist, Paul Ellwanger, head of Citizens for Fairness in Education, aspired to introduce Bird’s resolution into state legislatures. Numbers recounts that “within two years lawmakers in Arkansas and Louisiana had approved versions of Ellwager’s bill, and more than twenty other states were considering it.” Both Arkansas and Louisiana laws were enacted in 1981.

Larson has pointed out that while both the Arkansas and Louisiana bills called for equal time for creationism, their language differed from Bird’s, strictly speaking. The Arkansas bill

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215 Numbers, The Creationists, p. 352. See also Larson, Trial and Error, p. 149.


named the competing theories “creation science” and “evolution science” but otherwise “Bird’s litany of creationist affirmations appeared as legislative findings of fact.”\textsuperscript{218} The Louisiana bill was ultimately a product of legislative compromise. The state’s Senate Education Committee allowed balanced treatment for scientific creationism as an option without referring to Bird’s creationist findings of fact. Larson concluded that the new Louisiana bill resembled “the non-controversial Kentucky law permitting teachers to temper evolutionary teaching with creationist concepts.”\textsuperscript{219}

Nonetheless, the bastion of the New Left—the ACLU—rose to do battle in both Arkansas and Louisiana, as it had done in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925. Hence evolutionary teaching became associated with the “Left” label, just as creationism had had its blessing from Jerry Falwell and Ronald Reagan on the Right. (Candidate Reagan had openly supported the equal-time approach.)\textsuperscript{220} The conservative Right also bristled at any attempt to question the states’ rights in Arkansas and Louisiana. Larson reflected on how greatly the scenario had changed from 1925.

No longer would an obscure county court, presided over by an elected judge applying state law, be the site of such a confrontation. In the thirty-odd years since the U.S. Supreme Court had assumed final authority for state-level disputes involving religious freedom, a comprehensive body of federal constitutional law had developed to deal with the subject. This change was widely accepted.

\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., p. 151.

\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., p. 153.

Ironically the ACLU had played a pivotal role: “ACLU lawsuits…often allowed the Supreme Court to address the thorniest Establishment Clause disputes, including those raised by the new creationism laws.”\footnote{Larson, Trial and Error, p. 158.}

The major players of the Arkansas trial have been outlined at the beginning of this chapter. The subsequent defeat, based on the judge’s decision that “balanced treatment” violated the Establishment Clause, motivated leaders of the Right to pinpoint the shoddiness of the work by the Arkansas attorney general’s office as well as the judge’s bias as the culprits. “All placed their hope on Louisiana, where the state attorney general had deputized Bird to give creationists their day in court to defend the last surviving equal-time statute.”\footnote{Ibid., pp. 163 and 166.} In 1985 Adrian Duplantier, a federal judge, had declared the Louisiana equal-time statute “a patently unconstitutional establishment of religion” and later a three-judge panel on the Fifth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals unanimously affirmed the Duplantier ruling.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 169-171.}

Bird’s argument was undergirded by a number of affidavits, two of which were written by scientists. One of these, Dean H. Kenyon, was a biology professor from San Francisco State who had long been interested in the religious implications of evolution: He would join community college professor Percival Davis in 1989 to write a textbook defending intelligent design called Of Pandas and People.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 170-171. See Percival Davis and Dean H. Kenyon, Of Pandas and People: The Central Question of Biological Origins (1989; repr., Dallas: Haughton Publishing Company, 1993). The editor of Pandas was Charles Thaxton, described in Chapter Six as a disciple of Schaeffer’s, and who became active in the design-championing think tank The Discovery Institute, as did Kenyon. Both Thaxton and Kenyon are listed as fellows of the Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture (see Center for Science and Culture, “Fellows,” Discovery Institute, http://www.discovery.org/csc/fellows.php (accessed November 23, 2012).} The future leaders of the intelligent design movement
were without a camp in the 1980s and their cause overlapped with Henry Morris’s and Bird’s in the Louisiana case.

Bird’s side was defending a proposal that was altered from the Arkansas situation:

Bird rejected all the traditional features of the biblical account that figured so prominently in the Arkansas statute, leaving only the broad concept that some organic and inorganic matter initially appeared in complex form, rather than merely evolving from ever simpler forms…To resolve these issues, Bird demanded a trial on the scientific merits of creation science and the educational merits of the Louisiana law.225

Against Bird were arrayed the ACLU and the National Association of Biology Teachers, the National Science Teachers Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.226 Once again the political left and the scientific establishment appeared as one in the court of law.

Despite setbacks and losses to the creationist side, the flexibility of a plurality of judges toward creationism was about to be revealed. Though creationism was ruled a violation of the Establishment Clause by the appellate bench, the judges did “open a door to accommodation of creationist instruction by individual science teachers while slamming shut the door to establishing creation science in the public schools by legislative mandate.”227 Bird wanted more, and “sought a rehearing en banc by the entire fifteen-member Fifth Circuit appellate bench.” This was a strategic move as Reagan had appointed six of the fifteen, after declaring himself in line with the Religious Right’s agenda regarding creationism and school prayer.228

225 Larson, Trial and Error, p. 167.
226 Ibid., pp. 166-167.
227 Ibid., p. 172.
228 Ibid., pp. 172-173.
Bird lost again, but this time encouraging news came from the conservative wing of the court. While eight judges denied Bird’s petition, seven—including four appointed by President Reagan and two named by President Richard Nixon, concurred with Bird. The dissenting opinion was explained by Judge Thomas Gee and as Larson has pointed out, it “represented the first published judicial support for creationist claims since Scopes.” Larson outlined Gee’s response:

On the basis of the state’s [Bird’s] affidavits, Gee asserted that “there are two bona fide views” of origins. Once this is accepted, Gee reasoned, “It follows that the Louisiana statute requires no more than that … the subject of origins will be discussed in a balanced manner if it is discussed at all. I see nothing illiberal about such a requirement, nor can I imagine that Galileo or Einstein would have found fault with it.” Establishment Clause concerns melted under this light, according to Gee, because “requiring the truth to be taught on any subject displayed its own secular warrant, one at the heart of the scientific method itself.”

The tide had turned against the New Left as represented by the ACLU and Enlightenment science. With the success of Ronald Reagan and conservatives, including the Religious Right, the culture wars had come not only to the nation’s science classrooms but also to its judiciary. Larson concludes that “a profound split in world view divided the Fifth Circuit bench.” Bird then turned to the Supreme Court of the United States. There again, in 1987, he successfully split the bench.

The issues and the communities in conflict had not changed. Bird fought for the notion that “creation science was a scientific concept with educational merit” while the ACLU held that “creation science embodied a religious belief” and thus violated the Establishment Clause. Most striking were the alignments of New Left organizations and liberal Christianity with the scientific parties on one side and Religious Right organizations and creationists on the other. The

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230 Ibid.
231 Ibid., p. 175.
National Academy of Science, numerous scientific organizations and state academies of science, and a collection of prominent American scientists, including seventy-two Nobel laureates, joined against Bird and the creationist cause by filing briefs. But there were other opponents as well, including the National Education Association, People for the American Way, the American Jewish Congress, and Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Among Bird’s allies were the National Association of Evangelicals and Tim LaHaye’s wife Beverly’s anti-feminist Concerned Women for America.\textsuperscript{232} But the conflict was largely from a distance and on paper—through the filing of briefs—and the fracas was a quiet and formalized one compared to the circus-like atmosphere of Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925. This phase of the creation-evolution battle had boundaries and a shape unlike the primitive \textit{Scopes} scenario. Adjudicating the culture war was becoming a routine for the courts. If the courts at the time of Scopes had not yet charted the boundaries for these two large parties to coexist in America, by 1987 most of the legal terrain had been mapped and bounded.

By a majority of seven to two, the Supreme Court ruled that the Louisiana Balanced Treatment for Creation-Science and Evolution-Science in Public School Instruction Act violated the Establishment Clause as it “serves no identified secular purpose” and “has as its primary purpose the promotion of a particular religious belief.”\textsuperscript{233} William Brennan wrote for the majority while Antonin Scalia dissented and was joined by Chief Justice William Rehnquist. As Larson has noted, “The different conclusions reflected markedly differing views of creation science.”\textsuperscript{234}

\textsuperscript{232} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 178.


\textsuperscript{234} Larson, \textit{Trial and Error}, p. 179.
Brennan claimed that the structure of the Act had the earmarks of the age-old controversy between fundamentalist Christianity and evolution, or what he termed “historic and contemporaneous antagonisms between the teachings of certain religious denominations and the teaching of evolution”. He also noted that the Louisiana State Senator Bill Keith who had championed the Act believed that evolution and the religion of secular humanism were one and the same. At the same time, Brennan stated that “teaching a variety of scientific theories about the origins of humankind to schoolchildren might be validly done with the clear secular intent of enhancing the effectiveness of science instruction.” The term “secular” equated to Enlightenment categories for the scientific community. For fundamentalists the term meant secular humanism, a form of religion that was anti-God; for the court, the term meant displaying neutrality toward all religions. Regardless, Brennan seemed to present fundamentalists an opportunity, about which Larson noted that “only time will tell how wide a door this [comment by Brennan] opened.”

Justice Lewis F. Powell was even more specific. He pinned the substance of the Louisiana Act on the evangelistic teachings of the Institute for Creation Research and a related organization, the Creation Research Society. In Larson’s estimation, “Powell bound the Louisiana statute to fundamentalism.” Powell elucidated the structure of the Religious Right by noting that the Institute for Creation Research was an affiliate of the Christian Heritage

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236 Ibid., p. 2582.
237 Ibid., p. 2583.
238 Larson, Trial and Error, p. 180.
239 Ibid.
College [founded by Tim LaHaye] in San Diego, California. The network of creationists was now in full view of the American public.

The Religious Right had its Supreme Court champion in Antonin Scalia, who with Rehnquist wrote a dissenting opinion. Scalia accused the majority of the Court of assuming the worst about creationists, of “impugning the motives of its [the Act’s] supporters.”

“Appellants insist that it [creation science] is a collection of educationally valuable scientific data that has been censored from classrooms by an embarrassed scientific establishment.” The language of censorship implied discrimination and thereby the violation of rights. Scalia was determined to give creationists the opportunity for a real trial in district court they had been denied. Scalia refused to dismiss the Act’s merits simply because it had been championed by the politically active Christian fundamentalists of the Religious Right:

Nothwithstanding the majority’s implication to the contrary…we do not presume that the sole purpose of a law is to advance religion merely because it was supported strongly by organized religion or by adherents of particular faiths…To do so would deprive religious men and women of their right to participate in the political process. Today’s religious activism may give us the Balanced Treatment Act, but yesterday’s resulted in the abolition of slavery, and tomorrow’s may bring relief for famine victims.

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243 Ibid.
244 Larson, Trial and Error, p. 179.
After defending the rights of the religious, Scalia then argued for the credibility of creation scientists, “many of whom enjoyed academic credentials that may have been regarded as quite impressive by members of the Louisiana legislature.”

Scalia reached a crescendo. He held that “the censorship of creation science has at least two harmful effects.” First, instead of presenting origins as a competition between two views, teachers held “that evolution is a proven fact.” The second problem was a violation of the Establishment Clause given that evolution was a part of secular humanism, which has been declared by the Supreme Court a religion in *Torcaso v. Watkins* (1961). In other words, Scalia agreed with Bird’s assessment of the situation. Balanced treatment was the only means to accomplish state neutrality.

Scalia continued on with arguments that the legal system could not mandate a form of indoctrination that violated religious freedom. “The [Louisiana] legislature wanted to ensure that students would be free to decide for themselves how life began, based upon a fair and balanced presentation of the scientific evidence”. Scalia was therefore willing to read bias into the judgments of the scientific establishment. Scalia noted that “creation scientists were scorned by most educators and scientists, who themselves had an almost religious faith in evolution”; he understood why the Louisiana legislature sought to protect teachers “suffering from discrimination”.

Scalia concluded by saying that the history of the *Scopes* trial had clouded the majority’s judgment—that images of “Christian fundamentalist repression” of science had distorted the

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249 *Ibid.*, pp. 2602-2603. The first emphasis is mine and the second is Scalia’s.
issues at stake. “In this case, however, it seems to me the Court’s position is the repressive one. The people of Louisiana, including those who are Christian fundamentalists, are quite entitled, as a secular matter, to have whatever scientific evidence there may be against evolution presented in their schools”. 250 Scalia absolutely refused to believe that “the scientific evidence for evolution is so conclusive that no one could be gullible enough to believe that there is any real scientific evidence to the contrary”. 251

Still the outcome of Aguillard was a serious blow for creationism. “The long legal battle over the Louisiana law had finally ended,” Larson reflected, noting the celebrations of ACLU leaders and that

Harvard paleontologist and popular writer Stephen Jay Gould, who had joined in submitting an anti-creationist brief to the Court, made perhaps the most expansive claim regarding the impact of Aguillard when he later declared that it “ended an important chapter in American social history, one that stretched back to the Scopes trial of 1925.” 252

“Other evolutionists were less confident,” Larson noted. The Supreme Court had opened a door to allow individual teachers to introduce creationist ideas; the future remained uncertain and certainly the public remained deeply divided. 253 These fears of some evolutionists later proved, in fact, to be well founded. In 1999, a legal guidebook for the intelligent design movement, of which Charles Thaxton was a part, took Aguillard to mean a new opportunity existed to “teach the controversy” while remaining within the Court-ordered boundary of secular intent. 254

250 Ibid., p. 2604.

251 Ibid.


253 Larson, Trial and Error, p. 182.

254 David K. DeWolf, Stephen C. Meyer, and Mark E. DeForrest, Intelligent Design in Public School Science Curricula: A Legal Guidebook (Richardson, TX: Foundation for Thought and Ethics, 1999), p. v. Emphasis is the authors’ s. DeWolf was a professor of law and DeForrest had a law degree; the Foundation describes its goal on the
The Network of Attorneys in Cobelligerence

One aspect Larson overlooked was that Bird was not alone as a new breed of lawyer for the Religious Right. In the 1980s and early 1990s a host of attorneys sprang up to search for loopholes in the law to defend the religious liberty of evangelicals. Bird’s creationism case was only one of many categories of rights this new legal community was fighting for, and just as Bird had won partial victories by winning over seven judges on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and two Supreme Court justices, so other lawyers either won new ground or defended the old for their fundamentalist clients. The creationists had appealed directly to the law and ignored their opponents the scientists, treating them as if they were an interest group rather than as intellectual guides for all Americans. This maneuver of ignoring the opposition while appealing to the courts to follow the letter of the law became a common practice among this new generation of public interest lawyers for the Religious Right. Fundamentalists had been ignored before the rights era of the 1960s, and the 1980s with Reagan’s success provided them new social prestige as an interest group of their own.

In 1984, Bird and Whitehead collaborated on a book entitled *Home Education and Constitutional Liberties*, in the preface of which they argued that compulsory education laws had created a “legal confrontation” in which “the liberty of parents to educate their children at home and…the freedom of speech and belief, the freedom of religion, as well as the right to privacy” were all in jeopardy.255 In 2012, Whitehead recalled how Bird had sought him out. Whitehead had been impressed by Bird’s handling of the creationism case leading up to the *Aguillard* decision, especially because he personally had heard the arguments made in *Aguillard* and “saw

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creationists get wiped out …by the expert witnesses [scientists]”. Even years after these events Whitehead understood that “fighting the evolution thing in courts is very difficult because people believe it and you are seen as a kook if you don’t agree with it totally.” Nonetheless, the loss of the equal-time crusade did not hinder the advance of public interest law for the Religious Right in general.

The rise of law schools teaching the fundamentalist view on the Constitution created large networks of lawyers and legal scholars armed to do battle in the culture wars. Saving America was the top priority. Challenging Darwin was always a present call, but it remained in the background once the public school domain appeared lost after Aguillard. These institutions inevitably grew out of the empires of the nation’s most prominent televangelists, including Oral Roberts, Marion Gordon (“Pat”) Robertson, and Jerry Falwell. Oral Roberts University’s Coburn School of Law closed its doors in 1985 and transferred its journal, the *Journal of Christian Jurisprudence*, to Regent University, whose law school was supported by Robertson. Robertson also backed the American Center for Law and Justice, a public interest law organization. Finally, Jerry Falwell’s Liberty University Law School and his law firm Liberty Counsel also worked in public interest law.

*The Journal of Christian Jurisprudence* provided an outlet for an emerging legal perspective. In 1982 John Whitehead’s “Judicial Schizophrenia: The Family and Education in a Secular Society”, outlined the stepwise takeover of the parenting role by the state, in contradiction of the Bible. R. J. Rushdoony’s “An Historical and Biblical View of the Family, Church, State, and Education”, written in the same year, virtually echoed Whitehead’s

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256 John W. Whitehead, interview by author, July 23, 2012. Whitehead agreed that the teaching of origins in public schools has to be scientifically based and he supported the idea that all theories should be taught.

article. 258 Herbert W. Titus, initially professor at the Coburn School of Law and later at Regent University School of Law, posed the question whether education was one of the items that belonged to Caesar (or the state) in Christ’s command to “render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.” Titus concluded that the mass exodus of Christian families from the public schools was a direct result of God being run out of the schools by the courts.

Evangelicalism had indeed changed since the days of the Scopes trial newspaper caricatures since Titus was speaking as a graduate of Harvard Law School. 259 By the 1990s two other evangelical attorneys of prominence had emerged, Jay A. Sekulow of the American Center for Law and Justice and Mathew D. Staver of Liberty Counsel. Both men illustrated the collection of protests the Religious Right made in the 1990s and still make in 21st century, as well as the eclipse of creationism in that collection. 260


260 On the American Center for Law and Justice website, the focus of the organization—founded in 1990—is listed as “to protect religious and constitutional freedoms”, including “the free speech rights of pro-life demonstrators”, “the rights of religious groups to have equal access to public facilities”, and the protected status of Bible clubs on a school campus. The website celebrated certain court victories, such as Sekulow’s successful argument in the 1990 Supreme Court case Board of Education v. Mergens, in which the Court agreed that the Equal Access Act protected the creation of a Bible club on a school campus and that such protection did not violate the Establishment Clause. (The Equal Access Act was a federal law created in 1984 during the Reagan administration.) On the topic of school prayer, Sekulow also participated in the Supreme Court case Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe (2000), in which the Court ruled that student-led prayer at high school sporting events a violation of the Establishment Clause. Finally, in a direct confrontation between political right and left, Sekulow participated in the Supreme Court case of 2003 Operation Rescue v. National Organization for Women (NOW), which concluded in the Court’s rejection of the assertion by NOW claiming that Operation Rescue, an anti-abortion organization known for its use of civil disobedience, should be considered guilty of extortion. (American Center for Law and Justice, “About the American Center for Law and Justice,” American Center for Law and Justice, http://aclj.org/our-mission/about-aclj [accessed November 24, 2012].) In a 1996 book, Sekulow and Keith Fournier make almost no mention of creationism at all except to point out the 1987 Edwards v. Aguillard ruling by stating that “the Supreme Court ruled that public schools could not require teachers to teach the biblical account of creation along with evolution.” (See Jay Sekulow and Keith Fournier, And Nothing But the Truth [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996], p.54.) Mathew D. Staver of the Liberty Counsel listed a similar set of concerns in a 1998 manual outlining the zones of rights Christians should consider: teacher’s, student’s and parents’ rights, graduation prayer in public schools, prayer at public assemblies, the right to picket, use of religious signs and symbols, the right to proselytize, and religious
The biography and perspective of Jeffrey C. Tuomala (1950- ), former associate dean for academic affairs and professor of law at the Liberty University School of Law, has also shed light on the development of public interest law among evangelicals. Raised in Geneva, Ohio, Tuomala earned his bachelor’s degree from Ohio State in 1973 and completed a law degree at Capital University Law School, a Lutheran institution in Columbus, Ohio, in 1976. In the last year of his legal training, Tuomala converted to Christianity. In 1980, he attended Ashland Theological Seminary for two and a half years, a school run by the Ashland Brethren. Tuomala recounted how his seminary professors made connections between the Bible and law, and he became motivated to pursue an LL.M. (Master of Laws) at George Washington University. He then considered public interest law, possibly working with The Rutherford Institute, a religious liberties organization founded by Whitehead in 1982 in Charlottesville, Virginia that continues to style itself as a leading advocate of religious and civil liberties and human rights. His thought was to work for Christian law schools, but Oral Roberts University Law School was the only one that existed at this time (the mid-1980s) and it was closing its doors. Tuomala had met John Whitehead in a Sunday school in a Washington, D.C. church, and he had heard that Herbert W. Titus had left Oral Roberts University Law School and was planning to found a school of public policy at the Christian Broadcasting Network University (later Regent University) organized by Pat Robertson in Virginia Beach, Virginia. In 1987 Tuomala went to Regent University to teach, where he remained until 1996. Following a faculty dispute over tenure, Tuomala spent 1996-

discrimination were among many, but Staver included discussions of the social impact of same-sex marriage and what he termed “judicial tyranny”. Staver likewise said little about creationism except to defend the teaching of non-evolutionary theories of origins without reference to the Bible as permissible after the Aguillard case. (See Mathew D. Staver, Faith and Freedom: A Complete Handbook for Defending Your Religious Rights, 2nd ed. [Orlando, FL: Liberty Counsel, 1998], pp. v-xi.) Two past founders of the Moral Majority gave glowing reviews to Staver’s book, namely D. James Kennedy, who also wrote the foreword, and Tim LaHaye. In a subsequent work, Staver strongly opposed the application of the First Amendment to the states. (See Mathew D. Staver, Take Back America [Orlando, FL: New Revolution Publishers, 2011], pp. 54-55.)
2000 first practicing law in his hometown of Geneva, Ohio and then 2000-2003 teaching at a Church of Christ school, at Faulkner University’s Thomas Goode Jones School of Law in Montgomery, Alabama. He then came to Liberty University to help in the founding of a law school in 2003 and has remained there since.\textsuperscript{261}

Though a law professor, Tuomala reflected on the dynamic relationship Liberty Law had to public interest law firms like Liberty Counsel. He defined public interest law as focusing on hot-button issues that dealt with restrictions on religious liberties and involved interpretation of the First Amendment. But more broadly he noted that this category of law tended to have two foci—protecting individual liberties and broad policy changes (like universal healthcare). In other words, Christian law firms focused upon preserving certain values versus liberal groups like the ACLU, which tried to shape the culture by transforming, for example, American notions of rights. Tuomala claimed that the ACLU saw law itself as a change agent, but Christians saw the church in that role. He listed the rights to evangelize, to have equal access to schools, to fight abortion, to picket, and to homeschool as basic to the list of demands of Christian believers. The ACLU, on the other hand, attempted to remove religion from the public square by using the individual’s right not to pray or participate as a means to force the removal.\textsuperscript{262}

Tuomala reflected on the \textit{Edwards v. Aguillard} ruling of 1987, concluding that the only way the Bible might find a place in science classes was if it were seen as applicable there as it was in an English literature class; however, given the legal complaints about the establishment of religion, it was unlikely in his view that Genesis would be taken seriously in the public school classroom. “The federal government has swallowed up too many things,” he commented,

\textsuperscript{261} Jeffrey C. Tuomala, interview by author, August 28, 2012.

\textsuperscript{262} Ibid.
including the education of children. “We should not have public schools…they are unconstitutional.” He preferred a return to a previous arrangement, supporting the idea that people with different religious perspectives should establish schools as they did before the twentieth century. He stated that John Dewey’s influence on American schools was awful, noting Rushdoony’s idea that public education had a “messianic” quality as hugely influential among Christians seeking alternatives for their children, including homeschooling.\(^{263}\)

Tuomala spoke about interest groups and sociologically-driven lawmaking. He drew a contrast between rights based upon biblical principles versus “rights cut loose from anything but group demands.” He grieved that law in America has come to be viewed as little more than the will of the majority, and that this problem was aggravated by the fact that the basis for shared values founded in shared faith has dissolved, since he believed that national unity required more than a shared humanity. He warned that allowing law to have a sociological basis made the law infinitely uncertain and mutable as sociology changed. Tuomala added that without the Bible as a fixed standard politics increasingly dissolves into the chaos of interest groups vying for power over other interest groups. Thus Van Gosse’s celebration of the democratic process extending to all (at the beginning of this chapter) was actually a cause for frustration for Tuomala.\(^{264}\)

The political and legal activities of the Religious Right exploded after 1976. Buried in the midst of public battles lay the old issue of the Reformation vs. the Enlightenment in the topic of creationism versus evolution. Schaeffer’s support of the antievolutionist cause reached its apex in \textit{A Christian Manifesto} as outlined in the previous chapter, during the Arkansas Balanced Treatment case of 1981, which itself grew out of Wendell Bird’s equal-time argument. But

\(^{263}\textit{Ibid.}\)

\(^{264}\textit{Ibid.}\)
various communities of Christian leaders were emerging during this era, of which the
fundamentalists following Jerry Falwell were but one. Henry Morris and Wendell Bird had links
to Falwell, as did Schaeffer. But the legacy of Schaeffer’s mentor, J. Gresham Machen, had
multiple fruits, including the career of George Marsden, who testified against creationism on
behalf of the ACLU at the Arkansas trial. To Marsden’s relationship with creationism and
Schaeffer, we turn last, bringing the story of Machen and Scopes trial of 1925 full circle to the
courtroom in Little Rock, Arkansas in the shadow of Reagan’s conservative revolution.

The Academic Story: Responding to the Enlightenment and the Left

As evangelicals and fundamentalists came into politics, they engaged three com-
munities—the legal system, interest groups such as African Americans and the ACLU, and the
Enlightenment university. The topic of evolution pitted evangelicals against the ACLU and
evolutionary scientists simultaneously in the courts. Three players in the evangelical story from
1976 onward will be considered here. First, the testimony of John Morris about his father Henry
will serve to elucidate how the most important creationist in the Reagan years looked at the
political and educational scene. Second, Schaeffer’s disciple Charles Thaxton will provide
testimony about the Left’s treatment of his early attempts to question Darwinist certainties on
university campuses. Lastly, historian George Marsden, a product of J. Gresham Machen’s
influence like Schaeffer, will provide insight into Schaeffer’s views of American history and the
Arkansas “Balanced Treatment” trial, in which Marsden decided to testify on behalf of the
ACLU, to Schaeffer’s consternation. The sociological complexities of America’s pluralistic
society were essentially forced into a dualistic frame by Schaeffer and his allies, a group of like-
mined conservative white Protestant men that included Henry Morris and Jerry Falwell.
**John Morris (1946-)**

In the words of his son John, Henry Morris’s social and political views were driven by a deeply-rooted conservatism based on his views of the Bible. So conservative was the elder Morris that he believed the Scopes questioning of William Jennings Bryan by Clarence Darrow exposed Bryan as a hypocrite since he acknowledged the possibility of an old earth. “He [Henry Morris] saw that evolution and old earth was a main hindrance to the spread of the gospel”, Morris commented.\(^{265}\)

On the topics such as the feminist revolution and public education, Henry Morris held to highly traditional concepts as the ideal. “In general he recognized that the God-given role for the wife …. [was to be] basically at home raising the children….. [with the husband] providing for the home.” With regard to the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court rulings outlawing school-sponsored prayer and Bible reading, John Morris said his father saw the decisions as “devastating to the culture but he was not at all in favor of the public schools….He felt that they were an unbiblical concept entirely. There is no hint in Scripture that government should ever educate children. That’s the job of parents and the church.” John Morris added that his father never really supported the concept of giving creationism equal time in public schools because he neither supported public schools (and court mandates) nor did he want non-Christian teachers teaching creationism; however, when Wendell Bird’s argument became publicly known in the form of legislation, Henry Morris hoped creationism would secure an equal place in the schools, given the opportunity for creationists to make their case in the science classes.\(^{266}\)

Politically, Henry Morris harbored no hesitation about defending states’s rights.

\(^{265}\) John Morris, interview by author, August 10, 2012.

\(^{266}\) John Morris, interview by author, August 17, 2012.
He was a political conservative in every sense... because he was a biblical conservative... He would have been on the side of states’ rights for sure. The closer education gets to the individual the better; the more it gets to the federal level [the worse things are]... [and] the majority should not have to suffer for the minority.

Moreover, Morris’s Institute for Creation Research held Wendell Bird in high esteem and called upon his expertise when ICR fell under attack in California for its graduate school’s issuing of science degrees; Bird consulted with other Christian attorneys and ultimately won the federal case with a declaratory judgment. Creationists firmly embraced the vocabulary of rights by the 1980s. John Morris stated that in this period groups like the ACLU were “ruling by intimidation” on university campuses and that “Darwinism was the foundational principle for secularism” and fighting its influence was a moral issue for Christians.267

Charles Thaxton (1939-)

Charles Thaxton had a different trajectory from Henry Morris but faced similar opposition from the Left. Thaxton’s transition from being a chemistry graduate student who traveled to L’Abri in 1970 exploring origin-of-life issues in the seventies was a transformation from being a young man uncertain whether Christians could explore secular thought to a scientist confident to question Darwinism. Thaxton’s expression of his doubt took place among men who were making their reputations as culture warriors. As a consequence, Thaxton’s work was immediately associated with fundamentalist extremism by watchdogs for evolutionary theory.

Thaxton heard Schaeffer comment that Henry Morris’s young-earth position went too far and was unnecessary for the Christian worldview, but he observed that Schaeffer remained closer to Morris than to theistic evolutionists.268 This was because, as Numbers has observed, Morris and his co-author John Whitcomb provided a comforting and simple synthesis of science with

267 Ibid.

the Bible at an anxious and confusing time in fundamentalist history by making Genesis’s veracity as important as Revelation’s.\textsuperscript{269} Thaxton himself came to see the early 1960s, when Morris and Whitcomb published \textit{The Genesis Flood}, as a period of heightened public awareness of the importance of science and of the need for Christian theology to prove its continued relevance. In this context, the age of the earth was actually less important to the diverse creationists who read Morris and Whitcomb than the attempt to respond to the academy.

Conservative Christians I knew had respect for science and they had respect for the Bible but they didn’t know how to put them together. He [Morris] was in a sense the one many people looked to. His books got passed around in church….The fact that it \textit{[The Genesis Flood]} was young earth was maybe a plus for some churches, but not all churches were young-earthers. A lot of churches were interested in the subject even if they were in an old earth church. A lot of Presbyterian churches were not young-earthers…

I rather have a feeling that it was post-Sputnik and people were interested in science in the church and elsewhere in a new way that they hadn’t been focused on it before. And then when [President] Kennedy came out and said “Let’s go to space”….and science all the more was an important issue.\textsuperscript{270}

The Christian community was forced to decide publicly its position on the relation between science and the meaning of Genesis as science ascended in its prestige. There had been no need to reconcile the relationship precisely until this moment.

During the 1960s, even before visiting L’Abri, Thaxton struggled with his place in American Christianity as a scientist. He favored neither Morris’ young-earth position nor the theistic evolutionism of the American Scientific Affiliation and began to wonder about the claims that life could have arisen spontaneously from inorganic matter and if there were a third way to explain a designer’s action. Thaxton recalled many chemists in this period dismissing the whole topic of the origin of life as a waste of time. He became aware in his graduate work of the

\textsuperscript{269} Numbers, \textit{The Creationists}, p. 371.

\textsuperscript{270} Charles Thaxton, interview by author, February 11, 2012.
distinction between empirical sciences that involved immediately observable phenomena and historical sciences such as cosmology, geology, and evolutionary biology.

Thaxton chose to challenge the naturalistic assumptions of the historical sciences, but to do so he had to cooperate with activists engaged in the culture war of the 1970s. Among these was Norman Geisler, a Christian apologist who later testified in the Arkansas “Balanced Treatment” trial of 1981. After completing postdoctoral work at Brandeis and Harvard, Thaxton met Geisler when both were working in Dallas, Thaxton at Probe Ministries, an apologetics institute begun in 1973, and Geisler at Dallas Theological Seminary.\(^{271}\)

Probe Ministries, through meetings called Forums, was on the forefront of a growing culture war on college campuses. One such Forum saw Thaxton and Geisler co-debate professors at Temple University in Philadelphia. Thaxton recalls on other Forums speaking in science departments at universities where meetings were arranged by religious groups such as Campus Crusade. Campus Christian leaders would request class time from professors for visiting Probe speakers to present a Christian perspective on various topics. For a time this procedure was well received. But then the negative publicity began, and, in Thaxton’s words, “ACLU-type” organizations warning of violations of church and state separation attacked Probe’s work. Legal boundaries between science and religion were still forming and were still uncertain. But Thaxton learned between 1976-1979, the duration of Probe’s experiment at colleges, that, as he informed Schaeffer, academic freedom “only went so far.”\(^{272}\) Lastly, Thaxton commented that R.J. Rushdoony’s activity had a limited but positive impact upon him,

\(^{271}\) Ibid. The Probe Ministries website has a caption that reads, “Freeing Cultural Captives, Building Confident Ambassadors.” The activities are diverse and touch upon many fields, such as cults, marriage and sexuality, education, government, and the science of origins. (Probe Ministries, “Probe Ministries,” Probe Ministries http://www.probe.org/site/c.fdKEIMNsEoG/b.4213839/k.AF17/Probe_Ministries.htm (accessed July 3, 2012.)

\(^{272}\) Ibid.
and added that Schaeffer would never have supported Rushdoony’s application of Old Testament civil law to the American legal system.\textsuperscript{273} Thaxton was a living connection between the insular and subcultural world of Reformed churchmen and the academic world; Probe Ministries was an introduction to the culture war that sparked in the gap between these realms.

As conservative Christians began to fight the culture war on numerous fronts, from abortion and homosexuality, to religious expression in the public sphere, academics like Thaxton and a direct product of Reformed Christianity, George Marsden, were forced to relate the worlds of academe and faith to the issue of rights. Marsden concluded that working with the Left, at least the ACLU, might actually serve Christian purposes. The interactions Marsden had with Schaeffer illustrated how complex communities of Americans dealt with serious differences even within the boundaries of evangelicalism.

**George M. Marsden (1939-)**

George Marsden was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. His father Robert was a follower of Machen who left Princeton with him to attend Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929. He subsequently became a minister in Machen’s Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). Robert Marsden maintained a friendship with Carl McIntire in this period, but after McIntire split from the OPC to found the Bible Presbyterian Church the two parted ways for good. George Marsden claimed to have grown up very aware of McIntire and that becoming a historian of

\textsuperscript{273} \textit{Ibid.} Thaxton noted Rushdoony’s close associate Greg Bahnsen as one of the reviewers of \textit{The Mystery of Life’s Origin} and stated that Bahnsen was an extremely lucid debater for presuppositional apologetics in the tradition of Westminster Theological Seminary’s Cornelius Van Til (also an influence upon Rushdoony as noted in chapter five). Thaxton claimed to have met Rushdoony only once and understood how people might have been alienated by him, who had “no shades of grey---[he was] absolute.” Nonetheless, Thaxton applauded some of Rushdoony’s writing, especially in the field of education.
fundamentalism was a task he had been bred for, as his father had been friends with both McIntire and Harold Ockenga.\textsuperscript{274}

On the matter of the Reformed and race relations, Marsden acknowledged that “Machen certainly [was] a Southerner and a racist to some extent,” but he was not comfortable painting the whole Reformed movement as racist. The Dutch Reformed had a legacy of starting Christian schools that pre-dated the Baptist school movement of the 1960s of which Jerry Falwell was a part.\textsuperscript{275} In this context Robert Marsden founded a Christian school in 1944 and it was racially integrated with a few black students. When he became executive secretary at Westminster he encouraged racial integration at that institution as well.

The Reformed view of education in general terms celebrated the integration of faith and learning—the academy was not to be feared but brought under the lordship of Christ.\textsuperscript{276} Marsden’s story embodied this integrated ideal. He graduated from Haverford College in 1959 and did one year at Westminster Seminary before going to graduate school in American Studies at Yale for one year. Marsden decided then to return to Westminster to finish his degree; finally, he completed his Yale doctorate in American Studies in 1965, writing a dissertation on the New School Presbyterians. He arrived at Calvin College immediately after graduation and taught there until 1986, publishing his second book \textit{Fundamentalism and American Culture}, in 1980 and testifying at the Arkansas “Balanced Treatment” trial, just as the Reagan Revolution was underway and Francis Schaeffer was at the height of his political influence. Marsden spent six years at Duke Divinity School (1986-1992) before finishing his career with an endowed chair at

\textsuperscript{274} George M. Marsden, interview with author, August 14, 2012.

\textsuperscript{275} \textit{Ibid.} The newer Christian schools were accused of being “segregation academies” and their tax-exempt status the Internal Revenue Service threatened to revoke, as noted earlier in this chapter. Nonetheless Marsden reflected that “the Christian school movement has a racist component but it is not all that by any means.”

\textsuperscript{276} \textit{Ibid.}
Notre Dame (1992-2008). He published various books about American evangelicalism and its relation to education, including *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (1991) and *The Soul of the American University* (1994). In 2004, Marsden reached the pinnacle of the history profession by winning the Bancroft Prize for his book *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*. Since his days at Calvin, Marsden has been a member of the Christian Reformed Church.277

Marsden was taught to respect the doctrine of creation but to give space for an old earth and not to expend too much energy haggling over evolution.

To me the doctrine of creation is one of the most essential Christian doctrines…It seems to me it’s dangerous when the doctrine becomes trivialized. I think getting hung up on the issue of biological evolution as though the doctrine of creation hinges on one’s views of biological evolution to me is a great mistake that Christians make.

I was brought up that evolution was wrong…But at Westminster they allowed for an old earth. In the tradition there could be evolution, except for the creation of humans. Adam and Eve had to be a special creation….but antievolution was never a big thing in my upbringing. I have always thought that the real issue is did God create, and the question of exactly how God created…there could be a lot of answers to, and I am not expert enough on the science to be dogmatic on what might or might not have happened, and what means God used to create.

When Marsden learned of Henry Morris’s attempts to popularize a young-earth creationism in the early 1960s, Marsden assumed that there was no possibility evangelicals would allow Morris to turn them away from old-earth thinking once it had become a commonplace among Christians. Marsden was shocked that his perception “proved to be wrong”. “It is fascinating to me that in fact the dominant views became much more narrow.” Marsden was also surprised at Francis Schaeffer’s cobelligerence with the cause of equal-time for creationism. “When the [book] *Christian Manifesto* came out in 1981, he [Schaeffer] was putting the creation science thing…

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Marsden noted that Schaeffer’s, and other fundamentalists’s, tendency to see issues in a dualistic framework served political ends.

For political purposes it is much easier to represent everything as an either-or kind of choice and get rid of all the ambiguities and that’s a characteristic of Schaeffer’s thought... [and] it gets accentuated when he got into these political issues [such as] the Christian origins of the United States where he simply doesn’t have a set of middle categories—either it is Christian or it’s non-Christian.

Marsden added that Schaeffer’s “generalizations about secular humanism then meant that he put pretty much everyone in the universities into that category.” Dualism was a characteristic of the fundamentalist thinking Schaeffer was unable to shake in the 1970s despite his reputation for openness at L’Abri in the 1960s.

It is there in fundamentalism from the beginning of fundamentalism, that you have these black and white categories, and forces of good and forces of evil arrayed against each other, and you understand everything in that context. And that was the way fundamentalists dealt with individual political issues. [With] the Moral Majority suddenly they are dealing with it as an organized political force and [this approach] translates really well into politics.

Marsden reflected that popular success in book publishing resulted from a simplification of categories, and the political process encouraged such simplification as well. “I found it somewhat appalling that these [arguments] were passing for the Christian answer to complex cultural issues.” The structure of the narrative thus popularized by the Religious Right was a straightforward story of good versus evil. Marsden commented on the “deeply populist side of this whole business that is such a folk religion mixed up with genuine Christianity so that it

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278 Ibid.

279 Ibid.
invites simplicities that appeal.” By the 1960s, the issue of religious pluralism was a serious matter for the country and the Supreme Court, but was again simplified by fundamentalists.

One of the things that strikes me about the Religious Right, and Schaeffer as an example of it, is there is no pluralistic category. There is no way of dealing with religious pluralism for one thing. It’s either a Christian nation or you have a secular humanist nation.280

Schaeffer’s dualistic tendency extended to his reading of American history. His celebration of Samuel Rutherford’s thinking as the root of the American governmental system has already been noted in chapters five and six in his statements about Brown v. Board of Education and in the book How Should We Then Live? Schaeffer engaged Marsden and fellow Christian historian Mark Noll in debate about America’s founding around the time of Marsden’s testifying for the ACLU in Arkansas, Schaeffer’s publication of A Christian Manifesto, and a comment by Noll in a 1982 issue of Newsweek stating that Schaeffer was not a scholar.281 Noll’s positive comments about Schaeffer Woodward did not use in the article. With regard to the criticism, Noll personally told Schaeffer through letter that “[Y]our work does not take advantage of the crucial technical studies…which illuminate the past.”282 Noll discounted the influence of Rutherford’s thought upon the Founding Fathers. As their interaction progressed, “Schaeffer at times accused Noll of unwittingly joining the anti-Christian side of the culture war,” Hankins noted.283 Dualism reigned in Schaeffer’s version of American history.

280 Ibid.

281 Hankins, Francis Schaeffer, pp. 209-211. Hankins cited a November 1982 Newsweek article by Kenneth Woodward entitled “Guru of Fundamentalism,” page 88. Noll meant by his remark that Schaeffer had not joined the academic community through its normal rites of passage.

282 Ibid., p. 211. The Noll quotation is taken from Hankins, note 63, which cites a piece of personal correspondence from Noll to Schaeffer, dated November 3, 1982, with a photocopy in Hankins’s possession.

283 Hankins, Francis Schaeffer, p. 216.
Furthermore, despite the overwhelming conclusions of the scholarly community, Schaeffer acknowledged no historical relationship between the Enlightenment and America’s founding. Schaeffer wanted to separate the American Revolution from the French Revolution whereas Noll saw a much closer relationship between the two compared to the American Revolution’s relationship with the Reformation.\textsuperscript{284} Marsden eventually attacked Schaeffer’s ally John Whitehead openly for creating a false history of America in \textit{The Second American Revolution}, again as a non-scholar.\textsuperscript{285} Marsden, Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch eventually responded to Schaeffer’s and the Religious Right’s versions of American history in \textit{The Search for Christian America}: “We feel that a careful study of the facts of history shows that early America does not deserve to be considered uniquely, distinctly or even predominately [sic] Christian.”\textsuperscript{286} Rather than Schaeffer’s view of America as the end of an undiluted stream flowing from the Reformation, the authors saw a country that was the fruit of a mixed reality, including a contribution from the Enlightenment.

Marsden commented upon Schaeffer’s approach and attitude. Characterizing Schaeffer as firstly concerned with evangelism above all else, Marsden did not feel dismissed even as he and Noll contested certain points: Schaeffer was “not just writing us off…I do not think he was dismissive of us…He was not putting me just into a category of university type.” At the same time, Schaeffer’s categories were fixed when a discussion of America’s founding came up.

What I concluded from that [dialogue with Schaeffer]… [or] the main thing that I concluded is that… Schaeffer simply doesn’t have any middle categories. So when he talks about the Renaissance, he means secular humanism. When he talks about

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[284] \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 216-217.
\item[285] \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 223.
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the Enlightenment, he means the French Enlightenment and the French Revolution. So he was incapable of having a category of the American Revolution as being a mix of Christian and British Enlightenment kind of views... [Instead] he goes back to Samuel Rutherford. His set of categories forced him to do that. It [was] made more and more clear to me that that’s characteristic of his thinking throughout, that everything is in black and white categories, that he’s operating as a preacher, and that as a preacher, black and white is more effective, and then that kind of attitude translates very well into fundamentalist politics. 287

Marsden believed that Schaeffer was primarily motivated ideologically (to further the gospel). Regardless, Schaeffer’s vision was dualistic and he had a hard time understanding scholarly quibbling over historical details, a fact that made it easier for Schaeffer to stand as Falwell’s cobelligerent.

Finally, there was the Arkansas trial about “balanced treatment”, a scenario that grew out of lawyer Wendell Bird’s argument for the rights of creationist students. Upon hearing of the case from a lawyer affiliated with the ACLU, Marsden overcame his initial reluctance to work with the civil liberties organization when he digested the dualistic framework the Arkansas legislature wished to mandate. He concluded that it was not in the interests of Christianity as I understood it to have such a law, mainly because the law was based on a faulty premise, that is that there were essentially two views, one was naturalistic evolution, the other was young-earth creationism. And that simply did not cover the spectrum of all the views that were represented. It didn’t cover my views, and [those of] a lot of other conservative Christians I knew. 288

Still, why should creationism seize such public attention at this moment, in 1981? The present work has demonstrated that except for activities on the margin of society (such as Harry Rimmer’s presentations and the writings of George McCready Price and Henry Morris) only a rather small number of conservative Christians, representing a small subset of Americans, paid serious attention to Darwinism between 1925 and the mid-1970s in terms of organizing a mass

287 George M. Marsden, interview with author, August 14, 2012.
288 Ibid.
campaign to combat the conclusions of the Enlightenment university. But the 1980s represented the resurgence of conservative politics unlike anything since the 1920s. Since political narratives thrived on the simple dualisms that fundamentalist narratives employed, the creation-evolution controversy found new life in a new world substantively transformed from the America of Dayton, Tennessee and of William Jennings Bryan. Though the university scientists may have dismissed creationism, Marsden commented on the power of the imagery for fundamentalists struggling to contain modernity and find their own political voices.

The creation-evolution issue had terrific symbolic weight going back to the Scopes trial and resonance with the populace… [It had] a terrific resonance on its own, aside from the other political issues of the time…It [evolution] was symbolic of secularism. There is an independent element of its [creationism’s] resonance, as this is an issue you can really get people behind.\(^{289}\)

\(^{289}\) George M. Marsden, interview with author, August 14, 2012.
CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

In the eyes of fundamentalists and evangelicals, the dualisms of the twentieth century were abundant. In the era of Machen and Bryan, theological conservatives and theological liberals fought over Princeton Theological Seminary as Machen attacked the New Deal. With coming of Cold War, Carl McIntire relished labeling his foes as Communists. With the 1960s story of Francis Schaeffer, one finds an unexpected openess for cultural dialogue from a man emerging from under McIntire’s separatist fundamentalist shadow, in an era of growing restlessness among college people and confusion about authority. But the 1970s for fundamentalists was a period of immense fear about the future and about the progressive transformation of the definition of the family. Schaeffer was not a disciple of Henry Morris, but fell in line with other Presbyterians willing to entertain an old-earth; nonetheless, in the case of the Arkansas “Balanced Treatment” situation he was a cobelligerent with the most conservative creationists against the religious liberals, the ACLU, and fellow Machen-admirer George Marsden. And with Schaeffer stood Jerry Falwell, Tim LaHaye, John Whitehead, and a new generation of rights activists, both fighting the political Left and mirroring its tactics. In the midst of this fracas occurring with the rise of conservative champion Ronald Reagan, an old battle between fundamentalists and Enlightenment science reared its head. The Supreme Court had organized a body of decisions to reduce the circus-like atmosphere that surrounded Dayton to a methodical, inch-by-inch battle over the First Amendment and states’s rights. The years surrounding 1980 decided the terms of the engagement between the GOP and Religious Right on one side and Enlightenment science and the political Left on the other.
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Joshua Baiju Abraham was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1970. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in biology from Yale University in 1992. He also earned a master’s degrees in secondary education from West Virginia University in 1996. He worked for four years as a public school teacher in the middle and high school system of North Carolina from 1997 to 2001. As a transition to history graduate work, he earned a master’s degree from Regent College in Christian Studies in 2003. His doctoral work in the history of American creationism began at the University of Florida History Department in 2003. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Florida in the spring of 2014.