

June 2019



# NEXUS



**EVANGELICAL AFTER  
TRUMP**

Rhys Bezzant

**THE FUTURE OF  
EVANGELICALISM**

leaders speak

**EVANGELICAL  
FAITH, HISTORY AND  
IDENTITY**

Stuart Lange

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# FROM THE EDITOR

World events, particularly in the United States and in Australia, have led to much discussion of recent times over the future of evangelicalism.

As the theological consortium in Australasia which encompasses most of the evangelical colleges in this region, we will be vital contributors to this discussion.

Indeed, two of the articles I have reproduced in this issue appeared elsewhere first. One reason for this issue is that I noticed many of our academics have been engaging in the discussion about evangelicalism. The two articles included here are from Rhys Bezzant, a faculty member at Ridley College, Melbourne and Stuart Lange, Senior Research Fellow at Laidlaw College, Auckland.

Stuart's doctoral research was on the history of twentieth-century evangelical Christianity in New Zealand. While Rhys' doctoral thesis investigated the ecclesiology of Jonathan Edwards. So both are good voices to hear in this discussion, as are many within our colleges and also here at the ACT office. Have a read of their articles, both of which look to the future of evangelicalism: "Evangelical after Trump?" and "Maintaining Connectivity".

I also asked a selection of Australasian evangelical leaders about their thoughts on the future of evangelicalism – see this in the article of that name. I was conscious of the perception of evangelicalism as a movement which elevates the white male voice, and so I was glad to have a couple of women respond to me, and have included their responses. I'm also looking forward to Ridley's Women in Evangelical Academia conference later this year.

This interest in evangelicalism has sparked a spate of publishing on the subject. I've rounded up some of the recent books published in my bookshelf section for this issue. I started this section in the last issue, which focusses on books on that issue's theme, and have decided to retain it as a regular section.

And with (not so coincidental) good timing, our latest ACT Monograph Series book, which is on evangelicalism, has just been published, [Foundations of Anglican Evangelicalism in Victoria](#) by Wei-Han Kuan, Director of CMS Victoria. Australasian evangelicalism is an area which we are focussing on in the Monograph Series, as this is a niche we are particularly well placed to fill. I interviewed Wei-Han about how his research connects with evangelicalism today.

Note also that here is a welcome Asian Australian voice. One issue for the future of evangelicalism will be to be attentive to the diverse voices and communities within it.

The rest of the issue contains the goodness you all subscribe for: news, events, calls for papers, publication announcements.

Just to highlight one piece of news. As of Thursday this week, the ACT office will be in new premises. The new address is Level 5, 33 York St Sydney, 2000. Phone numbers and emails remain the same. However, for a week or so, emails will be a better option for reaching ACT staff.

I hope you enjoy this issue on evangelicalism, and would love to hear your thoughts on the topic. I'm also taking suggestions for the theme for the end of year issue. Until then, I'm going to leave you with a brief thought about evangelicalism.



I've kept my own voice out of this issue in the main, though it is my area of research.

I was struck recently when I read a former evangelical, Mike McHargue, say what he got out of evangelicalism. To summarise, it was community and how to live with integrity. He ended with "And Evangelicals were there for me when my life fell apart." (*Finding God in the Waves*). I wasn't surprised. Evangelicalism at its best brings the heart, head and hands together. A strength we should carry into the future.

**Megan Powell du Toit**

NEXUS Editor

Publishing Manager

Editor of Colloquium





# EVANGELICAL AFTER TRUMP?

RHYS BEZZANT

No doubt you are hearing it too: why is it that so many evangelicals voted for Trump? Many used this term to describe their voting choices in the US, even if amongst the unsophisticated media pundits it meant simply “white, non-Hispanic Protestants.”<sup>1</sup> Of course, if your politics don’t align with Trump, you might be asking the question to distance yourself from those Christians who take on this label. There are however many who vote Republican, but have serious questions anyway about whether the evangelical brand is damaged. The populism of American presidential elections is often a bellwether for other countries too. Many nations around the world are experiencing either discomfort with, or disdain for, the international order, and are making their opinions known through the ballot box. Here is not the place to canvass the economic drivers which lead to different kinds of extreme politics, or to analyse the strategy of fear-mongering adopted by world leaders. But here is the place to ask the question whether the word “evangelical” is past its use by date. I say it is not.

Like any technical word, we need to get behind popular usage to find out what generated its adoption in the first place. Only then can we decide whether it is worth junking. And as an historian, I want to help us understand that technical words are valuable because they summarise a story, and alert us to debates and decisions, of which we are beneficiaries, even when the narrative has got confused in the meantime. The word “evangelical” contains the beautiful resonance of Gospel-centredness, and in the Reformation it meant something like Bible-focussed. However, with other descriptors arising to summarise Protestant convictions, like Lutheran

or Reformed or Anglican, the word “evangelical” in the eighteenth century was used again in a fresh way.

In the 1700s, when Enlightenment philosophers pushed God out of the world, and instead taught that human beings have the capacity to make sense of their experience without him, conservative Protestants began to call themselves “evangelicals” because they wanted to remind their listeners that God was not distant but close, and that we can experience him being near through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The language of regeneration became a hot-button issue. Not that the likes of John Wesley or George Whitefield or Jonathan Edwards had given up on the doctrine of justification by faith. Far from it. But they did turn up the volume on the language of being born again. Remember: many nominal Christians upheld justification in their statement of belief, but they didn’t act like it was true in their heart. If you want a succinct definition of being evangelical, this is it: the protection and promotion of the of vital piety in the modern world. After the 1730s, being a conservative Protestant needed a modern theological defence. As Doug Sweeney so eloquently says, being an evangelical is being a conservative Protestant “with an eighteenth-century twist.” If you prize vital piety, or a real experience of the Lord, or a personal faith, you can call yourself an evangelical.

The world was changing dramatically around the time of the Great Awakening. Early capitalism was creating a new kind of economy, which was no longer defined by face-to-face encounters of producers and buyers. Now, more impersonally through money exchange and not bartering, a worldwide commercial economy was born. Mobility of goods and of people was essential for

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<sup>1</sup> See John Fea, *Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump*, 193.

this early globalisation to thrive. The postal service was created for carrying letters and parcels, and personal identity was no longer defined by your village or locality. No wonder itinerancy flourished, with preachers travelling throughout countries or across the sea to make converts. As offensive as it might have been for Whitefield to come to town and win souls to Christ without asking for permission from the settled pastor, it worked. And he used the postal system to encourage advance publicity, and reports of his work travelled around the world quickly. There was a new sense of space and time amongst citizens of the eighteenth century, and in the experience of the newly regenerate too. One of the most frequent words used to describe a conversion was "enlargement." When you are converted in the fields and not in a church building, God somehow seems bigger.



This openness to God's active presence in the world has made evangelicals more open to cultural movements of their own day, for good or for ill. Our evangelistic commitment means that we get close to the people we are serving – as the Apostle Paul suggests we should in 1 Corinthians 9 – and our evangelistic flexibility enables us to apply new cultural means for traditional Christian ends. This sometimes gets us into hot water. We have felt the fear of the French Revolution and have grown more conservative. We have reacted to the teachings of Darwin and have instead pursued a vision for history that is not based on gradual evolution but rather apocalyptic intervention. We have brought flowers into church as a result of the Romantic movement, and we have savoured the imaginative beauty of CS Lewis's children's books which were composed in contrast to a world where technology seemed out of control. After World War II, we had to rethink what Christian

civilisation might look like after old norms had come tumbling down.

One of the ways to respond to a post-Christian world is to engage through politics. This has been one of the chief strategies for evangelicals in the US, given Americans' commitment to participatory democracy and power pushed down to the most local level. They elect their police chief, whereas Australians do not. They have a nervousness about big government, going all the way back to Thomas Jefferson, whereas we recognise our need for governments to help a small population cultivate a big and sometimes brutal land. Christian witness in the realm of politics is certainly one possible path which evangelicals have taken, but our very own tradition alerts us to the fact that there are options too.

Evangelicals over the last three hundred years have reshaped nations through local revival tents, prayer meetings, petitions to abolish slavery, involvement in trade unions, establishing hospitals or orphanages, grassroots protests against racism, conventions in the mountains or missions at the beach. We have built publishing houses and published magazines. We have welcomed the nations who have come to us, as well as sending our own to serve our neighbours overseas. As we adapt yet again, this time to a post-Christian and yet strangely pre-Christian society, evangelicals will pursue vital piety in a number of different ways, through our speaking gifts and our service gifts, as Peter summarises so well (1 Peter 4:10-11). Our individual contexts will vary, and our responses will no doubt also be carefully calibrated to needs and opportunities.

But in all this, please don't ignore our story, the history of one of the most powerful Christian movements in the modern world. And to remind us of the story, let us keep using the word "evangelical." It may not be perfect, but if we did jettison it, we would still have to find another term to capture the wonderful ways that God has worked amongst conservative Protestants since the eighteenth century. We can hold this story of vital piety, or the power of godliness, in trust for the sake of the universal church. In fact, we must.

*Rhys Bezzant*

**Ridley College**

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# THE FUTURE OF EVANGELICALISM

The view from Down Under



I thought it would be interesting to ask a cross section of Australasian evangelical leaders their thoughts about the future of the movement. To that end I asked two simple questions:

*What is the greatest challenge facing evangelicals today? And What is the greatest opportunity?*

These voices have articulated well some key challenges: having relevant biblical faith in a changing world, a troubled and compromised reputation, division, reactions to loss of privilege and power. A common thread in the responses is a positive reorientation towards authentic discipleship, focus on core truths and mission, and a broader, culturally engaged movement. Perhaps these might trigger some further conversations.

Megan, ed.

*What is the greatest challenge facing evangelicals today?*

To discover what it means to be a 21<sup>st</sup> century movement which delights in the gift of the new birth and reconciliation found in Jesus, and which reads and lives the Bible well in an ever-changing world. Rev Dr Brian Harris, Principal, Vose Seminary

For all the benefits Evangelicalism has fostered, this has not come without a cost: namely theological anaemia and cultural syncretism.

The Evangelical movement has weakened denominational distinctiveness and resulted in the dismantling of theological traditions so that people now identify as a broad and generic (contentless?) 'Christian' or 'Evangelical' but have no other family identity. We have become theologically anaemic. What we find amongst Evangelicals today is a pietism that trumps orthodoxy, a sentimentality which undermines

obedience, and a Moral Therapeutic Deism which replaces the Gospel.

Evangelicals have also taken the call to engage society seriously, which is laudable, but when coupled with theological anaemia the result is a form of cultural syncretism. Evangelical church services have more in common with pop-rock concerts or infomercials than they do with covenant renewal ceremonies. Unfortunately, it is not only the outward appearance, Evangelical values and morals also echo that of popular culture as well. This results in what Martin Marty calls "Christian bodybuilding and beautyqueening," rock music "with a Jesus gloss on it," and entrepreneurs "hawking a complete line of Christian celebrity cosmetics and panty-hose."<sup>2</sup> Rev Dr Myk Habets, Director of Research & Dean of Faculty, Carey Baptist College. Soon to be Head of Theology at Laidlaw College.

That evangelicals become known for what they are against, rather than what they are for. This would be a very sad reflection of the central tenets of evangelicalism. Rev Melissa Lipsett, Group Chief Operating Officer, Bible Society Australia

I think it is disunity amongst evangelicals over almost everything, which has affected mission. Externally, the fact that evangelical as a word now means something other than what evangelicals themselves think it means. Rev Dr Michael Jensen, Rector, St Mark's Darling Point

One challenge for evangelicals in Australia is learning to let go of power and privilege. As the world changes (and as the church's moral failings increasingly are exposed), evangelicals are finding that privileges they previously assumed are now considered unfair and unacceptable. If we cling on to these, not only do we create antagonism, I think we also fail to recognise that power and privilege

<sup>2</sup> Mark Noll, David Wells, & Cornelius Plantinga "Evangelical Theology Today," *Theology Today* 51 (1995): 501.





actually are not good for our spiritual health. There is a great opportunity for our maturity and learning here. *Dr Laura Rademaker, Postdoctoral*

*Research Associate, Centre for Indigenous History, ANU*

A very fine evangelical historian once warned that, while we should seek to divine the divine hand in history, we should be very wary of making bold claims about the future, because it's 'outside our period of expertise'. With that being said, I would venture a guess that the greatest challenge evangelicals face today, at least in Australia, is understanding the changing cultures in which they exist and connecting the eternal gospel to the particular hopes and fears of their neighbours. There's a danger that comes with the relative historic strength of evangelicals in this land - especially conservative, denominational evangelicals - that we (yes, this is my tribe), end up speaking to ourselves about ourselves and not connecting to the complex world in which we, and our people, actually live. This has become particularly salient in the age of fragmentation and the echo chambers of social media, but it's always been a challenge, especially for the evangelicals I study who negotiated the massive upheavals of the 1960s. Evangelicals have historically done well, under God, when they have connected the 'other-worldly' with the 'this-worldly' by paying very close attention to the cultures they inhabit and speaking in ways that their neighbours find familiarly strange. *Dr Hugh Chilton, Vice-President of the Evangelical History Association*

### ***What is the greatest opportunity?***

To move from defensive posturing to creatively interacting with the fresh challenges and opportunities of the twenty first century, and to do so in such a way that human flourishing results. *Brian Harris*

Evangelicals have unique resources to further Christian ecumenism and to foster serious intellectual engagement with culture.

As a renewal movement Evangelicalism is, at its best, a powerful ecumenical force, bringing together diverse Christians into a coherent form of Christian unity. This unity has fostered numerous parachurch ministries which have had a powerful reach across the globe. In an age of receptive ecumenism, Evangelicals could play a significant

role in healing church divisions whilst not giving up on the fundamentals of the faith.

Many rightly believe the popular expression of Evangelicalism needs to be rejected and in its place the groundwork needs to be laid for a more effective Evangelical theology. Evangelicals can draw on the resources of the Christian tradition to sustain serious intellectual life and offer that as a gift to the wider church. McGrath argues that Evangelicalism needs to defend, retrieve, and engage. Evangelicals need to defend historic confessional Christian theology, retrieve a high view of Scripture in practice and not only in word, and engage contemporary culture.<sup>3</sup> *Myk Habets*

The world is in desperate need of the message of grace found in the person and completed work of Jesus. But the tone with which evangelicals share this is critical. We must authentically demonstrate and express grace in their own lives, living and dealings with others rather than falling into contempt or unattractive piety. *Melissa Lipsett*



I think there's still vitality in the movement through church planting, and through the amazing people who could be spokespersons for biblical Christianity. We were already post-denominational, so the decline in the denominations doesn't affect us so much. *Michael Jensen*

In Australia we have the particular opportunity to learn from and listen to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers. They are especially well placed to teach evangelicals about what it means to follow Jesus and do justice in this place, on this land, given everything that has happened here, and given our hope for the future. *Laura Rademaker*

Again, a historian would have to demur and say that the history of the church is one of repeated surprises, so who knows where God will move? However, I do think that the gathering of the nations to Australia presents unique opportunities that previous generations of evangelicals would have struggled to imagine. While the greatest hope here is that many people will come to Christ and go out to influence the world, I wonder if a more visibly pluralistic evangelicalism will also create fresh expressions of living out the Gospel in our own land. *Hugh Chilton*

<sup>3</sup> Alister E. McGrath "Prophets of Doubt," *Alpha Magazine* (July, 1996): 30.



# MAINTAINING CONNECTIVITY WITH EVANGELICAL FAITH, HISTORY AND IDENTITY

A NEW ZEALAND PERSPECTIVE

Is it time for evangelical Christians in New Zealand, in response to various voices (both Christian and ex-Christian) in the United States,<sup>4</sup> and in response to some voices in New Zealand too,<sup>5</sup> to stop identifying themselves as “evangelical”?

Recent calls to stop using the term are primarily because it has been compromised by its association with right-wing politics in the USA where, as one writer has expressed it, the term “evangelical” now means in American pop culture little more than conservative whites who are in some way religious, who vote Republican, and who suppose they must therefore be “evangelical.”<sup>6</sup> There are, however, a number of more longstanding hesitations about the term, which are more theological or ecclesiastical in nature. This article discusses the history and scope of the word “evangelical,” and the worldwide evangelical movement, and responds to some of the specific objections that are sometimes made against the name or identity of “evangelical.” I argue that it is neither necessary nor advisable to abandon the word, given its rich depths of meaning, its long and honourable history, and its continuing usefulness in many churches and societies. I suggest, however, that the term does need to be used carefully, and with sensitivity to context, and that there are other words that can be used as well.

Arguably, the term “evangelical” has always been somewhat controversial. It could hardly have been otherwise, given it is derived from the Greek New Testament word for the Gospel of Christ, εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*). The Gospel is indeed good news, but involves the rejection of much else, including human sin, self-sufficiency, and religion. Likewise, the word “evangelical” signals not only an enthusiasm for the biblical Gospel but may imply a lack of enthusiasm for various alternative expressions of Christian faith, such as ritualism or theological liberalism.

As an adjective, “evangelical” means “of the Gospel.” As a noun, “evangelical” means someone who holds to the Gospel. Although for many people, emphases, and practices in the ancient and medieval church could be seen to be “evangelical” (i.e. of the Gospel – reflecting both the New Testament and/or its message), the actual word “evangelical” appears to have been commonly used only from the sixteenth century onward. For the Reformers, the word “evangelical” signalled not just reforming the church according to the pattern of the early church as depicted in the four canonical gospels, but primarily the New Testament Gospel of justification by faith (as opposed to justification by works) and the primacy of Scripture (as opposed to the primacy of church tradition). In Germany, Luther freely used the word “evangelical” in both its Latin and German forms. In England, in 1531, William Tyndale wrote about “evangelical truth,” and Thomas More (a Catholic) referred to English

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<sup>4</sup> Josiah Hesse, “‘Exvangelicals’: Why More Religious People are Rejecting the Evangelical Label,” *The Guardian*, 3 November 2017; Josiah Hesse, “Apocalyptic Upbringing: How I Recovered From my Terrifying Evangelical Childhood,” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/05/religion-evangelical-christianapocalypse-josiah-hesse>; “Ex-Evangelical Means Much More than Dropping a Label: A Response to Josiah Hesse,” <https://christroop.com/tag/ex-evangelical/>; Thomas Kidd, “Is the Term ‘Evangelical’ Redeemable?” *Gospel Coalition* post, 8 September 2017, <https://www.theGospelcoalition.org/blogs/.../is-the->

termevangelical-redeemable; David French, “It Might Be Time to Retire the Term ‘Evangelical,’” 19 December 2017, <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/it-might-be-time-retire-term-evangelical> [sic].

<sup>5</sup> Kevin Ward, “Does a Rose by any Name Still Smell the Same?” in *Gospel, Truth, & Interpretation: Evangelical Identity in Aotearoa New Zealand*, ed. Tim Meadowcroft and Myk Habets (Auckland: Archer Press, 2011), 153–68.

<sup>6</sup> Kidd, <https://www.theGospelcoalition.org/blogs/.../is-the-term-evangelical-redeemable>.



supporters of the Reformation as “Evaungelicalles.”

In Western Europe, as many churches and communities broke with the Catholic Church, and the region became divided in its ecclesiastical loyalties, the word “evangelical” would often come to mean little more than “Protestant,” i.e. “not Catholic.” On the European continent, that remains a common sense of the word. It does not mean what is usually now meant by the word in English-speaking countries.

From the 1730s onwards, following the earlier Puritan and Pietist movements, a major movement of revival began to sweep through Britain and its North American colonies, with great emphases on repentance, new birth, spiritual experience, holy living, and evangelism. Its most prominent leaders included such figures as John Wesley, George Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards. So began the modern evangelical movement, a powerful historic current of conviction and spirituality which profoundly affected both the British Isles and North America, touching all levels of society. This movement was soon termed “evangelical,” and those who followed its doctrines and practices – at least among Anglicans and Nonconformists – became identified as “Evangelicals.” It was a movement that in successive periods was characterised by people such as John Newton, William Wilberforce, Hannah More, Charles Simeon, Thomas Chalmers, Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, William and Catherine Booth, and Dwight L Moody – and in the twentieth century by Billy Graham and John Stott.<sup>7</sup>

Along the way, evangelical Christianity gave rise to a vast number of religious and philanthropic causes and societies, which were active both at home and abroad. Evangelicalism produced many new church denominations. It sent a countless number of missionaries to every part of the world, among them William Carey, Henry Martyn, Hudson Taylor, Adoniram and Ann Judson, Mary Slessor, C. T. Studd, and Church Missionary Society missionaries such as Henry and Marianne Williams who nurtured Christian faith among Māori. In both Britain<sup>8</sup> and America,<sup>9</sup> evangelical Protestantism was highly influential in

shaping religion and culture from the mid-eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century – and had a significant resurgence from the 1950s onwards. In Britain, an Evangelical Alliance was formed in 1846, as an expression of evangelical identity and united action. In the same year, a World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) was formed. Both organisations are still very active. The WEA claims it reflects the faith of some 600 million evangelical Christians worldwide, in 129 countries.<sup>10</sup> In time, evangelicalism has grown to become a vast global movement of popular Christianity; unstructured, highly diverse, and crossing countless denominational, cultural, and national boundaries. Evangelical faith and spirituality has been expressed in an extraordinary amount of devotional material, literature, hymns, and songs. The word “evangelical” thus describes a wide and deep stream of Christian faith, a worldwide movement, which has been hugely influential in shaping modern Christianity and its churches.

Depending on whether one is looking at evangelicalism from a historical and sociological perspective or from a theological perspective, evangelical Christianity can be seen as both a movement (a very broad movement) and as a set of common “evangelical” doctrinal beliefs (again with much variety in emphasis, and much variety in secondary doctrinal commitments). An important distinction can also be made between those people and groups who consciously and explicitly identify themselves as “evangelical,” and those many more people and groups who share characteristic evangelical beliefs and practices but who do not normally call themselves “evangelical.”<sup>11</sup>

Those defining evangelicalism tend to defer to David Bebbington’s quadrilateral of four recurring characteristics: “conversionism,” “biblicentrism,” “crucicentrism,” and “activism” – the last of those including such things as evangelism, overseas mission, and evangelical humanitarianism.<sup>12</sup> However, other definition of evangelicals and evangelicalism are possible. John Stott identified Evangelicals as simply “Bible people” with a “Gospel” to proclaim,<sup>13</sup> and asserted that “the evangelical faith is nothing other than the historic

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove and Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2004); John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (Nottingham: InterVarsity, 2006); D. W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Nottingham: InterVarsity, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

<sup>9</sup> Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic,

2005); Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> [www.worldidea.org/whowea/introduction](http://www.worldidea.org/whowea/introduction).

<sup>11</sup> My analysis of evangelicalism and its history, in this and some following sections of this article, in part reflects material in my book on the history of evangelicalism in New Zealand: Stuart M. Lange, *A Rising Tide: Evangelical Christianity in New Zealand, 1930-1965* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 1.

<sup>13</sup> John R. W. Stott, *What Is an Evangelical?* (London: Church Pastoral Aid Society, 1977).

Christian faith.”<sup>14</sup> The World Evangelical Alliance endorses Leon Morris’ assertion that “an evangelical is a Gospel man, a Gospel woman.”<sup>15</sup> In Australia, Stuart Piggin has described evangelicalism as “biblical experientialism,” by which he meant trust in the Bible and “vital experience of Jesus.”<sup>16</sup> In late nineteenth century England, Bishop Ryle (a self-declared “evangelical”)<sup>17</sup> described “Evangelicals” as “a school or party” within the Church of England, a party whose first and leading principle is “the absolute supremacy it assigns to Holy Scripture as the only rule of faith and practice,” along with strong belief in human sinfulness and corruption, in the person and work of Christ, and in the Holy Spirit’s work in bringing people to repentance, faith, and spiritual regeneration.<sup>18</sup> As an Evangelical, Ryle rejected religious formalism and ritualism, trends towards re-Catholicising the church, and modernist unbelief in the Bible.<sup>19</sup> Several decades later, many evangelicals would continue to assert the authority of Scripture and the doctrines of the Gospel, but would see the main threat not as ritualism but as liberalism. It is obvious from the history of evangelical Christianity that evangelicals have emphasised different beliefs and practices at different times. Also, diverse forms of evangelical faith can often co-exist in the same time and country: one writer identified fourteen principal types of evangelicalism in the United States, each with its own subcultures;<sup>20</sup> another identified fourteen types in Australia.<sup>21</sup>

More often than not, those people who are evangelical in belief and practice (whether they recognise that or not) are similar to most other Christian people, and simply identify themselves as believing in God, as churchgoers, and as belonging to this or that denomination. The use of the word “evangelical” has never precluded the use of many other terms to describe or

identify evangelical beliefs, emphases, and people. At various times, many other descriptors have been used. For example, evangelical Christians have often referred to themselves – or to others – by such terms as “born again,” “saved,” “believers,” “Christians,” “true” Christians, “serious” Christians, “vital” Christians, “conservative” Christians, “orthodox” Christians, and “Bible-believing” Christians. Detractors have often felt free to adopt other terms, such as “Bible-bangers,” “holy rollers,” and “hot Gospellers.”

It must be emphasised that American evangelicalism has always been somewhat different in character and tone from that found in Britain.<sup>22</sup> In Britain, a more traditional society, religion had been associated with social conformity and respectability, was dominated by two State churches (the Church of England and the Church of Scotland), was led by socially conservative clergy, and was generally respectful of education. In the Church of England, evangelicalism had opposition from two separate directions, from high church and Anglo-Catholic elements, and from modernists. As a result, Britain’s evangelicalism tended to be more restrained. In the USA, in a new and expanding society, religion was more often more revivalist, populist, flexible, and boisterous. New Zealand evangelicalism more closely followed the British rather than the American model, as New Zealand society was strongly British in identity up until at least the end of the 1960s.<sup>23</sup>

In the USA in the 1920 and 30s, as modern liberal views gained strength in church and society, many evangelicals retreated into a separatist and more defensive style of evangelicalism, which became known as “fundamentalist.” After World War II, however, many evangelicals pulled away from a separatist, fundamentalist type of

<sup>14</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Make the Truth Known* (Leicester: UCCF Booklets, 1983), 3; idem, *Evangelical Truth* (Leicester: IVP, 1988), 16–17.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.worldea.org/whoweare/evangelical>.

<sup>16</sup> Stuart Piggin, “Evangelicals Unchained. Stuart Piggin talks to Mark Powell,” *AP Magazine* online. The Evangelical Reformed Christian magazine.

<https://apmagonline.org/2018/08/21/evangelicals-unchained/>.

<sup>17</sup> John Charles Ryle, *Knots Untied, Being Plain Statements on Disputed Points in Religion from an Evangelical Standpoint*, 31st Edition (London: James Clarke and Co., 1954), 6.

<sup>18</sup> Ryle, *Knots Untied*, 9–12.

<sup>19</sup> Ryle, *Knots Untied*, 15, 61

<sup>20</sup> Robert Webber, *Common Roots: A Call to Evangelical Maturity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 31–33. Webber’s categories include: Fundamentalist Evangelicalism, Dispensational Evangelicalism, Conservative Evangelicalism, Nondenominational Evangelicalism, Reformed Evangelicalism, Anabaptist Evangelicalism, Wesleyan Evangelicalism, Holiness Evangelicalism, Pentecostal Evangelicalism, Charismatic

Evangelicalism, Black Evangelicalism, Progressive Evangelicalism, Radical Evangelicalism, and Main-line Evangelicalism.

<sup>21</sup> E. Croucher, *Recent Trends among Evangelicals: Biblical Agendas, Justice and Spirituality* (Heathmont: John Mark Ministries, 1986), 1, cit. Ward, op. cit.: 155.

<sup>22</sup> George M. Marsden, “Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon: A Comparison with English Evangelicalism,” *Church History* 46 (June 1977): 215–32; David Bebbington, “Evangelicalism in Modern Britain and America. A Comparison,” in *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States*, ed. Mark A. Noll and George Rawlyk (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press), 183–212; David Bebbington, “Evangelicalism in its Settings: The British and American Movements since 1940,” in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles and Beyond, 1700–1990*, ed. Mark Noll, David Bebbington, and George Rawlyk (New York and Oxford: OUP, 1994), 365–88.

<sup>23</sup> For evangelicalism in New Zealand, see Lange, *A Rising Tide*.

evangelicalism and worked to re-establish a more positive and intellectually self-assured identity for American evangelicalism.<sup>24</sup> Reformist and intellectually self-assured leaders such as Carl Henry and Harold Ockenga, seeking to regain cultural influence for evangelical Christianity, distanced themselves from fundamentalism, called themselves “neo-evangelicals,” and identified with a more mainstream evangelical Protestant tradition. From 1942, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) helped differentiate neo-evangelicals from the militant fundamentalism of Carl McIntire and the American Council of Christian Churches.<sup>25</sup> Ockenga described the NAE as representing “responsible evangelicals.”<sup>26</sup> From 1949, the overwhelmingly important figure in the evangelical resurgence was the hugely popular Billy Graham, who concentrated on preaching of the Gospel, avoided polemical and secondary matters, and insisted on working co-operatively with as many churches as he could. Other factors in the American evangelical recovery were the establishment of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship in the United States (the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1939), the growth of evangelical publishing houses such as Eerdmans, and the influence of British evangelicals such as John Stott.<sup>27</sup>

It is not a new thing for the word “evangelical” to be misunderstood, or used too loosely, or applied too broadly. In New Zealand, in 1930-31, the pages of the Presbyterian Outlook contained many different uses of the term “evangelical,”<sup>28</sup> the word variously meaning “Protestant” (i.e. not Catholic),<sup>29</sup> or “nonconformist” (i.e. Protestant but not Anglican),<sup>30</sup> or “evangelistic.”<sup>31</sup> The same survey of the Outlook showed that the term “evangelical” did not, in that era, necessarily imply biblically conservative, and was sometimes

applied to those who held a critical view of the scriptures, such as Karl Barth (who was acclaimed as “thoroughly evangelical in the truest sense of that word”),<sup>32</sup> or to theological modernists such as Harry Emerson Fosdick (who was described as leading “modern evangelical Christianity”).<sup>33</sup> In England, following what Bebbington describes as a “deep and permanent split” within evangelical Protestantism in the early twentieth century, there was an explicitly “liberal evangelical” movement, fostered by such bodies as the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement.<sup>34</sup>

From the 1930s and 40s, however, and into the post-war period, the term “evangelical” began to be reclaimed by the more conservative strand within British evangelical Protestantism, and more tightly defined.<sup>35</sup> A key catalyst for that firmer defining of evangelical faith was the increasing influence in Britain of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF), which had been established in 1928 following the 1910 secession of the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union from a liberalising Student Christian Movement.<sup>36</sup> Factors behind the 1950s and 60s resurgence in British evangelicalism included the sobering effects of the Second World War and the Cold War, the influence of C. S. Lewis, and the impact of the Billy Graham campaigns (1954-55), which greatly boosted evangelical profile and confidence.<sup>37</sup> Bebbington, however, asserts that “probably the most important single factor behind the advance of conservative Evangelicalism in Britain in the post-war period was the Inter-Varsity Fellowship,” which restored evangelical confidence, trained future evangelical leaders, developed a strong evangelical publishing work, and sponsored the

<sup>24</sup> George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987); Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.nae.net/about-nae/history> (accessed 29 August 2018).

<sup>26</sup> J. Elwin Wright to Bernard G. Holmes, 10 June, 1950, TSCF archives N1/4.

<sup>27</sup> A. Donald MacLeod, *C. Stacey Woods and the Evangelical Rediscovery of the University* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> Lange, *A Rising Tide*, 20.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. *Outlook* (6 October 1930): 5.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. *Outlook* (22 June 1931): 6. The Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches (UK) included Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Presbyterians – the “Free Churches.”

<sup>31</sup> E.g. NZBTI advertisement, *Outlook* (1 December 1930): 36; *Outlook* (23 June 1930): 5.

<sup>32</sup> *Outlook* (25 May, 1931): 20.

<sup>33</sup> *Outlook* (22 December 1930): 6. Cit. Lange, *A Rising Tide*, 20.

<sup>34</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 161, 202.

<sup>35</sup> For British evangelicalism in the twentieth century, see e.g. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*; Randle Manwaring, *From Controversy to Co-existence: Evangelicals in the Church of England, 1914–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Ian M. Randall, *Educating Evangelicalism. The Origins, Development and Impact of London Bible College* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000); Harriet A. Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Rob Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism, 1966–2001: A Theological and Sociological Study* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007); Oliver Barclay, *Evangelicalism in Britain, 1935–1990* (Leicester: IVP, 1997).

<sup>36</sup> See e.g. David Goodhew, “The Rise of the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union, 1910–1970,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 54, 1 (January 2003): 62–88; D. Johnson, *Contending for Faith: A History of the Evangelical Movement in the Universities and Colleges* (Leicester: IVP, 1979).

<sup>37</sup> Randall, *Educating*, 51, 95–96, 139.



revival of evangelical scholarship.<sup>38</sup> Other historians have made similar assessments.<sup>39</sup>

A key contribution of the Inter Varsity Fellowship was to define afresh, in a twentieth century environment, what it meant to be “evangelical.” The IVF Doctrinal Basis set out the perceived essentials of evangelical faith, including the inspiration and authority of scripture, substitutionary atonement, the need for repentance, faith, and regeneration, and the resurrection and return of Christ. These points clearly differentiated IVF-style evangelical faith from the broader theological stances of the Student Christian Movement, and of “liberal evangelicals” and “modernists.” The book *Evangelical Belief* expounded such evangelical convictions, as did many subsequent IVF publications.<sup>40</sup> The IVF stood for a thoughtful conservative evangelicalism: Gospel-centred, biblically grounded, and theologically orthodox. It was also prayerful, devotional, and evangelistic. It was committed to Bible study, and careful Bible exposition. Conscious that evangelical Christianity had lost ground to theological modernism and religious scepticism, the IVF emphasised that Christian faith is buttressed by understanding, reason, and evidence. The IVF avoided extremes in both belief and style, and was uncomfortable with sectarianism, excessive emotion, and high-pressure evangelism. It identified itself with the historic British evangelical tradition, and its Reformation and Puritan antecedents. The IVF and its evangelical identity were not in any way American.

In New Zealand, Evangelical Unions (EUs) were established from 1930 onwards, the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions (New Zealand) was formed in 1936, and by the late 1960s the IVF student movement had eclipsed the more liberal Student Christian Movement. Within New Zealand’s two largest Protestant denominations, the Anglicans and Presbyterians, graduates of the EU/IVF movement spawned influential evangelical fellowships within their own denominations: the Evangelical Churchmen’s Fellowship (later the Anglican Evangelical Fellowship and later again the Latimer Fellowship), and the Westminster Fellowship. The Baptists – and to a lesser extent the Open Brethren – were also influenced by the involvement of some of their members in the EU

and IVF. For those New Zealand church leaders and members who had come up through the university Evangelical Unions, the term “evangelical” was commonplace. It meant adherence to the beliefs articulated in the IVF Doctrinal Basis, and participation in the evangelical practices of Bible-reading, prayer, and evangelism. For those of evangelical belief and identity within theologically-divided mainline denominations, speaking of others as “evangelical” was a convenient way of referring to those who shared similar evangelical convictions.<sup>41</sup>

It should be noted that the British evangelical movement – and the IVF movement in Britain, New Zealand and elsewhere – very definitely did not identify with American “fundamentalism.” While British and IVF evangelicals shared a belief in the orthodox “fundamentals” of Christianity (as defended in *The Fundamentals*, a series of books published in the USA between 1910 and 1915), they regarded the subsequent American fundamentalist movement, which took shape in the 1920s and 30s, as too narrow, reactionary, anti-intellectual, and polemical, too preoccupied with matters of only secondary importance, and too American. Various British evangelical leaders, such as Graham Scroggie and Campbell Morgan, returned from visits to America and publicly deplored the extremism of the American fundamentalist movement.<sup>42</sup> In New Zealand, in 1939, an EU/IVF leader wrote that “one of the difficulties under which the Evangelical movement labours is its association in the minds of many with the extremes and extravagances of American Fundamentalism.” Instead, he stressed the importance of British evangelical values such as soundness, reasonableness, and “sobriety and balance.”<sup>43</sup> In Britain, evangelical leaders continued to vigorously refute any suggestion that they were to be identified as fundamentalists.<sup>44</sup> These distinctions highlight that the British and United States evangelical traditions were (and are) significantly different than New Zealand evangelicalism. Notwithstanding the steadily increasing American influence in the last few decades, it has primarily reflected the British evangelical tradition rather than that of the United States fundamentalist tradition. Many of those identified currently by American media as “evangelicals” could possibly

<sup>38</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 259–60.

<sup>39</sup> Manwaring, *From Controversy*, x–xi, 44–45, 51; Randall, *Educating*, 18; Harris, *Fundamentalism*, 51, 54; Goodhew, “The Rise,” 64, 86–88.

<sup>40</sup> [IVF] Advisory Committee, *Evangelical Belief: The Official Interpretation of the Doctrinal Basis of the IVF* (London: the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions, n.d. [1935]).

<sup>41</sup> For evangelicalism and evangelical movements in New Zealand, and especially the influence of the IVF and Evangelical Unions, see Lange, *A Rising Tide*.

<sup>42</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 182, 222.

<sup>43</sup> Max Wiggins, *IVFEU TSPU circular*, April 1939, TSCF I1/035.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. John Stott, *Fundamentalism and Evangelism* (London: Crusade for the Evangelical Alliance, 1956), 20–24; Clive Calver and Rob Warner, *Together We Stand* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996), 19–20.

be characterised as “fundamentalists” rather than as “evangelicals,” or alternatively, as cultural evangelicals rather than as convinced evangelical Christian believers.

In New Zealand, over the last few decades, there has been a discernible move by evangelical organisations to become a little coy in using the word “evangelical,” and to feature it less prominently in how they describe themselves. The Evangelical Unions have become Christian Unions or Christian Fellowships. The Anglican Evangelical Fellowship has become the Latimer Fellowship. The Evangelical Fellowship of New Zealand has morphed into the New Zealand Christian Network, while the Evangelical Missionary Alliance has become Missions Interlink. Nevertheless, on their websites all of those organisations identify themselves as “evangelical” – as do such denominations as the Baptist and Wesleyan Methodist churches, institutions such as Laidlaw College, and groups such as Presbyterian AFFIRM.<sup>45</sup> In every case, the organisations also use many other words, sometimes quite creatively, to try and describe themselves and what they stand for.

So how might evangelicals in New Zealand respond to the claims that it is now time to discard the label “evangelical” altogether? I shall state some of the main reasons why that is proposed, and briefly respond to each point.

### **1. The word “evangelical” has become irreparably damaged through the support of American “evangelicals” for right-wing politics and Donald Trump**

Unquestionably the politicisation in the United States of the term “evangelical” has created a significant problem for evangelical Christian people in that country, whether they recognise that or not, and there will be no easy way to disentangle evangelical faith from partisan politics. How Americans deal with this situation is for them to work out for themselves. It needs to be questioned, however, how critical this problem is for evangelical Christians outside of the United States. The political and religious fault lines in the United States are peculiar to that particular country and have only limited relevance in most of the world’s other 194 countries, all of which have their own religious and political environments.

The American alliance of conservative evangelical Christians and right-wing politicians does not relate closely to New Zealand. Christianity in New Zealand is generally more muted, the percentage

of active Christians in the New Zealand population is lower than in the United States (and the language and cultural presence of “born again” Christians is also lower). In addition, public discourse is more secular. New Zealand politicians generally play down their religious views rather than use them for any political purposes, and politics in New Zealand are generally less polarized.

How much significance has the current association of evangelical religion and Republican politics for the general New Zealand public? And how much does it influence public perceptions of evangelicals in New Zealand? The international reach of American media sources is considerable, and the much-publicised support of many “evangelicals” for Donald Trump and his views probably does provide another reason for some liberally-minded secular New Zealand people to feel prejudiced against evangelical Christians in this country as well as in the USA. American culture wars do have some impact within New Zealand. Many people in New Zealand associate American political and religious conservatives with illiberal views in such issues as patriotism, militarism, abortion, marriage, family, sexuality, race relations, immigration, social inequality, poverty, gun control, Israel-Palestine, and climate change. There may well be some flow over into how New Zealand evangelical Christians are perceived by some. While many people in the New Zealand public will have no awareness of “evangelical” support for Donald Trump, and little interest in either religion or politics, the current situation in America does suggest that Christians in New Zealand should exercise additional caution in using the label “evangelical” in a public setting, at least outside of those church circles where the word is both familiar and reasonably well-understood.

Within the New Zealand churches, and varying from denomination to denomination, the word “evangelical” is still commonly used by many Christians as a theological marker, and without any thought or fear of any possible connection to politics (American or otherwise). Despite the ever-increasing influence of American popular culture in New Zealand generally, and in some branches of the church (especially among many Pentecostal and independent churches, Baptists, and some other theologically conservative churches), and despite some weakening of the IVF-style evangelical tradition both in Britain and New

<sup>45</sup> [www.tscf.org.nz](http://www.tscf.org.nz); [www.latimer.org.nz](http://www.latimer.org.nz); [nzchristiannetwork.org.nz](http://nzchristiannetwork.org.nz); [missions.org.nz](http://missions.org.nz);

[www.baptist.org.nz](http://www.baptist.org.nz); [www.wesleyan.org.nz](http://www.wesleyan.org.nz); [www.laidlaw.ac.nz](http://www.laidlaw.ac.nz); <https://www.presaffirm.org.nz>.

Zealand,<sup>46</sup> the culture of New Zealand and its churches is arguably still generally more British than American. Within some New Zealand churches at least, the word “evangelical” is still widely understood as a useful theological descriptor for those with a focus on the Gospel and a very high view of the Bible. The New Zealand use of the word “evangelical,” where it is used, still largely reflects the longstanding British evangelical tradition, not the more complicated American context and usage (where it is no longer very clear whether the term means evangelical or fundamentalist, or just a conservative voter with some religious sympathies).

## **2. The word “evangelical” now means too many different things to be a useful term, is often misunderstood, and takes too long to explain.**

Terminology is very commonly ambiguous or fluid. There are thousands of other English words, especially those relating to concepts rather than objects, which are frequently misunderstood, or which have a range of meanings. Post-modern, liberal, and fundamentalist, to mention a few. When used, they are best clarified in some way. But nobody is suggesting such words be retired.

As this article has shown, multiple application and misunderstanding of the word “evangelical” is no new thing. From the 1930s through the 1970s, the Evangelical Unions and Inter-Varsity Fellowship helped give closer definition to the term, for those who were influenced by those and similar movements. In New Zealand, with the overall shrinking of the church, and the rebranding of many organisations which were once overtly “evangelical” by actual name (including the EUs and IVF), fewer people are now sure of what the word “evangelical” means, and there is greater potential for misunderstanding. One very common and longstanding misunderstanding of the word “evangelical,” especially by ordinary Christian people, and by people outside the church, is to assume that “evangelical” is a synonym for “evangelistic.” There is little harm in that, though, as the sense of both words have considerable overlap: to be evangelical means to be committed to the Gospel, and to be evangelistic means to be committed to sharing that Gospel.

Whenever it seems appropriate to use the word, but there is the possibility of any serious misunderstanding, it is often best to use the word

“evangelical” in conjunction with some other words or phrases, to make the meaning clear. It does not take very many words to say or write something like, [he/she/it] is “evangelical, i.e. [he/she/it] has a strong emphasis on the Gospel and the Bible.” I have found such a passing explanation, by way of a simple paraphrase, is neither difficult nor time-consuming.

## **3. The word “evangelical” is divisive and reflects a “party spirit.”**

Biblically, a “party spirit” (or factionalism) is spiritually destructive, unloving, and a breach of the church’s essential unity in Christ.<sup>47</sup> The church has one Lord, one faith, one body, and all Christians are called to make every effort to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit.”<sup>48</sup> Within that essential spiritual unity in Christ, however, faith is held and practised in a million different ways, reflecting an infinite variety of cultures, contexts, and convictions, and Christian people of all types and flavours inevitably use different words to articulate and describe their own beliefs, emphases, and identities.

I suggest that the word “evangelical” is no more divisive than any other term which denotes some sub-set of Christian faith and practice, such as “Catholic,” “Protestant,” “Reformed,” “ecumenical,” “liberal,” “progressive,” “conservative,” “traditional,” “orthodox,” “neo-orthodox,” “high church,” or “Anglo-Catholic” – especially when such a designation is used by people to describe themselves. All such terms imply some divergence from (and even disagreement with) some alternative positions. But identifying our own particular Christian persuasions and emphases (and we all have them) need not and should not imply animosity towards others, or any denial of our essential spiritual oneness with all who others acknowledge Christ as Lord, even if we may take a different view on many secondary matters.

## **4. The word “evangelical” implies “anti-Pentecostal,” and is therefore one which Pentecostals cannot identify with.**

Words have connotations, often shaped by past experiences. The lingering feeling that “evangelical” implies a rejection of “Pentecostal” Christianity reflects the tensions and stand-offs of the twentieth century, when neo-Pentecostalism was steadily growing in New Zealand, but was often openly rejected by the “evangelical” leaders of that day. Times have moved on,

<sup>46</sup> In Britain, the IVF is now called the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF), and in New Zealand it is called the Tertiary Student Christian Fellowship (TSCF).

<sup>47</sup> John 17:21, 23; 1 Cor 1:10–13.

<sup>48</sup> Ephesians 4:4–6, 3.



however, and distinctions have greatly softened. Large numbers of evangelical churches in New Zealand are now suffused by charismatic influences, and the contribution of Pentecostal churches to New Zealand society is now widely accepted by most New Zealand Christians.

When it comes to definitions, evangelicalism is best seen as a very broad and diverse global movement of biblicism and conversionism. By that measure, churches and people of Pentecostal experience and emphasis clearly fall within that, and are a distinctive variety of evangelicalism, rather than another type of Christianity altogether, or an opposing form of Christianity. Many Pentecostals nowadays agree – but not all.

**5. The word “evangelical” should be discarded because, in a hostile post-Christian society, with a diminishing percentage of people holding to any form of Christian faith, all we need is the word “Christian.”**

Outside the church, the word “Christian” is usually the best way for Christians to identify themselves (despite its negative connotations for those who are hostile to Christianity and especially to evangelical types of Christianity). The word is from New Testament times (Acts 11:26), and widely understood.

Within the church, the word “evangelical” can still be a useful descriptor and category, identifying a particular Gospel and Bible emphasis within Christianity. It is best used as an in-house term, and with some explanatory paraphrase. It is not an everyday word, and the majority of people around the world who are recognisably evangelical in their beliefs neither know nor use the word and are none the worse for that. People may use it, not use it, as they see fit. Other words can express the same sort of thing, but often less succinctly.

So should Christians in New Zealand abandon the word “evangelical”? If they so choose to do so, for whatever reason, that is their choice. Many barely or rarely use it anyway. I would argue, though, that there is some loss in that. In dropping the word “evangelical,” are we losing too much, losing it too lightly, and losing it unnecessarily? Do we really want to distance ourselves from our evangelical faith and heritage? Do we really want to put aside a Christian identity centred on the Gospel of Christ, and known for its belief in the new birth, for its deep love and respect for the Scriptures, and for its great effectiveness in taking Christ into all the world?

Yes, we can use many other words besides “evangelical,” and should definitely continue to

do so. For me, I prefer to retain the word “evangelical” in the mix. The word clearly and concisely links us with the Gospel and the Bible, and identifies us with the very rich and transformative evangelical tradition within Christianity – that magnificent tradition which encompasses the faith of the New Testament, all that was reflective of Christ and the Gospel in the early church and medieval periods, the superb re-appropriations of grace and scripture during the Reformation, the dramatic revivals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the courage and global fruitfulness of evangelical missions, the renewal of society wherever the Gospel has taken deep roots, and the sense of spiritual affinity among evangelical believers worldwide. I am not eager to weaken those associations, and do not see any compelling reason to do so. As a Christian in Aotearoa, I think it good for us to keep identifying ourselves closely with the *euangelion*, the Gospel of Christ – in faith, word, and action.

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# EVANGELICALISM

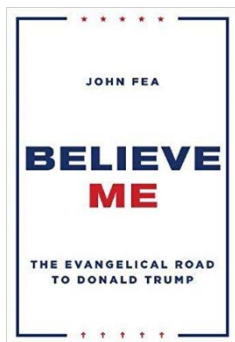
The new books shelf.



insights of national leaders in their fields will aid readers to reflect on the past contributions of evangelical institutions for the life of the mind as well as prospects for the future.

Evangelicalism seems to be the flavour of the month --- year? in American publishing at the moment. No doubt due to current events there. I've curated a selection of books from the last year on the subject:

[Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump, by John Fea, 2018.](#)



A historian's discerning, critical take on current American politics

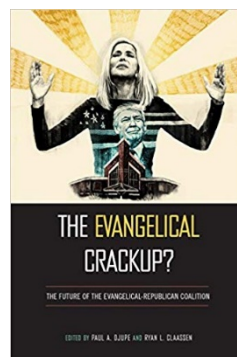
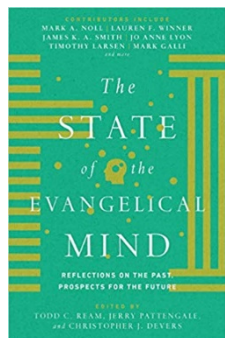
"Believe me" may be the most commonly used phrase in Donald Trump's lexicon. Whether about building a wall or protecting a Christian heritage, the refrain has been constant. And to the

surprise of many, a good 80 percent of white evangelicals have believed Trump—at least enough to help propel him into the White House.

Historian John Fea is not surprised, however—and in these pages he explains how we have arrived at this unprecedented moment in American politic

[The State of the Evangelical Mind: Reflections on the Past, Prospects for the Future](#), eds. Todd C. Ream, Jerry A. Pattengale (Editor), Christopher J. Devers, 2018.

Two decades on from Mark Noll's Scandal of the Evangelical Mind, could we now be on the threshold of another crisis of intellectual maturity in Christianity? Or are the opportunities for faithful intellectual engagement and witness even greater now than before? These essays invite readers to a virtual "summit meeting" on the current state of the evangelical mind. The

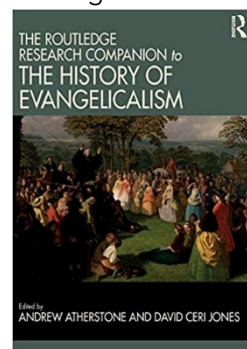


[The Evangelical Crackup?: The Future of the Evangelical-Republican Coalition, eds. Paul Djupe Ryan L. Claassen, 2018.](#)

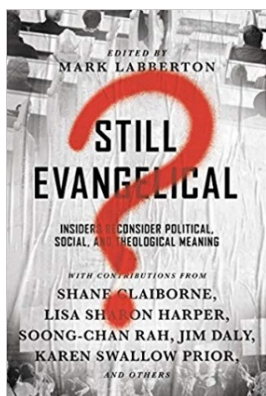
Explores a crucial question in American national politics: How durable is the close connection between the GOP and the evangelical movement?

[The Routledge Research Companion to the History of Evangelicalism](#), eds. Andrew Atherstone, David Ceri Jones, 2018.

Over the past three decades evangelicalism has become the focus of considerable historical research. This research companion brings together a team of leading scholars writing broad-ranging chapters on key themes in the history of evangelicalism. It provides an authoritative and state-of-the-art review of current scholarship, and maps the territory for future research. Primary attention is paid to English-speaking evangelicalism, but the volume is transnational in its scope. Arranged thematically, chapters assess evangelicalism and the Bible, the atonement, spirituality, revivals and revivalism, worldwide mission in the Atlantic North and the Global South, eschatology, race, gender, culture and the arts, money and business, interactions with Roman Catholicism, Eastern Christianity, and Islam, and globalization. It demonstrates



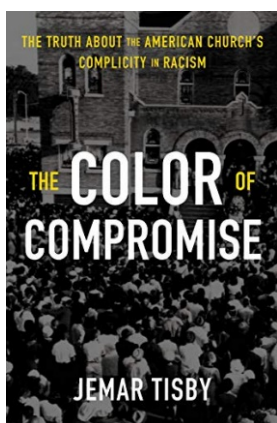
evangelicalism's multiple and contested identities in different ages and contexts.



[Still Evangelical?: Insiders Reconsider Political, Social, and Theological Meaning, ed. Mark Labberton, 2018.](#)

Evangelicalism in America has cracked, split on the shoals of the 2016 presidential election and its aftermath, leaving many wondering if they

want to be in or out of the evangelical tribe. The contentiousness brought to the fore surrounds what it means to affirm and demonstrate evangelical Christian faith amidst the messy and polarized realities gripping our country and world. Who or what is defining the evangelical social and political vision? Is it the gospel or is it culture? For a movement that has been about the primacy of Christian faith, this is a crisis. This collection of essays was gathered by Mark Labberton, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, who provides an introduction to the volume.



[The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism, Jemar Tisby, 2019.](#)

An acclaimed, timely narrative of how people of faith have historically--up to the present day--worked against racial justice. And a call for urgent action by all

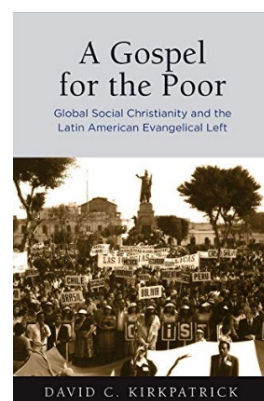
Christians today in response.

The Color of Compromise is both enlightening and compelling, telling a history we either ignore or just don't know. Equal parts painful and inspirational, it details how the American church has helped create and maintain racist ideas and practices. You will be guided in thinking through concrete solutions for improved race relations and a racially inclusive church.

[A Gospel for the Poor: Global Social Christianity and the Latin American Evangelical Left, David C. Kirkpatrick, 2019.](#)

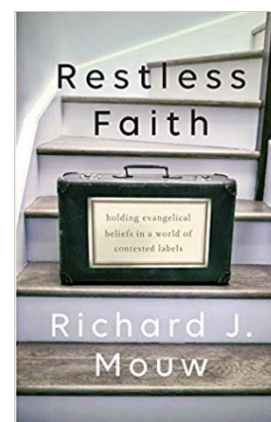
In 1974, the International Congress on World Evangelization met in Lausanne, Switzerland. Gathering together nearly 2,500 Protestant

evangelical leaders from more than 150 countries and 135 denominations, it rivaled Vatican II in terms of its influence. But as David C. Kirkpatrick argues in *A Gospel for the Poor*, the Lausanne Congress was most influential because, for the first time, theologians from the Global South gained a place at the table of the world's evangelical leadership—bringing their nascent brand of social Christianity with them. Drawing upon bilingual interviews and archives and personal papers from three continents, Kirkpatrick adopts a transnational perspective to tell the story of how a Cold War generation of progressive Latin Americans, including seminal figures such as Ecuadorian René Padilla and Peruvian Samuel Escobar, developed, named, and exported their version of social Christianity to an evolving coalition of global evangelicals.

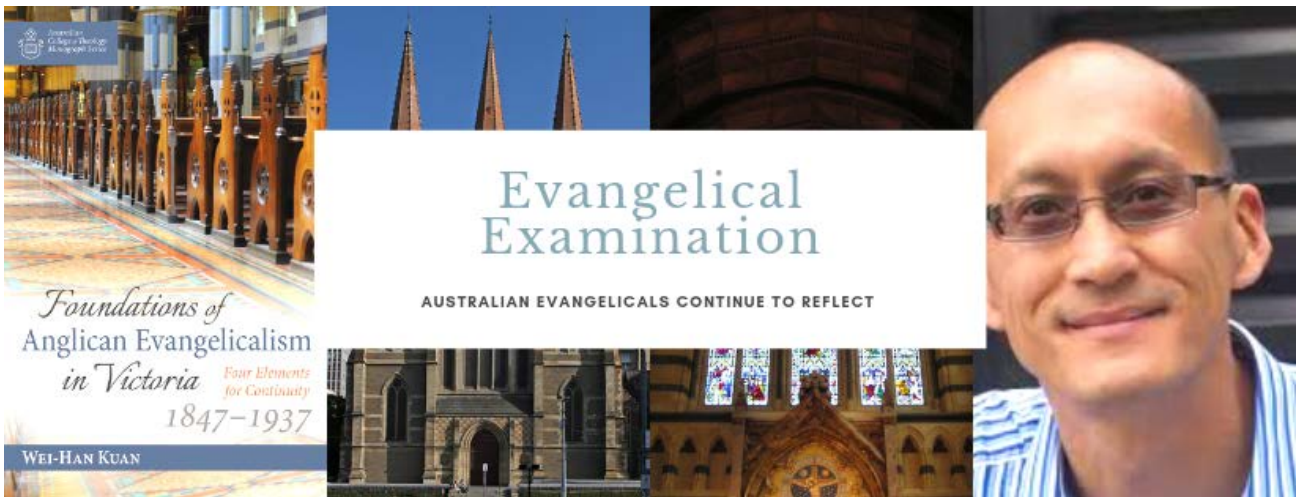


[Restless Faith: Holding Evangelical Beliefs in a World of Contested Labels, by Richard J. Mouw, 2019](#)

One of the most influential evangelical voices in America chronicles what it has meant for him to spend the past half century as a "restless evangelical"—a way of maintaining his identity in an age when many claim the label "evangelical" has become so politicized that it is no longer viable. Richard Mouw candidly reflects on wrestling with traditional evangelical beliefs over the years and shows that although his mind has changed in some ways, his core beliefs have not. He contends that we should hold on to the legacy that has enriched evangelicalism in the past. The Christian life in its healthiest form, says Mouw, is always a matter of holding on to essentials while constantly moving on along paths that we can walk in faithfulness only by seeking the continuing guidance of the light of God's Word. As Mouw affirms the essentials of the evangelical faith, he helps a new generation see the wisdom embodied in them.







Our latest book in the ACT Monograph Series is an historical look at Anglican evangelicalism in Melbourne, adding to what has become a key focus of the Series, Australasian evangelicalism. I spoke to author Wei-Han Kuan, Director of CMS Victoria, about his work in light of today. Megan, ed.

*What do you think is distinct about the evangelical scene in Melbourne?*

The first thing to say is that Melbourne is the historic home of Anglican evangelicalism. Our first bishop made us the most evangelical diocese in Australia, which means that Australian evangelicalism has very strong roots in Melbourne - across the denominations. Today, no one evangelical group dominates, there is significant diversity and each tribe makes a different contribution to the whole. Around 70% of Australia's evangelical missions agencies still have their headquarters in Melbourne. That's an indication of significant energy and vitality - especially of the laity.

Melbourne evangelicals have always had a strongly principled form of gospel activism, with a generous heart. The same group of evangelicals who founded Ridley College also saw to the founding of the Melbourne Bible Institute (today's Melbourne School of Theology), also saw to the founding of our Belgrave Heights Convention. We can be as tribal as the best - just watch us at the footy! (I mean AFL) - but there remains a strong instinct to prioritise relationship-building, relate well, and work through wide networks across a wide variety of chosen aims.

*You looked at a significant period of Anglican history in Melbourne - what according to you most helped evangelicals survive and thrive then?*

Leaders matter and clear evangelical leadership matters. Healthy and evangelistically-effective local churches were absolutely critical, but the

history shows that every one of these churches had to be led by a minister who had clarity about the biblical source of the claims of the Gospel of Christ. They therefore prioritised the necessity of conversion and the activities of evangelism and proclamation. These leaders also made important strategic decisions at key points in history to ensure, not just the survival of evangelicalism but more importantly for them, freedom for the faithful to keep proclaiming Jesus Christ crucified for the sins of each repentant person. Two clear examples of these are seen in Bishop Perry's rules for clergy selection and the later founding of Ridley College. Without the evangel, there is no evangelicalism. Without leaders who understand risks and threats, and who courageously work towards gospel ministry priorities, there is no evangelical movement.

*What could this teach us as evangelicals today?*

Leadership development is critical to any organisation or movement. It is a long, slow process. 'Good missionaries take a long time to cook properly', is something I joke about often in my work with CMS. I want to encourage evangelicals to stay the course with 2 Timothy 2:2 and keep working together at training and equipping successive generations of gospel leaders. Resist the temptation to pragmatism and quick-fixes. But equally, one of the lessons from history seems to be that it takes the whole church to raise up and sustain quality evangelical leadership. Which is a way of saying, do not neglect the leadership contribution and energy of lay leaders, women and men. Lay people are the majority of the church, and make all sorts of vital contributions, not least in and through para-church organisations. Groups focussed on evangelism and mission breed leaders. We need to support them, trust them with our people, work closely with them.

To talk about publishing in the ACT Monograph Series, please contact [Megan Powell du Toit](#).

## OUR TEAM

### Strategy & Operations

*Dean & CEO*

Rev Dr Martin Sutherland

*Executive Assistant to the Dean*

Tara Holdaway

*Director of Risk & Compliance*

Dr Paul Yeates

*Quality & Inclusion Officer*

Meredith Walker-Harding

*Academic Quality Officer*

Stephen Sarkoezy

*Director of Finance*

Vicki Chen

*Financial Accountant*

Mary Ann Navidad

### Learning, Teaching & Research

*Associate Dean, Director of Research*

Rev Dr Graeme Chatfield

*Director of Learning & Teaching*

Dr Geoff Treloar

*Publishing Manager & Colloquium Editor*

Rev Megan Powell du Toit

*Research Students Administrator*

Elizabeth Kohn

### Academic Services

*Registrar*

Simon Davies

*Acting Deputy Registrar*

Elisa Norris

*Academic Administrative & Overseas Liaison Officer*

Asanka Gunerathne

*Academic Administrative Officers*

Rebekah Croucher

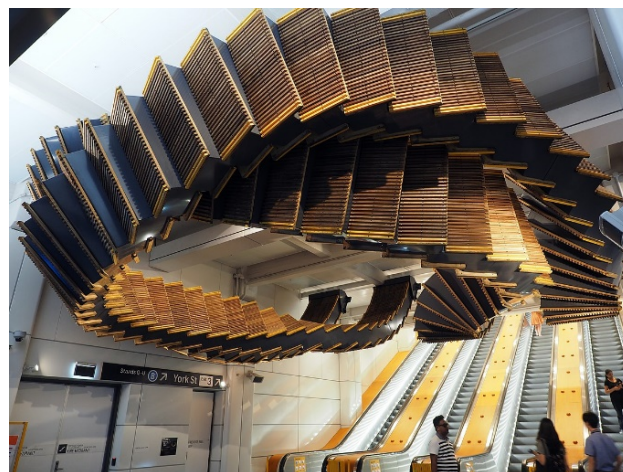
Coralie Scott

## ACT NEWS

### New Office

The ACT is just about to move to new larger premises in York St, Sydney. We can even enter into the building from just outside the gates at Wynyard Station. This is the sculpture train

commuters will see on their way in, a repurposing of the old escalators:



(picture from [here](#))

The new office is still being set up, so expect pictures of the new set up in the end of year NEXUS.

Our new address is Level 5/33 York St Sydney 2000. Phone numbers and email will remain the same, but as we move, it will be easier to contact us via email. We will be moved in by 7 June 2019.

### Baby Love

Our deputy registrar Diana is on maternity leave this year. She gave birth to her third child in February. Congratulations Diana and family. With Diana's usual dedication to work, she was at work in the morning, left to have her baby, and was ringing back on work matters that afternoon. Elissa Norris is currently acting as Deputy Registrar.

## COLLEGE NEWS: STAFF



There has been some staffing movement at our colleges.

Morling has restructured, and now have a senior leadership team under the Principal of Chief Academic Officer, David Starling, Chief Community Officer, Gayle Kent and Chief Financial Officer Peter McCrindle.

Christopher Green has just commenced on faculty at MST as Lecturer in Systematic Theology & Deputy of Postgraduate Studies.

John Dickson starts at Ridley in second semester as Distinguished Fellow and Senior Lecturer in Public Christianity.

## CONFERRALS

*Nov 2018 – May 2019*

### Doctor of Philosophy

Brent Belford, Ridley

Thesis: *Paul's Use of Fused Citations of Scripture: Literary Features, Hermeneutics, and Theology*

DongWoo Oh, Ridley

Thesis: *The Name, the Temple, and the People of the Lord: the Connection between the Name of The Lord and the Temple of the Lord*

Chris Porter, Ridley

Thesis: *Social Identity Formation in Temple Removed Environments – A Study of Johannine Social Construction*

### Master of Theology

Derek Hooper, BST

Thesis: *A look at the phrase πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη in Galatians 5:6 through the lens of the Two Ways Motif'*

David Mitchell, TTC

Thesis: *An exploration of the Son of Man in Mark's Gospel and its possible background in the Book of Ezekiel*

Ben Rae, TTC

Thesis: *Approaching Qohelet: The Role of הבל and the Narrative Frame in Understanding Ecclesiastes*

## PUBLICATIONS

### Consortium

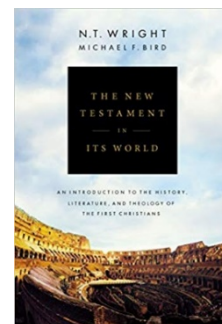
Faculty publication information is now available on the ACT [website](#). Links to purchase books can be found there.

### Department of Bible and Languages

G. Geoffrey Harper, "I Will Walk Among You" The Rhetorical Function of Allusion to Genesis 1–3 in the Book of Leviticus, Eisenbrauns, 2018.

N.T. Wright & Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Zondervan Academic, forthcoming) is now available for pre-order on [Amazon.com](#).

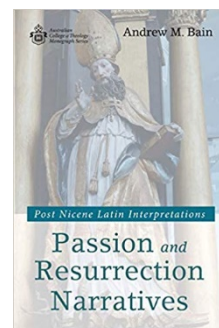
If any faculty would like a copy for inspection for class use please contact Harper Collins: [Joshua.Kessler@harpercollins.com](mailto:Joshua.Kessler@harpercollins.com)



### Department of Christian Thought and History

Bart J. Koet, Edwina Murphy, Esko Ryokas, eds, *Deacons and Diakonia in Early Christianity: The First Two Centuries*, Mohr-Siebeck, 2018.

Andrew M. Bain, *Passion and Resurrection Narratives Post Nicene Latin Interpretations*, ACT Monograph Series, Wipf & Stock, 2019.



Scott Harrower, *God of All Comfort: A Trinitarian Response to the Horrors of This World*, Lexham, 2019. Listen to Scott speak about it:

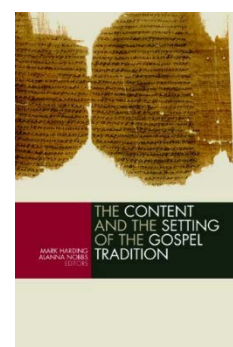


Michael Bird & Scott Harrower, *Trinity without Hierarchy: Reclaiming Nicene Orthodoxy in Evangelical Theology*, Kregel, 2019.

### Department of Ministry and Practice

Ian G. Duncum, *The Impact of Church Consultancy: Explore the Impact of One Model of Church Consultancy on Church Health and Church Growth in NSW/ACT Baptist Churches*, ACT Monograph Series, Wipf & Stock, 2019.

**Notice:** Several people asked me (Megan) to chase up a reprint of this book, which has been used in ACT classes. Working with the editors and the publisher, a reprint of the first book in the Harding/Nobbs NT series is again available for order.





[Mark Harding & Alanna Nobbs, \*The Content and the Setting of the Gospel Tradition\*, Eerdmans, 2010.](#)

If you would ever like me to chase up reprints of other books used in class, please let me know.

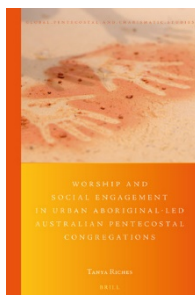
## Beyond

[Kevin Giles, \*What the Bible Actually Teaches on Women\*, Cascade, 2018.](#)

[Christopher Holmes, \*The Lord is Good: Seeking the God of the Psalter\*, IVP, 2018.](#)

[Tanya Riches, \*Worship and Social Engagement in Urban Aboriginal-led Australian Pentecostal\*](#)

[\*Congregations: \(Re\)imagining Identity in the Spirit\*, Brill, 2019.](#)



## CALLS FOR PAPERS

[The Future of Gospels and Acts Research: Discerning the Trends Centre for Gospels Research Conference](#), SCD, Sydney, 3-4 October 2019, Proposals due 1 June 2019.

[ANZATFE Biennial Conference 2019, expressions of interest for workshop presenting.](#) Send to Mark Johnston markkcm@gmail.com. Proposals due 28 June 2019.

[St Andrew's Third Theology Symposium, The Importance of Christology for the 21st Century](#), September 20-21, 2019 Proposals due 15 July 2019.

[The Center for Pastor Theologians Conference Student Paper Contest. Theme: A Christian Vision of Technology](#) Proposals due July 15, 2019.

[AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION CONFERENCE: Religion and Violence](#). Dec 5-6, 2019. Proposals due 1 August 2019.

Stimulus, the NZ Journal of Christian Thought & Practice is [open for submissions](#). It is published June and December each year.

## EVENTS

### Consortium

#### June

18 Morling, NSW

[Healing our Broken Humanity Public Lecture with Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Graham Hill](#)

### July

4-6 Morling, NSW

[Transforming Vocation - Work & Faith Conference](#)

5 Morling, NSW

[ACT Work & Faith dinner with Mark Greene](#)

9 RTC, VIC

[FRUITFULNESS ON THE FRONTLINE SEMINAR: Mark Greene](#)

11 MST, VIC

[EASTERN COLLEGE AUSTRALIA & MELBOURNE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY SEMINAR, Mark Greene](#)

12 QTC, QLD

[CHURCH LEADERS SEMINAR, Mark Greene](#)

13 QTC, QLD

[PUTTING YOUR FAITH TO WORK CONFERENCE, Mark Greene](#)

22 Morling, NSW

[Leadership in a Globalised World Forum Day with Darrell Jackson and Friends](#)

25-26 Morling, NSW

[Jo Saxton Leadership Conversations](#)

29 Morling, NSW

[Hermeneutics and Genesis 1-3 Forum Day with Andrew Sloane](#)

### August

3 Ridley, VIC

[Grounded: in the Body, in Time and Place, in Scripture - Evangelical Women in Academia Conference](#)

20-22 Ridley, VIC

[Salt and Light: Preaching the Sermon on the Mount: Mike Raiter and Alan Stanley](#)

### September

17 Ridley, VIC

[Remembering Stuff! Leon Morris Lecture in NT Studies, John Dickson](#)

### November

11 Morling, NSW

Matt Anslow "Farming as a missional option: a theology for the cabbage patch".

### Beyond

#### June

7-10 Uniting Centre for Theology & Ministry, VIC  
[History Conference: FINDING A HOME IN THE UNITING CHURCH, Meredith Lake, Joanna](#)



## Cruickshank

13 St James Institute, NSW

Letters from a Most Unlikely

Friendship: Monsignor Tony Doherty and Ailsa Piper

16-19 Catholic Leadership Centre, VIC

Spiritual Care Australia National Conference:

John Fisher, Bruce Rumbald, Sandy Leggat, Fiona Gardner

30 St James's Institute, NSW

The Spiritual Formation of Evelyn

Underhill: Dr Robin Wrigley-Carr

## **July**

1-3 Carey College, Auckland

ANZATS conference: Missional Theology

3 Garrison Church, NSW

LIVING AS A WHOLE-LIFE DISCIPLE, Mark Greene

7 St Alfred's Anglican, VIC

Mark Greene speaking in service

9 Campari House, VIC

FRUITFULNESS ON THE FRONTLINE

- LIFE@WORK DINNER. Mark Greene

11 ATHENAEUM CLUB, VIC

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY ADVANCEMENT

BREAKFAST, Mark Greene

12 TBD, QLD

CITY BIBLE FORUM BREAKFAST, Mark Greene

12-14 St Luke's Woy Woy, NSW

Vessels: Theology and the Arts Symposium: John McDowell

Dorothy Lee, Chris Bedding, Rod Pattenden

23-24 ACU Melbourne, VIC

International Conference on Comparative

Theology: Identities transformed or transgressed?

## **August**

1-3 Carey, NZ

The International Association of Youth Ministry Regional Conference

2 Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, NSW

AAMS: Fr Diego Sarrio Cucarella on Christian-Muslim relations

8 Moore, NSW

The Titus Strategy: A fresh look at learning the lessons of Titus, Richard Coekin

12 Moore, NSW

Is God Green? – Centre for Christian Living Event, Lionel Windsor

15 Yarra, VIC

Identity and Mission in Catholic Schools, Dr Michael Kelly

15, 19-23 Moore, NSW

Annual Moore College lectures - Gary Millar

23-25 Eva Burrows, VIC

Thought Matters Conference: Freedom to flourish

## **September**

11 Moore, NSW

School of Theology 2019

13-15 Eva Burrows, Vic

'A Curious Machine': Wesleyan Reflections on the Post-Human Future

19 Yarra Union, Vic

Dr Cormac Nagle | "Beauty as a Formative Principle of Moral Living."

21-22 St Andrews College, NSW

Theology Symposium: The Importance of Christology, Demetrios Barthellos, Gerald O'Collins

## **October**

3-4 SCD, NSW

Centre for Gospels Research Conference, Craig Keener & Dorothy Lee

17 Yarra Union, Vic

Dr Ross Fishburn | Ecclesiology in the current context

24 ACOM, NSW

Formation Gathering with James Bryan Smith

27 CSU, NSW

International Conference on Ageing & Spirituality

30 Moore, NSW

Priscilla & Aquila / Centre for Christian Living

## **November**

10 St James Institute, NSW

Faces of Christ: Depicting Christ in Art, Christopher Waterhouse

19-21 Laidlaw, NZ

ANZATFE Biennial: Conference 2019: ETHICS MATTER! Formation of ethically-responsible ministry

## **December**

5-6 Uni of Newcastle, NSW

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION CONFERENCE: Religion and Violence

7 St John's Balmain, NSW

Meeting God in Matthew: Advent Quiet Day, Christopher Waterhouse