



WHAT MAKES EVANGELICAL HOMILETICS DISTINCTIVE? A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW¹

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“Whatever evangelical meant, in other words, it did not mean closed minded.”

Frederick Buechner

INTRODUCTION

Evangelicalism is preaching. Preachers and their preaching have formed the backbone of the evangelical movement. In these days of politicism, defining the evangelical movement might be a little fuzzy. However, what distinguishes evangelicalism is its historic commitment to the pulpit. The preaching of the Word is a distinctive mark of evangelicalism.

Readers may not be clear about the term “evangelicalism.” We begin with a definition. From there we will explore the place of preaching in evangelicalism, examine the contributions of evangelical preaching, and close with words of caution and conclusion.

WHAT IS EVANGELICALISM?

Evangelicalism is not easy to define. Evangelicalism is a movement, not associated with any single group. One cannot point to a specific person or group and say, “that’s evangelicalism,” at least not in its entirety. Douglas Sweeney notes:

Not only do evangelicals come in different shapes and sizes, but they also participate in hundreds of different denominations—some of which were founded in opposition to some of the others! The vast majority are Protestant, but even among the Protestants there are Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptist evangelicals. There are Anglicans, Methodists, Holiness people, and Pentecostals. There are Calvinists and Arminians.²

Sweeney continues, “There has never been—and there never will be—an

evangelical denomination, despite the references one hears to the evangelical church."³ The spectrum of evangelicals includes Peace-churches to Black Pentecostals, men, women, multi-ethnic, Native American, an evangelical ecumenism.⁴ Or, as David Bebbington observes, "Evangelicals are remarkably diverse."⁵

Evangelicalism's roots are found over two hundred and fifty years ago in Great Britain, Germany, and America where in the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century the Wesleys and Whitfield, Edwards and Franke believed that one's Christian life was founded on the Bible, with personal rebirth through faith in Jesus Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the commitment to evangelism—persuading others to be born again.⁶

To define evangelicalism according to beliefs only, limits a fully contoured understanding of the movement. Social concern has been an important part of evangelical history. Timothy L. Smith notes, "the concern for social justice has been a major contribution of evangelical faith to modern culture."⁷ Derek Tidball points out that evangelicals are realistic, "Recognizing that conversion does not always bring about long-term or wide-scale social transformation, and that sin is located in our fallen world not just in sinful individuals, they now generally believe there are two tasks to be accomplished, that is evangelism and social action."⁸ The movement is global in its reach and influence.⁹

Evangelicals run the gamut on their position and practice of education. Yet, not all evangelicals shy away from education. Evangelicals were on the forefront of establishing schools, led in inaugurating public education, and founded distinguished institutions of higher learning. From Wesley to Carl F. H. Henry to today, evangelicals number among the graduates of some of the most elite universities in the world.¹⁰ In the years following the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy in the United States there arose a "renaissance of conservative biblical scholarship."¹¹ Since then, evangelicals have found themselves on the faculties of departments of theology or biblical studies in major research universities and seminaries on both sides of the Atlantic.¹²

In the 1980s, mainline Presbyterian preacher and author Frederick Beuchner was invited to teach a semester at the evangelical Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. In his memoir Beuchner reflected, "I knew it was Billy Graham's alma mater. I knew it was evangelical though without any clear idea as to what that meant." He continued, "Whatever evangelical meant, in other words, it did not mean closed minded."¹³ Beuchner further pondered his brush with evangelicalism while at Wheaton. He wrote:

The result was that to find myself at Wheaton among people who, although they spoke about it in different words from mine and expressed it in their lives differently, not only believed in Christ and his Kingdom more or less as I did but were also not ashamed or embarrassed to say so was like finding something which, only when

I tasted it, I realized I had been starving for for years.¹⁴

John H. Gurstner observed that in contrast to the rigidness of their fundamentalist forebears, evangelicals were “not militant, schismatic, or antischolarly...but who are, nonetheless proponents of the fundamentals.” He continued, “They call themselves evangelicals rather than fundamentalists, not because they repudiate the fundamentals, but because they reject the image which fundamentalists acquired.”¹⁵ Evangelicals have shared biblical commitments, many are socially aware, and many have an appreciation for education.

WHAT IS THE PLACE OF PREACHING IN EVANGELICALISM?

Preaching is the mark of the evangelical’s commitment to the Bible and the spread of the movement. Preaching arises as the unique feature of evangelicalism. The preachers of evangelicalism’s first and second Great Awakenings, including Theodore Frelinghuysen, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Gilbert Tennent, Francis Asbury, Joseph Bellamy, Samuel Hopkins, Timothy Dwight, Lyman Beecher and later Charles Finney, Frances Willard and Phoebe Palmer underscore the central role preaching played in the movement.¹⁶ Interestingly, although historians of evangelicalism have investigated various facets of the movement, the role and place of preaching appears to be an area yet to be explored.¹⁷ For example, *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* explores the Bible, theology, the church and mission, yet none of the articles address the place of preaching in the movement.¹⁸

British evangelical preacher and author, John Stott begins his important book on preaching with the statement of the place of preaching, “Preaching is indispensable to Christianity.”¹⁹ Preaching is indispensable to evangelicalism.

The Neo-Evangelical movement reflected the same commitment to preaching. Clarence McCartney and Robert Lamont of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, A.Z. Conrad and Harold John Ockenga of Boston’s Park Street Church,²⁰ Donald Gray Barnhouse and James Montgomery Boice at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Gardner Taylor of Concord Baptist Church, Brooklyn, B. M. Nottage of Berean Chapel, Detroit, Shadrach Meshach Lockridge of Calvary Baptist Church, San Diego, and Lewis F. Evans of Hollywood Presbyterian Church, Hollywood, preached unwaveringly, many of whom were committed to systematic weekly exposition of different biblical books.²¹ Evangelist Billy Graham, a key figure in the Neo-Evangelical movement, helped to solidify the place of present-day evangelicalism on the American and even world stage. On the other side of the Atlantic, John R. W. Stott of All Souls and Martin Lloyd-Jones of Westminster Chapel sounded the evangelical message. The pulpit was their platform. Preaching communicated their message. Preaching is inseparable from evangelicalism.

Derek Tidball observes, “By tradition, evangelicals have exalted two

means of conversion as primary: preaching and personal work."²² Preaching the gospel, preaching the Word, are simultaneous commitments: conversion and growth in Christ. Preaching being the primary means of conversion. As Tidball notes, "Whatever other methods of communication are employed, most evangelicals would agree that, at some stage, there must be a verbal explanation of the gospel for people to respond to it."²³

What is evangelical preaching like? What are the features of an evangelical homiletic? Returning to Frederick Buechner, we read what someone from the outside perceives of the movement. Buechner writes:

Most evangelical preaching that I have heard is seamless, hard sell, and heavily exhortatory. Men in business suits get up and proclaim the faith with the dynamic persuasiveness of insurance salesmen. If there are any evangelical women preachers, I have never happened to come across them. The churches these preachers get up in are apt to be large, packed full and so brilliantly lit that you feel there is no mystery there that has not been solved, no secrets that can escape detection. Their sermons couldn't be more different from the generally low-key ones that I am used to hearing in the sparsely attended churches in New England, but they give me the same sense of being official, public, godly utterances which the preacher stands behind but as a human being somehow does not stand in. Whatever passionate and private experience their sermons may have come from originally, you are given little or no sense of what that private experience was. At their best they bring many strengths with them into the pulpit but rarely, as I listened to them anyway, their real lives.²⁴

As Buechner suggests, there are stereotypes of evangelical preaching, they differ depending on one's culture, region, and background. Today, the evangelical movement is world-wide, embracing the globe.²⁵ Preaching is at the center for evangelicals, persuading people to salvation in Christ and moving them to maturity.

THE COMMITMENTS OF EVANGELICAL PREACHING

Among the historic commitments of evangelical preaching are a allegiance to the Bible, a commitment to the high place of preaching, and a commitment to scholarship.

A Commitment to the Bible

Evangelical emphasis on the Bible as the authoritative Word of God is at the heart of preaching.²⁶ "It was part of the evangelical genius," says Hutchinson and Wolffe, "that the Bible in hand and the Holy Spirit in mind,

a reflected biblical vision of the future could be worked up out of the ground almost anywhere.”²⁷ John Stott underscores the unique place the Bible has in the ministry of preaching. He urges:

Since God’s final deed and Word through Jesus were intended for all people of all ages, he inevitably made provision for a reliable record of them to be written and preserved. Without this he would have defeated his own purpose. As a result, today, although nearly 2000 years separate us from that deed and Word, Jesus Christ is accessible to us. We can reach him and know him. But he is accessible only through the Bible, as the Holy Spirit brings to life his own witness to him in its pages.²⁸

Stott further notes:

It is certain that we cannot handle Scripture adequately in the pulpit if our doctrine of Scripture is inadequate. Conversely, evangelical Christians, who have the highest doctrine of Scripture in the Church, should be conspicuously the most conscientious preachers.²⁹

David L. Larsen emphasizes, “The history of preaching bears out the acute dangers of preaching out of a text rather than preaching the text.” He continues, “Respect for authorial intention may be under siege currently, but it must be seen as the hermeneutical high ground which must not be surrendered.”³⁰ The Bible is the foundation for evangelical preaching.

A Commitment to the High Place of Preaching

Evangelical ecclesiology is a “proclamatory ecclesiology,” observes Leanne Van Dyk.³¹ The Word is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit and people’s lives are changed in conversion and in Christian growth. In his magisterial study of preaching, Hughes Oliphant Old devoted seven volumes to the study of preaching throughout the ages, focusing on preaching as worship as well as the place and practice of preaching in the theology of worship. He traces the contours of evangelical preaching while he explores the high place of preaching in individual preachers, suggesting the important role of preaching in the evangelical movement.³²

There has been an emphasis on expository preaching in evangelicalism. Forebears like Birmingham’s R.W. Dale, advocated for systematic expository preaching.³³ G. Campbell Morgan of Westminster Chapel, London, influenced generations by his emphasis on the weekly exposition of the Bible.³⁴ He was followed by Lloyd-Jones, John Stott and William Still in Britain, and Donald Grey Barnhouse, and James Montgomery Boice. The practice of expository preaching remains a feature of evangelical preachers, including Calvin Thielman, Earl Palmer, William Pope Wood,

Timothy Keller, Haddon Robinson, Bryan Chapell, Tony Evans, among others.

Preaching is central to evangelicalism, despite its critics. "Preaching has stubbornly refused to acknowledge the validity of the charges against it," states Clyde Fant.³⁵ Preaching is here to stay.

A Commitment to Scholarship

In this section, we recognize three different contributions to evangelical homiletics scholarship. The first concerns the prodigious publication of books on preaching. Evangelical authors on the topic of preaching range from the popular to the scholarly. Over the years, publishers like Baker, Zondervan, Eerdmans, Inter-Varsity, Moody, in addition to Crossway, B&H, P&R, Weaver, Christian Focus, among others, have devoted significant portions of their catalogs over the years to the publication of evangelical preaching. The books range from popular to scholarly in content.

Several significant textbooks on preaching have emerged, including Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching* (1980), Bryan Chapell's *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (1994), and John Stott's *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching Today* (1982), and a host of others.

Second, in addition to scholarly publications, education in the theory and practice of preaching has developed in the field of homiletics. Evangelical homileticians have gained important ground over the last fifty years and continue to make strides in writing, teaching and scholarship, including the establishment of several doctoral programs (doctor of philosophy) in preaching and the founding of centers for preaching for preaching research.³⁶

The teaching of preaching has been part of the landscape of theological education since the establishment of formal theological training in North America. Harvard College was founded in 1636 not only to prepare ministers for the burgeoning Puritan nation, but also to prepare students in leadership for the various aspects of colonial society.³⁷ By 1805 the Harvard faculty was persuaded to embrace Unitarianism and voted to appoint Henry Ware, a self-proclaimed Unitarian, to the Hollis Professorship of Divinity. This led to the founding of Andover Seminary in 1808, making a break to establish a theological school based on orthodox Trinitarian theology.³⁸

What is striking about the founding of institutions like Andover and other seminaries to follow is the primacy of preaching in the theological curriculum. Unlike the British universities where clergy were trained, like Oxford or Cambridge where preaching was not part of the curriculum, their American counterpart theological schools placed preaching in the forefront, moving it into a distinct academic discipline.

There were notable exceptions to the British model. Philip Dodderidge led an academy where practical studies like preaching were taught to every theological student, but this was not the case with the Oxbridge schools.³⁹ Later, Charles Haddon Spurgeon trained students in

preaching at his Pastors' College.⁴⁰ Additionally, continental theologians like J. J. Van Oosterzee advocated for the "idea and importance of homiletics."⁴¹ Van Oosterzee demonstrated high regard for homiletics in the theological curriculum, its place as a distinct discipline. He urged:

Christian Homiletics is that part of Practical Theology which describes the nature of and requirements for the preaching of the Gospel in the congregational assemblies of the Christian Church, with the definite object of training by this method well-qualified heralds of the Word of Life. As such it displays—however closely allied to the domain of art—the unequivocal character of a science, and one for the future minister of the Gospel absolutely indispensable. As such it is opposed only by ignorance and prejudice, although powerless in itself alone to form living and life-awakening witnesses of the Salvation in Christ.⁴²

From the beginning, Andover Theological Seminary established the Bartlet Professorship of Sacred Rhetoric in 1808 provided by William Bartlet of Newburyport, Massachusetts.⁴³ The catalogs of Andover Theological Seminary from 1819 to 1830 demonstrate the key role of homiletics in the curriculum, with the final year focusing on sermon development and the practice of preaching. Later, the 1850 catalog includes "Homiletics" and "Sermonizing."⁴⁴

Princeton Theological Seminary, founded in 1812, appointed Archibald Alexander as the first Professor of Didactic and Polemical Theology, additionally teaching practical theology, including preaching, throughout his tenure at the seminary. Joining Alexander in 1813, Samuel Miller was appointed as the Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government, church government meaning, practical theology, including preaching.⁴⁵ Miller lectured to third-year students on the practice of preaching.⁴⁶ The Princeton faculty considered pulpit eloquence so important that as early as 1858 the teaching of speech was added to the curriculum to supplement the teaching of preaching.⁴⁷

Harvard established its Divinity School in 1815 and by 1830 announced the funding of the Professor of Pastoral Care and Pulpit Oratory, teaching students the composition and delivery of sermons. Students at Harvard Divinity School were exposed to the value of preaching in the curriculum for the churches they would serve. The catalog states:

A religious service with preaching, in which one of the students officiates takes place twice a week, and is attended by the Professors and all the members of the school. Also once a week there is an exercise in extemporaneous preaching, in the presence of one of the Professors, by the students of the two upper classes in rotation. Students take their turns in performing these exercises with the first

term of the middle year.⁴⁸

Another example of the prominent role of homiletics in the theological curriculum is Yale Divinity School founded in 1822. By 1817 there was an informal divinity school already functioning at the college with a few graduates who remained to study divinity. The commitment of Yale to preaching is indicated as early as the appointment in 1817 of Chauncey Allen Goodrich as professor of rhetoric and oratory.⁴⁹ Then, by 1822 fifteen students of the class of 1822 requested to study divinity following graduation. Eleazar T. Fitch, the professor of divinity supported their request to the administration to be formed into a regular theological class, thus providing the impetus for the founding of the divinity school.⁵⁰ The chair of homiletics was filled from 1822 to 1852 by Fitch, the Livingston Professor of Divinity.⁵¹

Other seminaries that were established later followed suit.⁵² The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was founded in 1859 in Greenville, South Carolina, and moved to Kentucky following the Civil War.⁵³ From the founding, John A. Broadus taught New Testament interpretation and most notably, homiletics. He is the author of *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (1870), one of the most influential trans-denominational textbooks on preaching in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁵⁴

Garrett Theological Seminary (1853), Rochester Theological Seminary (1850), Crozer Theological Seminary (1866) Union Theological Seminary (New York-1836), Union Theological Seminary (Virginia-1812), the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church [New Brunswick Theological Seminary] (1784), Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia (1864), Drew Theological Seminary (1867), among others, and notably evangelical institutions like Gordon Divinity School (1889), Denver Seminary (1951), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (1897), Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (1908), New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1917), Dallas Theological Seminary (1924),⁵⁵ Beeson Divinity School (1988), George W. Truett Theological Seminary (1993) required courses in homiletics for students as they prepared for ministry, emphasizing the prominent place of the teaching of preaching in the seminary curriculum.⁵⁶

Like the theological seminaries, evangelical Bible colleges and Bible institutes in the United States placed an important emphasis on the instruction and practice of preaching.⁵⁷ This brief survey indicates that from the beginning of theological education in the United States, homiletics served as one of the key components taught in the curriculum to strengthen a minister's education, and continues to play a key role especially in evangelical theological training.

A third contribution to evangelical homiletics is the honing of the craft of preaching through a specialized society. A professional guild, the Evangelical Homiletics Society, was founded in 1997 primarily for professors in seminaries and Bible Colleges who teach preaching. The society was established "for the exchange of ideas related to the instruction of biblical

preaching. The purpose of the Society is to advance the cause of biblical preaching through the promotion of a biblical-theological approach to preaching; to increase competence for teachers of preaching; to integrate the fields of communication, biblical studies, and theology; to make scholarly contributions to the field of homiletics."⁵⁸

The Evangelical Homiletics Society was established because of a demonstrated need for a distinct homiletics guild with evangelical commitments; these would include professors who teach homiletics in university divinity schools, seminaries, and Bible Colleges; in addition, "by reason of interest and involvement in preaching, including pastors, evangelists, and graduate students."⁵⁹

In a memo dated 11 December 1996 to Ken Swetland, then academic dean at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Scott M. Gibson reflected on his experience at the 31st annual Academy of Homiletics meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico, held 5-8 December 1996. He wrote:

I considered leaving the meetings for Boston after the first evening's presentation. However, I wanted to allow as much latitude as I could, so I stayed for the meeting the next day. That session was equally unimpressive. However, during that time I made use of it and penned on a pad an idea for a new homiletics organization for evangelicals, much like the Evangelical Theological Society. While exiting the room I (providentially) met Keith Willhite of Dallas Theological Seminary. We chatted a few minutes—I shared with him my idea. He was equally frustrated with the direction of the Academy, and we decided to spend the afternoon together to discuss my proposal.

Our plan is to establish the "Evangelical Homiletics Society," with the first meeting at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in October 1997.⁶⁰

Soon Keith Willhite developed a "Project Planning Guide" so that "we can be on the same page."⁶¹ The guide mapped the steps needed in order to launch the new organization, with the view to host the inaugural meeting at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary 16-19 October 1997. A letter was sent to potential interested parties in January 1997, inviting recipients to become a charter member of the Evangelical Homiletics Society.⁶² Letters were mailed in February 1997.⁶³

Support for the proposal was immediate. "I think it is a great idea to establish the Evangelical Homiletics Society," wrote Robert E. Cooley, president of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary to Scott M. Gibson. "It appears that the time has come that a greater purpose can be served in this special way." He continues, "I encourage you in your explorations to move forward."⁶⁴ Letters of support suggested a strong beginning. One professor of

preaching expressed excitement at the prospects of the upcoming inaugural meeting, "I'm looking forward to being part of this new society."⁶⁵

Paul Scott Wilson of Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, expressed both congratulations and sadness on the founding of the society. "As a past president of the Academy of Homiletics, may I extend to you and to the Evangelical Homiletics Society my personal congratulations on the occasion of your first meeting." He continues, "While I celebrate your formation, it is with a profound sense of loss that I do so.... On this occasion I deeply regret that the Academy of Homiletics will be deprived of an influence it very much needs, and not just it, but the church at large that its members represent."⁶⁶ Another homiletician and newly elected president of the Academy of Homiletics, Richard Lischer of Duke Divinity School wrote with equal grief in a letter to Scott M. Gibson, "In some ways, I think that such a development was inevitable...."⁶⁷

The first annual meeting of the Evangelical Homiletics Society was held 16-18 October 1997 at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with the theme, "The Need for Biblical Preaching in Today's Church." The plenary speaker was Vernon Grounds of Denver Seminary and Haddon W. Robinson of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary was the featured preacher.⁶⁸ The society was formally established at the plenary business meeting called by Scott M. Gibson, organizing chair on 18 October 1997. Thirty-two charter members were present. The by-laws were proposed, discussed, and approved, along with the first slate of officers for 1997-1998: Scott M. Gibson, president; Keith Willhite, vice-president; Endel Lee, secretary; Jeffrey Arthurs, treasurer; William Hogan, communication coordinator; Carol Noren, Donald L. Hamilton and Charles Zimmerman, members-at-large. Timothy Warren offered the motion for the society to accept the invitation to hold its second annual meeting at Dallas Theological Seminary in October 1998. The motion was seconded by Dennis Phelps of Bethel Theological Seminary.⁶⁹ The trajectory was set for this new preaching society.

On 16 April 2003 co-founder of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, Keith Willhite (1958-2003) died from complications of a cancerous brain tumor. The funeral service was held on 19 April 2003 at Lake Pointe Church, Rockwall, Texas. Mark Bailey, president of Dallas Theological Seminary gave the welcome and later a tribute. Rev. Ray Pritchard, Senior Pastor of Calvary Memorial Church in Oak Park, Illinois, preached the funeral message. Keith Willhite's influence continues to be felt in the society.⁷⁰ The Keith Willhite Award was established by the membership in 2006 in memory of the society's co-founder. The award recognizes the outstanding paper presented at each annual meeting voted upon by attendees to the meetings. The award includes a certificate of recognition, an honorarium, and the publication of the paper in the society's journal.

Additionally, in 2016 the Emerging Scholars Grant was initiated by the society to invest in the future of younger scholars and in the developing field of homiletics.⁷¹ The grant preamble states, "The Emerging Scholars

Grant is a means for the Society to assist and encourage developing scholars fund their education. Awardees of this grant represent the best in current graduate educational scholarship in homiletics."⁷² The purposes of the society continue to be addressed and developed.

The society publishes *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society*, which is peer-reviewed, featuring research articles and book reviews. The first edition of the journal was published in December 2001, with four articles and one sermon. The first volume has only one issue, while the following volumes produce two issues a year, now in March and September.

The journal was published in hard copy from 2001 until 2012, when the journal transitioned to an on-line publication beginning in March 2013.

The founding of the Evangelical Homiletics Society also underscores a commitment to the teaching of preaching. As part of their purpose the Evangelical Homiletics Society encourages the development of pedagogy, has devoted conferences to the task of teaching preaching, and study groups as well. Some evangelical homileticians who have backgrounds in educational theory developed the book, *On the Teaching of Preaching: The Use of Educational Theory and Christian Theology in Homiletics*, arising out of a Lilly Endowment grant. The book underscores the importance of informed educational pedagogy for evangelicals who teach preaching in Bible Schools, colleges and seminaries.⁷³

The Evangelical Homiletics Society is now twenty years old, with a burgeoning membership of about three hundred, including professors of preaching, graduate students, and pastors—all committed to advancing the cause of biblical preaching.

WORDS OF CAUTION AND CONCLUSION

To be sure, there is a range of preaching in evangelicalism. The commitments listed above highlight the best of the movement. However, contemporary preaching is often driven by personality rather than the preacher having the ballast of education and maturity in the scriptures. To evangelicalism's embarrassment, American pragmatism has distilled preaching to what works best. In his important study of evangelicalism, David Wells lamented:

Where, then, has the church lost its vision?

We can only surmise from the data we have. Perhaps the disaffection is grounded in the virtual collapse of biblical preaching in the contemporary church that some have noted or in the perception that even where biblical preaching is done, it is not always sufficiently nourishing.⁷⁴

Wells wrote these words over twenty years ago as he surveyed the evangelical

landscape of the late twentieth century—and, sadly, they can be reaffirmed to be the case today in the twenty-first century.

In spite of the detractions found within evangelicalism—the consumeristic tendencies, the threats of theological shallowness, the pervasiveness of the cult of personality—preaching drives the movement. Evangelicalism is made up of preaching and preachers. Preaching is of great significance for evangelicalism. We can say confidently that preaching is indispensable for evangelicalism.

NOTES

1. Author's note: portions of this paper were presented at the "God's Word and Our Words: The Significance of Preaching from the Prophets to the Present," symposium on preaching at Baylor University, Truett Theological Seminary, 12 September 2017 and from a forthcoming chapter in *On the Teaching of Preaching: The Use of Educational Theory and Christian Theology in Homiletics* (Wooster: Weaver, 2018).
2. Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 19.
3. *Ibid.*, 20.
4. Timothy L. Smith, "A Shared Evangelical Heritage," *The Evangelical Round Table* vol. 2 *Evangelicalism: Saving its Success*, ed., David A. Frazer (St. Davids, PA: Eastern College and Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1987), 12. See also, Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnson, *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1991); Andrew David Naselli and Collin Hansen, eds., *Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart, eds., *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities* (Nashville: B&H, 2008); John H. Gerstner, "The Theological Boundaries of Evangelical Faith," *The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing*, eds., David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 31-37. For a perspective on blacks and evangelicalism, see William Pannell, "The Religious Heritage of Blacks," *The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing*, eds., David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 96-107; William H. Bentley, "Bible Believers in the Black Community," *The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing*, eds., David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 108-121; Steve Wilkens and Don Thorsen, *Everything You Know about Evangelicals is Wrong (Well, Almost Everything): An Insider's Look at Myths and Realities* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010).
5. David Bebbington, "Evangelicalism in Its Settings: The British and American Movements since 1940," *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies in Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond 1700-*

- 1990 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 366.
6. Smith, 12-13. Smith considers these elements to be consistent in evangelical traditions. See also Bebbington, 365.
 7. *Ibid.*, 16. See pages 16-28 where Smith details evangelical engagement with social justice. See also in the same volume, Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Why Care About Justice?" (156-167). Also see for example, Rufus Spain, *At Ease in Zion: Social History of Southern Baptists* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967); Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform on the Eve of the Civil War* (Nashville: 1957; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); Norris Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920* (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1977); Leonard I. Sweet, ed., *The Evangelical Tradition in America* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984); Robert D. Lindner, "The Resurgence of Evangelical Social Concern (1925-75)," *The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing*, eds., David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 189-210.
 8. Derek Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals? Tracing the Roots of Today's Movements* (London: Marshall Prickering, 1994), 132.
 9. See Mark Hutchinson and John Wolfe, *A Short History of Global Evangelicalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Donald M. Lewis and Richard V. Pierard, *Global Evangelicalism: Theology, History and Culture in Regional Perspective* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2014).
 10. Sweeney, 74.
 11. Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott* vol. 5 *A History of Evangelicalism: People, Movements and Ideas in the English-Speaking World* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 112.
 12. *Ibid.*, 93-98. A casual internet search of universities and seminaries in North America and in Britain will demonstrate the place of evangelical scholars on these faculties. As for evangelical seminaries founded in North America in the twentieth century, these include Fuller Theological Seminary, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, the emergence of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Regent College in Vancouver, BC, among others. In Great Britain, London School of Theology arose as a leading evangelical center of learning, among others.
 13. Frederick Buechner, *Telling Secrets: A Memoir* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 79, 80.
 14. *Ibid.*, 82.
 15. Gerstner, "The Theological Boundaries of Evangelical Faith," 30-31.
 16. For evangelical women preachers see, for example, Janette Hassey, *No Time For Silence* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986); Nancy A. Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984); Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Peaching in America, 1740-1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
 17. The histories of evangelicalism seem to presume that preaching has had an impact on the movement, citing revivals and preachers. But no one

has yet to connect the dots to demonstrate the unique place of preaching in the movement.

18. Gerald R. McDermott, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
19. John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982, 2017), 1.
20. Garth M. Rosell, *Boston's Historic Park Street Church: The Story of an Evangelical Landmark* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009). See also Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 55.
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See also Roger R. Dale, "John A. Broadus, Rhetoric, and *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermon*," *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, eds., David S. Dockery and Roger D. Duke (Nashville: B&H, 2008) 68-96. Dargan, editor of the revised edition notes: "The first edition of this work was published in the summer of 1870. Immediately after getting it through the press the author went abroad for some months, and did not expect to teach Homiletics again after his return. But circumstances made it necessary that he should resume his work in that department—always a favorite subject with him. The book was a great success. It became the most popular and widely-read text-book on Homiletics in the country, and has passed through twenty-two editions, thousands of copies have been sold. It has been adopted in many theological seminaries of different denominations as the text-book, and in many where no text-book is used it is highly commended for study and reference. Besides this, it has had a wide and useful circulation among the ministry in general. Two separate editions were published in England; the book was used in the mission schools of Japan, in its English form, and was translated for similar use in the Chinese missions. A translation into Portuguese for the Protestant missions in Brazil has been prepared, and only waits for funds to be published." Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, ed., Edward Charles Dargan i.

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