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Where Have All the Fundamentalists Gone?

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Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

With two smart British historians—one from Oxford (Andrew) and one from Aberystwyth (David)—and one curious American pastor (Kevin), you might say that this episode puts the "fun" back in fundamentalism. How did fundamentalism become a pejorative putdown? Are evangelicals and fundamentalists really all that different? What is a fundamentalist anyway? And, to paraphrase Harry Emerson Fosdick, did the fundamentalists win or lose the last century? Join in as Kevin interviews two evangelical scholars about their new edited volume, *The Oxford Handbook of Christian Fundamentalism*.

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Books & Everything:

Oxford Handbook of Christian Fundamentalism

Ask Pastor John: 750 Bible Answers to Life's Most Important Questions

Look at the Book

Transcript

Greetings and salutations. Welcome to Life and Books and Everything. I'm Kevin D. Young, senior pastor at Christ Covenant Church in Matthews, North Carolina.

And I am joined by my two guests. They are doing well to share a couch or a chair this morning. I guess a couch.

Andrew Atherstone and David Jones, who have edited a new book, The Oxford Handbook of Christian Fundamentalism. I have several of these Oxford handbooks, which are a compilation of scholarly chapters and articles, and I very much enjoyed reading through this one. So Andrew and David, thank you for being on the program.

Thank you for having us. We're sitting in a room in Oxford. Very sunny early spring day here.

Oh, well, very fitting. So give a little bit of background for each of you. I've worked with both of you as you've edited some projects that I've done, and appreciate that, and I appreciate your writings and other areas.

You've done a lot of work in and around evangelicalism across a few different centuries. And now this is fundamentalism, not evangelicalism. And that's going to be a big part of that.

The questions that I want to ask you, but just give a little bit of background for each of you, and personally, and then why an interest in this topic? Maybe Andrew, start with you. My day job is teaching a little seminary, evangelical seminary in Oxford, part of the university here. It's called Wyck-Tiff Hall.

And we were founded back in Victorian times, mostly to train ministers for the Church of England. These days, we train ministers for all sorts of different churches and networks, and you can come here and do theology. So I've been teaching here for 16 years now, and I love researching the history of modern evangelicalism last couple of centuries or so.

Yeah, so David and I've collaborated several times on different projects, and this is the fourth book we've enjoyed doing together. So we've got a bit of teamwork going from between Oxford and Wales. Yeah, and David, give a little bit of your background and interest in this project.

Hi, I'm current, well, my current day job is a reader in early modern history at Aberystwyth University, which is as far west in Wales as it's possible to go without falling into the sea. I've been there for almost 35 years, first as an undergraduate student, and

I've never left, and I teach in a state university, I guess. It's the oldest university in Wales, and I teach early modern history mainly.

In terms of research, as Andrew said, we've collaborated over many years on a whole array of different projects, but my current work is on producing an edition of the letters of George Whitfield, and then I'm currently trying to finish writing history of evangelicalism in Wales in the 20th century and right up to the present day. So it's the last two or 300 years we live, evangelical history, with a particular focus on Wales, which I try to be as evangelical as possible about introducing Wales to the world. Very good.

So I wonder, I think I know the answer to this, but would either of you call yourselves a fundamentalist or an evangelical? Do you want to claim either of those labels? I would claim the label evangelical. It's understood in an English context, and a church of England context, which might translate differently across the Atlantic. It's one of the labels that my seminary uses in terms of our self-identity, we call ourselves the Evangelical College in Oxford.

And many of the history that I would identify with in terms of shaping my own story has been personalities like John Stott in the 1960s and 70s. Perhaps John Charles Ryle, the first bishop of Liverpool in the last century, Charles Simeon, that sort of tradition, which is the Evangelical tradition in the Church of England. So yeah, I'm very happy to embrace that, but fundamentalism as a label, not so much.

Yes, good. And we'll get into that and understood Evangelical in a British context. We will not impute to you any political presidential voting preferences here in the United States.

Very good. What about you, David? Yeah, I suppose I'd use the term Evangelical, preferably as well. Although I'm an ordained Anglican clergyman as well, my kind of background is in sort of Welsh non-conformity.

And if anyone, if I would see myself in any kind of tradition, it's the kind of Lloyd Jones, as Martin Lloyd Jones has been my kind of biggest influence having been brought up in his first church in South Wales. So that kind of looms large in my hinterland. But within that tradition of Welsh non-conformity, I'm an uneasy Anglican, really, by culture and perhaps conviction as well.

Very good. I suppose if you scratched enough, there'd be a bit of fundamentalism would come out quite, quite ready. Any Presbyterianism come out? No, there's just not many of those around.

You know, I was brought up in a Calvinistic Methodist church, which today is the Presbyterian Church of Wales, although the Evangelical presence in that denomination today is very limited. And the denomination itself really is struggling. It's not really much of a long term future in it.

But it was very much the church set up by the early Methodists in the 18th century Calvinistic Methodist in Wales. How will Harris, Stanley Rowland, and others? So I'm very much in that tradition, really. Good.

So let me start with a book other than yours, which we're going to get to, but in 2011, Colin Hanson and Andy Nacelli, who are both friends of mine, they edited a book here in the States on Evangelicalism. And it was a four-views book. And the first view was on fundamentalism by Kevin Bowder, who is a self-identifying fundamentalist.

And there just aren't, I find, there aren't that many of those around that I can find anymore. And we'll get to that. It's usually an epithet thrown at other people.

There aren't as many as there used to be. But I found this interesting. And since you know the scholarship, I wonder if you can comment on this and what you think the reasons are.

So here's how he begins his section. He says, imagine the difficulty of explaining fundamentalism in a book about evangelicalism. Fundamentalism is generally treated like cryptozoology of the theological world.

It need not be argued against, it can simply be dismissed. And then he says this, part of the fault lies with fundamentalist themselves. For a generation or more, they have produced few sustained expositions of their ideas.

Perhaps a certain amount of stereotyping is excusable and maybe even unavoidable. No fundamentalist has produced a critical history of fundamentalism, nor has any sustained scholarly theological explanation of core fundamentalist ideas available. And I found that fascinating as I was reading through your massive book and you just see the secondary literature, there's almost none of it written by fundamentalist.

It's by evangelicals or sometimes sort of ex-evangelicals or people not in the evangelical fold and very little from fundamentalist themselves. Do you think Kevin Bowder is right there in his assessment and why do you think that's the case? Such a dearth of resources from fundamentalist, fundamentalist themselves? Go ahead Andrew. I think that is, yeah, that is largely the case.

I mean, there are a number of histories inside a story from within the movement. Perhaps people working within history departments within fundamentalist Bible colleges who narrate the movement up into the middle of the 20th century and beyond. But they are few in number and I think it's more to do with the type of history that's being written rather than that those histories are not being written.

So there is plenty of literature being produced within the fundamentalist world and fundamentalist colleges, whether it has what we would want to try and bring in terms of critical distance and an ability to self-critique. I think that's probably missing from that

literature. And you're quite right as well that very few people want to assume this badge of identity for themselves.

In England, few in number, you might think of someone like Peter Masters, who was at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, Spurgeon's famous pulpit, who would have self-described in fundamentalist terms and say it's an important part of being a classic evangelical. And in the North America, of course, you do have self-styled fundamentalist churches, fundamentalist Baptist churches, but those are few in number. And perhaps it is to do with a story we partly narrate of withdrawing from academic culture, withdrawing a little bit from the history guild, means that there are not a large number of historians doing that work themselves, which they were more.

And in your opening chapter, which the two of you, Chapter 1, defining and interpreting Christian fundamentalism, which is a really great overview. As in any work this big, there were some chapters that I found myself resonating with more than others. And some might say, I want to push back on that.

This first chapter, I think you've done a really nice job of laying out the literature, and obviously you're the experts, not me, but you mentioned, for example, Pope Francis dismissed fundamentalism as quote, a sickness that is in all religions, and you could multiply that sort of language. I just found this yesterday on Twitter, or X, someone had tweeted this in 2022, but then it was retweeted yesterday, so it came up on my feed and it said, fundamentalism is not what we believe, it's how we hold our beliefs. And this person gives seven characteristics of fundamentalism, absolutism and knowledge, self-righteous in spirit, combative in dialogue, us versus them, demonizing other groups, policing ideological borders, using shame to ostracize.

Well, if that's fundamentalism, who would want to be a fundamentalist? David, what do you do when you encounter, as you did often, those sorts of definitions? What is a better definition, and is there some truth in what these very pejorative descriptions are giving to us? I think a lot of the literature on fundamentalism, a lot that's been written about fundamentalism, tends to adopt that kind of approach. And as we've already said, to use the term as a sort of tip of the iceberg as much as anything else. And I think it was George Morrison in his book in 1980 who talked about a fundamentalist being an evangelical who's angry about something.

And fundamentalism has not been so much about specific beliefs, as about how those beliefs are handled and how fundamentalists relate to other evangelicals or Christians of different persuasion. So it's an attitudinal thing rather than a theological set of beliefs, if you like. And I think there's an element of truth to that.

And you can see perhaps the way the term is used, the term fundamentalist is used beyond Christian fundamentalism. Atheist fundamentalists, for example, Richard Dawkins of this world, who would take that kind of aggressive, anti-attitude against

belief in his case. But it taps into that idea of fundamentalists being a competitive, angry, belligerent, and not being the defining characteristic of the movement rather than any specific belief or set of beliefs.

And I think the seven new mentions of encapsulate that really, all of them say the same thing really in that sense. So David, how did you explain this project to colleagues or friends who said, oh, you're doing a book on Christian fundamentalism. So what's Christian fundamentalism or who are the fundamentalists? How did you answer that either historically, theologically, what's your boilerplate definition? I think that's quite difficult to read in stone, isn't it? Because those boundaries between sort of evangelicals and fundamentalists are so porous, then what we've tried to do in the book is to represent a whole range of views to explore that boundary between the two movements and then to see fundamentalists as perhaps on the fringe of the evangelical movement as such.

But I think it's very difficult to reduce fundamentalism down to a simple definition. And maybe Andrew, you want to add? Well, I think one of the things we've tried to do is to hold the ring for that conversation. So rather than offering, either in the whole volume or offering to our contributors, this is the sense of people that we're studying.

Actually, it's a fluid movement. It's a highly contested movement. And one of the interesting things is that conversation is itself interesting.

So that conversation over how people construct their own identities, how they describe themselves, how they express their theologies, partly the content of those theologies, but also the kind of cultural shaping with which it comes. That in itself deserves historical analysis. So rather than offering a five point summary of what fundamentalism is, rather what we've done is we've brought together multiple different ways of looking at the question that different sociologists and historians have done.

And so what interesting things are revealed by that conversation in terms of how people like to view themselves. And as you say, no one likes to subdue themselves as angry or belligerent or those sorts of things. Those are derisive things.

And as a historian, therefore you have to say you need to critique the person who's trying to use the language in a derisive manner and say why would they want to do that? What are the polemical strands of the question which run through the whole volume? I guess there are some fundamentalists who wouldn't want to be associated as belligerent, isn't it? Exactly. And you think of an example like Ian Baysley in Northern Ireland who almost prided himself on being belligerent and aggressive and outspoken. And it was almost part of the identity, isn't it? So some fundamentalists embrace that as well, but not all.

But then you compare that to Kevin Boudier and his chapter you've just mentioned,

which is a bane, thoughtful, theological, winsome, using the same label, but totally different characteristics. Yeah, and in Kevin's chapter at the second half, he has seven characteristics which are almost the same as that tweet that I just read, but he calls it hyper fundamentalism. So he's saying, well, that's the bad kind of fundamentalism, but that's not what real fundamentalism ought to be.

And I think you've highlighted it well in the book. The further back you go, it's a little easier. I mean, still the boundaries are porous, but you did have more of the fundamentals, of course, that series of articles and books came out.

So there are people who identify the closer you get to our current time, it gets a little trickier. So two examples I underlined in the book. One, you talk about the Nashville statement, which was written here in Nashville, Tennessee, and I wasn't at the drafting meeting, but a lot of people I know were, and I had, you know, was sort of a little involved with it and signed it.

And I think one of the chapters, so this is a statement on sexuality and kind of up-to-date on LGBT issues. And I think one of the chapters says, although not all of the signers would identify as fundamentalists. And I thought, I'm not sure any of the signers identify as fundamentalists.

Or in Brian Stanley's very good chapter, excellent messiologist. You know, he says he's working with the definition of a fundamentalist impulse, which in missions it views people who haven't heard and put their conscious mind. And I think that's what most Christians throughout history have believed about evangelism in the lost.

And so how did you interact with your contributors? You said you gave them some latitude, which makes sense. What sort of back and forth did you have among yourselves about what constitutes a conflict? An appropriate person, institution, idea, under this label of fundamentalism? I think one of the amusing things I found when the chapters started coming in, in this respect, particularly from our US-based contributors, was that many of them took the opportunity to tell us that they didn't vote for Donald Trump. And so I just really began to analyze, you know, especially those chapters that had a more political edge to them.

There was a very definite wish to distance themselves from some aspects of the evangelical sloped fundamentalist movement. So there's a lot of, you know, that's less the case with British contributors. But obviously a lot of our contributors felt the need to self-identify in the chapters as well, and to distance themselves from what they regarded as some of the more negative connotations of fundamentalism.

And obviously the Trump presidency was live at the time that we were receiving chapters as well. So that was kind of an interesting thing that was going on with some of them in terms of how people were identified. And also encouraging contributors to keep

the borders and the boundaries porous, and not to approach their material with a particular grid, which says they are worthy of study in this chapter and other folk or not.

But the way in which fundamentalism and perhaps conservative evangelicalism merge into each other and overlap quite a lot, and just allowing that to sit in some of the chapters. So I mean, I think this is why this project compared to some of the other projects that David and I are working in together, it's of a piece because you could say much of this book is about evangelical history, a particular sort of conservative evangelical history, rather than something different. It's not like a separate subject.

There's a huge amount of overlap there. So we might push back on a chapter which drew the boundaries too neatly and said, you know, this is one thing and that's the other. I have a creative conversation that those bounce up against each other.

I was very struck, for example, in the book that you already mentioned with the Kevin Bowder chapter, how his dialogue with Albert Mueller in the same book actually they have a huge amount in common and speak those two chapters very kind of warmly of each other as being common cause in a way in which some of the other branding is, I think, which we mustn't draw too hard and fast from a historical angle. You just need to investigate what's in front of you. So in the British world, there's a great chapter in here, for example, on magazines within the fundamentalist world, but it takes a count of things like the Banner of Truth magazine published in Edinburgh from the Banner of Truth, just the Martin Lloyd-Jones stable.

Now they wouldn't themselves use that language. It's just a classic evangelical or conservative evangelical publishing house. But you don't want to cut the pie too sharply, otherwise you have a very narrow field of vision.

And sometimes people are assumed to be fundamentalist, called by that name, who would not be themselves and who would not define themselves in that way. And so it's a difference between self-identification and how people are perceived in the media. So be like, our molar we've already mentioned would be a classic example of that, isn't it? Yeah, so yeah, very fascinating.

And I'm sure there are a number of people out there who would say Kevin DeYoung is a fundamentalist, because even though I've never owned that label, and I try to be careful to not use it as an epithet, either. I had a friend of mine early on in something that I had written. I used as basically a synonym.

I just had a series of adjectives describing someone as, you know, close-minded, rigid, narrow, fundamentalist, and just did that. And somebody rightly said, now hold on a minute, you may not be a fundamentalist, but I know some people who claim to be fundamentalist, and they don't own all of those other adjectives. So you simply can't drop it in.

I know many people do. But I appreciate that you're trying to say that may fit some or many of the fundamentalist exponents proponents over the years, but not all, and it's not how most people want to identify. I've found particularly fascinating in your opening chapter, the engagement with Stott, who I would gather is, you know, someone that all three of us have benefited from, and his books and sermons, and appreciate.

But you talk about how Stott in a sort of typical, should we say, third way, wanted to get liberals, fundamentalist, evangelicals. So evangelicals are the good guys in the middle. So on page 11 in your opening chapter, you talk about some of these eight identifying characteristics which Stott wished to repudiate a suspicion of scholarship, a mechanical view of dictation theory, a superstitious reverence for the King James, literalistic interpretation, separatist ecclesiology, cultural imprisonment, a denial of the social implications of the gospel, pre-millennial eschatology.

So, yeah, that resonates with how I think many people understand the difference between fundamentalism and evangelical. You said earlier, you know, Marston's was, a fundamentalist is an evangelical who's angry about something. And I think you give the other kind of quip in the other direction, you know, an evangelical is a fundamentalist with good manners.

So how, say a little bit more about Stott's lecture here, what was the context for it? And I imagine that has proved to be very influential in Britain. I think it's the same basic idea that many people would have here in the States. Talk about Stott's role in defining these boundaries.

I think it's fascinating, and he's been really hugely influential for the evangelical movement, as you say, in Britain, in particular. And in the Church of England, the network that I'm part of, I think it goes back to the visit of Billy Graham to Cambridge University in 1955 for the triennial mission of the Cambridge Intercollegiate Christian Union, a famous event at which the evangelicals in the University of Cambridge invited this American preacher, American revivalist in, and it kicked off, through the British press, a massive sorority about why you should allow an American to preach to, what are considered to be the elite of the young British intelligentsia at the University of Cambridge. And lots of letters written to the press, to the Times newspaper, for example, by bishops and archbishops denouncing this idea, and positioning the evangelicals who had invited Billy Graham as fundamentalists, as illiterate, as unintelligent, or all of those sorts of things shouldn't be allowed in a university setting.

And I think that's very shaping for John Stott. So John Stott spends much of the rest of his career trying to explain why he's an intelligent sort of evangelical, not a fundamentalist. So it's a case of public relations, really.

I think his ain't points that you've put down there are not so much a theological or historical definition of fundamentalism. But they are self-defense. It's John Stott saying

these are the things that me and my movement are not like.

It kicked off again 20 years later when Professor Barr, here at the University of Oxford, published his famous book called fundamentalism. And he wasn't critiquing anyone in the US. He was critiquing British evangelicals, especially within the Inter-Varsity Fellowship or the ISD's movement.

He self-identifies evangelical, but he's saying that you are your separatists, you won't work with liberals in your missions, you are in erances, you have great suspicion of biblical criticism in terms of your handling of scripture. This is basic fundamentalism. And Stott has to come back and push back and say no, no, because if you accept the language of fundamentalism, you cut off your public platform.

As Kevin Bowder says, you'll be immediately dismissed. So those eight points developed from a conversation he has with a man called David Edwards from Westminster Abbey in London, from liberal Anglicanism. And Stott is trying to show that he can't be dismissed.

He needs to be taken seriously. The evangelical voice needs to be heard. But I see it as basically PR rather than good history or theology.

And David, I'd love for you to connect the dots. I know you've both done work on Lloyd Jones, but how does Lloyd Jones fit into this story? Of course, Stott and Lloyd Jones famously have their public split. I mean, there was some personal reproachment later, but is Lloyd Jones seen as more of a fundamentalist? Allah, you know, vis-a-vis, Stott? Or how do the lines fall out between those two who are in many ways, you know, maybe along with Dick Lucas, the three key leaders in British evangelicalism in the second half of the 20th century? I think there's a fair bit of scholarship on Lloyd Jones that would seek to portray him as more fundamentalist, or the fundamentalist wing of British evangelicalism.

And particularly in terms of the separatist issue from 1966 and afterwards. And if separatism is a key feature of fundamentalism, then certainly Lloyd Jones was calling for churches to in some form or other separate from liberals within various denominations. So in that sense, perhaps there's a more obvious resonance with fundamentalism.

But somebody like Lloyd Jones was also schooled in sort of traditional Calvinism. And so that high regard for scholarship and the reform tradition that he kind of sat in, always kind of militated against the involvement in fundamentalist organizations, you know, he famously distanced himself from Billy Graham as well. And that kind of fundamentalist evangelism, and obviously he was also distanced of himself from Graham's policy of having non-Vangeligos on platforms with him as well.

But certainly that became then that division within British evangelicalism between those who remain in denominations and those who stay out, or sorry, those who leave

denominations becomes a major fisher within the British movement with a lot of accrimination between the two groups. And an assumption perhaps amongst those who stayed in, that those who separated succumb to a kind of fundamentalist mindset, really, fundamentally an impulse in effect. One of, I think it's fair to say, Stott's, if not disciples, certainly someone who was very influenced by Stott was Tim Keller here in the States, and Tim was influential in Britain as well.

And Tim, of course, has gone on to his reward, and Tim was a friend of mine. And though we had some candid disagreements about some things, and I know that this would have been one of them. Tim Rowe, I think you, I looked at the index, and Tim Keller was referenced one time in the book, which makes sense, he wasn't a scholar of fundamentalism, and probably when you were working on the book, some of the things he had written hadn't yet come out.

But one of the last things he wrote was a series of articles trying to understand what it looks like to renew evangelicalism. And in there, he compares evangelicalism and fundamentalism, and it's very stoddy in. I wonder if he was just cribbing the notes from Stott.

So he says, these social marks between evangelicalism and fundamentalism. So the more you move toward, you know, the first of these pairs is the bad one, moving more towards fundamentalism. He says, moralism versus gracious engagement, individualism versus social reform, dualism versus a vision for all of life, anti-intellectualism versus scholarship, anti-institutional versus accountability, and in culturation versus cultural reflection.

Well, of course, the second of those words are the good ones. So we've talked a little bit about how these definitions take shape, and you said, you know, some of what Stott's doing there was kind of a PR. I mean, I think the negative weight would be to say, trying to say, thank God, I'm not like those other Christians.

A more positive way would say, look, I'm trying to reach secular people with the gospel. And so if I'm saddled with these sort of definitions, it's not going to help me reach people with the gospel. So I understand there's two different ways to look at it.

How have you seen maybe looking more at the history and the development of fundamentalism in the first half of the 20th century? To what degree do you think these more negative definitions were fair? Were there people who really did, you know, they were very anti-institutional, anti-scholarship, anti-intellectual? Was that a lot of the movement, some of the movement? Andrew, how do you see especially the first half of the 20th century reflecting or not these kind of Stott Keller definitions of fundamentalism? I certainly think it's true that the more you investigate somebody, the more you realize that they might not be a fundamentalist after all. So we perhaps have a caricature or someone and you think, well, there's a fundamentalist and therefore

they're definitely a fundamentalist. I'm going to research them.

And the more you go into their opinions, their teaching, you will find quite a lot of nuance, you'll find thoughtfulness, you'll find a reception of biblical criticism, all of those sorts of things, perhaps not on the surface, but when you get to know somebody better. So you might say fundamentalists keep on disappearing in the mist and you end up just realizing you're working on another evangelical. So in the early 20th century, of course, the fundamentals, which give the fundamentalism its name, published in the 1910s famously, are classic evangelical statements.

The sorts of people writing there would simply be identified as evangelical theologians, evangelical missionaries, some evangelical celebrities, somebody like C.T. Studd from those days heading into B.B. Warfield. I mean, he wasn't. Exactly.

And what's in the fundamentals is sometimes quite surprising. How fundamentalist some of the fundamentals actually are. You look at the chapter on creation and the acceptance of evolution within that.

So something that became a badge of creationism becoming a badge of fundamentalism later on, wasn't in the fundamentals, which is quite interesting as well. In the early 20th century, you'll often find splits between evangelicals and in the evangelical movement. So in the United Kingdom, for example, you have the Church Missionary Society, has a big conversation in the 1910s and early 20s over biblical criticism, the reality of an eternal hell and the inerrancy of scripture, those sorts of themes.

They fall out of it big time and end up in two groups, the Church Missionary Society and the Bible Church Missionary Society. And the more liberal group will always think of the other as fundamentalist. But there's always somebody more conservative than you are.

So you tend to identify yourself as evangelical position and the whole conservative person. So I mean, I think as soon as you start studying their biographies, part of the gifts of biographers to be sympathetic of the person you're looking at, you end up realizing, yeah, they need to be interpreted much more roundly. And perhaps they're evangelicals like everybody else rather than fundamentalist.

Yeah, that's an interesting way of putting it, of disappearing in the midst. I want to come back to that. And maybe fitting here, I have two ads to give for the program and they both have to do with John Piper, who would be considered by many a fundamentalist.

Though I know John, he was raised by a fundamentalist father. And so he is loath to be uncritically pejorative of the term. And yet he doesn't identify that way.

But here we go from crossway. I want to mention the ask pastor John book that Tony Ranky has put together 750 Bible answers to life's most important questions. I wrote a blurb for this book.

It's a very handsomely put together book. It's very impressive. It's Tony condensing 750 of these questions that John's done over the years on the ask pastor John podcast.

So I think Piper said something like he was making up for all those years of not having enough application in his sermon. So there they are in this book. So thank you to crossway.

And then also mention desiring God. John has been doing for a number of years these online Bible study videos called look at the book where he exposit a text in about 10 minutes. It's kind of like a con academy.

And so you can go to YouTube or desiring God.org and John's goal is to work through all of Paul's letters as the Lord gives him life and strength to complete that. So thank you to crossway and to desiring God. Both of those are great resources.

I want to ask you both and you can just pick one of you can talk about one one can talk about the other. But these are two different chapters in the book and I know not chapters you wrote but they seem to be very big demarcation lines in understanding fundamentalism. So one is the scopes trial.

And then one is who we've already talked a little bit about Billy Graham. So I'd love to have you talk about what were the shaping influences positive or negative in fundamentalism from these two events. So one of you can start with the scopes trial.

What was it and have we misunderstood has the mythology overtaken the actual facts of what happened? Yeah, the scopes trial is as kind of taking on a life of its own, isn't it? As the kind of famous movement in fundamentalist history and formation and particularly in terms of the popular perception of fundamentalists as turning their backs upon science and scholarship and all of those kinds of things. But obviously when some of the things like we've already said really in terms of wise creationism came to be seen as one of the defining features of fundamentalism. One of the things that is quite obvious in the book is that that was a contested subject area as well interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis.

There were such a variety of views on that and it was only later after sports and after the caricature of fundamentalists as kind of issuing belief in evolution came to be normative that those boundaries perhaps hardened up much more than they were particularly in the fundamentals themselves in the 1920s, early 1910s. Yeah, go ahead. In terms of Billy Graham picking up that story later on he of course is involved in trying to distance himself from some of that background.

So the Scopes trial has dominated public discourse about more conservative forms of your angelicalism and fundamentalism. And you have novels like Alma Gantry famously which everyone is reading which is the typical picture now of a fundamentalist revivalist

who is certainly not well educated by university standards but also is perhaps manipulative and after seeking after women seeking after money. And you have all of these sort of conversation in public discourse what is someone like Billy Graham going to do in order to make his platform more effective as you say in reaching those who have come.

You have got to distance yourself from that story somehow. You have got to put clear blue water between you and the caricatures that are in circulation in public discourse about fundamentalism. And so Billy Graham although he has much of that background, dairy farming in South Carolina and then Wheaton College for his anthropology major, those sorts of things has to try to rebrand himself now as a neo evangelical perhaps or a more obeying character than what has been said and is what is in the caricature.

And that's a really interesting conversation taking place in the 1950s and 60s just at the same time as John Stoshes having to do that on this side of the Atlantic. Billy Graham is doing it on that side of the Atlantic. And many of his more fundamentalist friends or his older friends criticise him strongly for the trajectory that he's taking, especially now his non-separatist attitudes.

The fact that he'll work right across the breadth of evangelicalism, he'll work with more liberal evangelicals. He'll also then begin to work with liberals who don't identify as evangelicals at all, even in later years having Roman Catholics on the platform. And some of his older friends said that he was treating liberalism in the wrong way in a famous magazine article that he's going to the grisly bear of liberalism with a pot of honey in order to try and tame it and have a conversation and sit down together with the grisly bear.

And what he needs to do is get the double barrow shotgun and attack it as his fundamentalist roots might have done. So there you get something of that theological contest which is happening. Yes, you can change the language.

That's all well and good. But if you start putting theological clearly water between classic evangelicalism and your new position, you haven't just changed the language or the branding, you've actually changed the substance of where you're coming from. And that's been a very lively conversation and still runs and runs today.

Yeah, I'm interested to hear more about that. So when I moved from Michigan up in the north to Charlotte here in the south, about seven years ago, it's 20 miles away from here is the Billy Graham Library and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. They moved one of his farmhouses that was out in the country.

They actually picked it up and moved it, put it in so you can go and you can walk through the farmhouse and then he and Ruth are buried here in Charlotte. So this is Billy Graham country. And I would say that most of the people I encounter, you know,

probably all of the Christians I encounter around here think of Billy Graham fondly.

They think of Billy Graham as he preached the gospel. He was an evangelist. He, you know, preached Jesus, all of which is true.

That there is, as you've hinted at though, there's a more negative interpretation. I'm thinking of Ian Murray's book from 15, 20 years ago Evangelicalism divided, who has more of that mindset of, well, Billy Graham partnered with liberals and Roman Catholics. And that was a very negative part of his legacy.

And I'm, I'm, I'm sympathetic to a number of Ian Murray's critiques there, even as I appreciate the overall ministry that Billy Graham did. What, what is the, does Billy Graham have, have name recognition still in Britain? Are those, was Ian Murray's book widely read? It was certainly widely read in kind of conservative Calvinist circles here in the States. It was, it was passed around quite a bit.

And because, you know, many of us have appreciated Ian's work in the banner for, for years. So there's a built-in audience. How, how, how was that argument received? And is that still a live conversation in Britain? I think, I think Ian Murray's work, in particular, is very influential amongst, certainly non-Anglican, certain evangelicals, less so, perhaps, some of us Anglicans, Andrew? Probably.

Or would I be wrong in that? He, Ian's books have a good angle to readership, but, but perhaps a smaller one. Yeah. So, so there is that, you know, image is divided and obviously Ian Murray is works under the shadow of Lloyd Jones.

So the critique of Billy Graham, it comes directly from Lloyd Jones's own distance of himself from Billy Graham. You know, they remain on good terms personally. And I think Lloyd Jones thought very highly of Billy Graham, but wouldn't associate in the 1950s in the Harrogate Crusades.

For example, wouldn't have end to do with that publicly. Famously prayed from the puppet of Westminster Chapel about the brethren down the road, and wishing God's blessing on them without ever naming Billy Graham by name. And I think certainly amongst more conservative evangelicals in the UK, and perhaps particularly free church non-conformist evangelicals, the kind of world I, I come from, Billy Graham would be regarded with considerable suspicion.

And as somebody who perhaps diluted elements of evangelicalism because of his associations. And certainly, once you had this, this, the secession within British evangelicalism in the 1960s, there was always that charge that was bandied about by those who had seceded from the denominations that those who stayed were guilty by association with their liberal co-anteums or co-vaptists or whatever the case might be. And I think that fear then that by associating with non-evangelicals, Graham and others

who did the same were in some way compromising the purity of evangelicalism.

So I think for those really, you know, conservative circles, Billy Graham would be regarded with some affection. You're one of the people converted to Billy Graham Crusades who then go on to distance themselves from, from him. It's quite remarkable, really.

You don't have to look far for, for some of these conservative ministers who ride against Graham, actually being converted at Graham Crusades as well. Yeah, you may know that Carl Truman, fellow Brit here in the States, he was converted at a Billy Graham, per se. And I've not, yeah.

So let me switch gears a little bit and forgive me for asking an American centric question, but that's what I am. So, you know, some of the chapters toward the end talk a lot about politics and they hit on American politics, and that's where the lines between evangelical fundamentalists can be very porous. And I confess, I found myself underlining and wanting to push back on some of the things some of the contributors were saying in those chapters, which maybe makes me fundamentalist adjacent or something.

But how do you, you can answer this personally or you can answer it as scholars or just thinking. I imagine that the American political scene, as bound up as it is with evangelical identity, and there's tons written about it, and actually you find that many people who claim evangelical on a poll, a survey, actually don't go to church very often at all, but it's become, sadly, a political nomenclature as much as a theological or religious one. How do you view what I sometimes hear my British friends have two kinds of responses.

One set is, wow, American evangelicals are, you are so overly political, and I can't believe how bound up you are in this political process and in almost idolatrous. And then the other hand, some British friends will say, well, I'm glad you still have a large contingent that will speak against abortion, or you have a political party that still stands for a number of traditional moral Christian principles, you might say, and maybe someone can hold both of those. How do you view the American political evangelical intertwining dynamic, which is very different from Britain? I promise you to speak freely.

I've been reading the last week or so, Tim Alberta's new book, *The Kingdom, The Power and the Glory*. It travels around various evangelical churches, and which I found quite revealing in terms of the close alliance, lots of these evangelical churches he goes to, there's very little gospel, but the idea of the Christian nation and Trump as the savior of Christian America has almost replaced the gospel in what a lot of these churches seem to be preaching. And whether that's just his own perspective and the kinds of places he's going, how typical that is, is how to judge from one book, but certainly that close alignment of America as a Christian nation, and Trump as the savior of that ideal seems

to have become one and the same thing with much of evangelicalism in the US.

And really it's a few additional chapters in our book would be quite useful on that, on the more recent developments as well. We finished the book slightly too early perhaps to capture some of those things. I think Tim is go ahead Andrew.

I was just going to say one of the striking things about this subject is the cultural purchase and interest they raise in, fundamentalism or more conservative brands of evangelicalism, punching above its weight in terms of that conversation to do with politics and culture and education and sexuality and the high quarter and the rest of it. As we've said, a minority of people identify with this language and yet it might be quite a small movement, yet it punctures big in terms of the national and the international conversation. We've had some interesting dynamics putting this book together, both of us from a British context, actually most of our contributors from an American context.

And it's striking how quickly the American political scene moves. So many of the chapters arrived in early 2021, first drafts, and we were saying, well, we need this book still to be relevant in four or five years time. So don't mention Donald Trump so much because he's old news by the time he'll be gone.

He'll be gone. And of course, it's not the case. Or Andrew Lewis's chapter on abortion, he's a specialist in the history of abortion legislation and produce an excellent first version.

And then of course just as we were in the production process, Roe versus Wade is overturned, major political news and you have to rewrite the chapter, which he kindly did to bring that up to date. So very fast moving fields. I've also found the other way.

I did some studies of people who've left fundamentalism or evangelicalism and is quite striking how strongly they use the language of evangelicalism on fundamentalism as the movement they've departed because they know it will sell books and it has political purchase. They then describe themselves as former charismatic or former Pentecostals. No one's interested in that book.

But if you're an exemangelical or a former fundamentalist, then because of this political power that the movement has, you get readers. Yeah, I wanted to ask you about that and that's a good segue to, you know, I think the penultimate chapter that you wrote on escaping fundamentalism and you're certainly right. There's a quite a booming cottage industry of books, both personal memoirs.

I left evangelicalism. I left fundamentalism. And also the larger of which Tim Alberta's I think is a better version of those books.

Actually, Tim, I haven't met him before, but he grew up just about 45 minutes down the road from the church I was pastoring in Michigan and his dad was pastored a large

Presbyterian church and later in life, you know, before he passed away a few years ago, kind of ran a foul of some of the Trump insurgency. And so I know that that's in some of Tim's background and I think what he's spotting certainly exists and he's right to highlight the troublesome things that exist. Many of us would question how prevalent that really is, how mainstream, you know, and to your point, many of the, you know, the really egregious, just weird examples are more hyper charismatic kinds of churches, but that doesn't get the same purchase as putting the evangelical label on it.

So Andrew, go ahead, David. It's the weakness of the book in a sense is you don't, he never discusses how he takes the sample of churches. So you never really get a sense or he's not critical enough, self-critical enough to critique the sample of churches that he's chosen.

So you never really get a sense of how typical they really are. That's right. And you assume that all evangelical churches are like the ones that he is, that he's writing about.

And I'm guessing that book will have much greater readership than our book probably, you know, and that will shape people's perception much more than a book that costs as much as our book does. Really? Yeah. His book has been very high.

I mean, I think it's been in the top 100 of Amazon books for some time. And there's, and it will mostly be, I think, mostly be non-Christians who read it, or those who find confirmed their suspicions that these Christians have gone bonkers with some of them spew Christian and conservative, Baptist, Presbyterian, free church churches, are doing the things and believing the things and going about the business of being good Christians like most Christians do. I wonder what you found, Andrew, in your chapter, what led you to write that chapter, escaping fundamentalism, you know, dealing with some of these ex-evangelical memoirs and anything surprise you in researching that? I was led to it partly by an Amazon search initially of hit terms to do with fundamentalism and realizing how much of the literature is being produced are not historical, sociological analyses, but are personal stories.

Everyone loves an autobiography or a biography, and everyone has a story to tell. So the number of voices, I think, is being multiplied. It's becoming a whole genre of itself.

There have been excess stories from Christian faith for centuries, of course. That's quite typical. But excess stories from fundamentalism, self-defined, has really been increasingly prominent since the 1970s, and I suggest since the 2000s as well, for numbers of reasons, partly because publishers are more looking for those voices, partly because it allows women's voices to come to the fore much more in terms of some of those stories.

That's been a very striking trend. Last year I was writing a book on the alpha evangelistic movement, and spent a lot of time reading conversion stories, so hundreds and

hundreds of accounts of people describing their Christian identity and how they come to it. And then, at the same time, reading this other material of deconversion stories, I found it, yes, historically fascinating, but also theologically and pastorally deeply challenging of the number of people who've expressed being hurt by the church, not being allowed to breathe theologically by the congregations that they're in, or witnessing the hypocrisy of the church at close quarters, which put them off the gospel, many accounts of people with fundamentalist parents.

Now, of course, most children kick against their parents in different ways. But there's a whole bunch of lessons in there, partly about why people exist, more conservative forms of faith. But also I think lessons there for pastors and parents and congregations in how to help people who are wrestling with those questions, rather than chasing them away.

And pastorally, it is challenging because you'll have someone who gives this kind of narrative, and when you press into the details, you realize, no, you had normal, imperfect, faithful parents. You had a church that was normal, faithful, imperfect, and you've created a story of trauma that doesn't really exist. And on the other hand, you press into some stories and you realize, oh, my, you were severely mistreated.

And the word abuse really does apply in this situation. And whatever you call it, fundamentalism or hyper fundamentalism, that was a controlling authoritarian environment. So, you know, I need to remember as a pastor and just encourage any other pastors listening.

You know, ask people, if you find these people in your churches, because that's what we want to deal with first and foremost, just ask lots of questions. Be curious, be inquisitive. Don't assume that the presenting narrative has to be the final word, but don't presume that it is a scam either.

We just don't know until we ask some of these questions. People genuinely can be very hurt in the church, and we want to own that. We want to help people work through it.

I wondered if there was a, if this was intentional, I've found it interesting. So you have your chapter, second to last chapter, escaping fundamentalism. And then the very last chapter is globalized fundamentalism, almost as if at the same time while some people are, you know, leaving it, at the other hand, we have to recognize this is not going away.

This, whether you call it conservative evangelicalism or fundamentalism, it is a worldwide phenomenon. Did you try to put those two chapters like that to try to give a sense for both truths? I think two chapters that look forward, really, was the key is that look to the future of fundamentalism, rather than the sort of backward-looking chapters, the historical chapters, I should say, that most of them happen to be. And the story of fundamentalism globally is growth, not of not shrinkage in many parts of the global south, of course.

So we've just hit the first century of the language of fundamentalism, coined as a word in 1920. So in the 2020s, we're into the second century, and it has a century and more before it to come. You know, it's not just the century that's been.

What Mark Hutchinson argues in that very final chapter is that because of the globalization of this movement in all sorts of contexts, think of Nigeria, think of Singapore, think of South America, where conservative evangelical Christianity is strong and is booming, it's going to break down the categories of definition of these movements with which we've been used to over the last decades, narrating it from an Anglo-American, northern hemisphere world, we have these neat categories. And he argues very much in that chapter, absolutely. Fundamentalism is burgeoning, it's growing, it's increasingly globalized, but therefore, back to where we began this conversation, that the boundaries need to be rethought, and perhaps the whole category needs to be reexamined from a brand new perspective in the 2020s and beyond.

So that's a good place to circle back to the very beginning, and I'll read this, and this can be your last question. Thank you so much for staying on this whole hour. You say in your opening chapter, this is page five, the Christian Protestant fundamentalism that is the focus of this handbook can be traced back to the publication of 12 volumes of essays between 1910 and 1915, the Iranian oil tycoon, Lyman Stewart.

The fundamentals covered a broad range of themes, theological, devotional, practical, although not all took the strictly conservative line. And then you say five key points of doctrine were identified as under particular assault by the liberal and modernistic theology of the day, so one, the inerrancy of the Bible, two, the divinity of Christ, three, his virgin birth, four, his physical resurrection, and five, the literal truth of Jesus' miracles. So if you think about fundamentalism as those being five of the most important fundamentals historically to this whole project, I come back to the question that Harry Emerson Fosdick famously preached in 1923, shall the fundamentalist win, and I look at those five qualities, theological commitments, and I think to myself, well, maybe the fundamentalist did win.

I think you can make a case, at least in Anglo-American setting, that culturally and society, the fundamentalist, you could argue, lost. I mean, they are not the dominant elite purchasing power. And yet, in terms of the actual churches that still have people and are growing, you'd be hard pressed to, I know inerrancy has some different shades of meaning and even Britain and America, but just say that the total trustworthiness of the Bible.

If you take those five, I mean, I'm hard pressed to think that there's not a denomination I know of that doesn't believe in the divinity of Christ, the virgin birth, the physical resurrection, the truth of Jesus' miracles, that you would call currently a really growing, thriving Christian expression. So my last question you can answer with any nuance you

want. Did the fundamentalist win? What say you, Andrew? I think it's certainly the case that evangelical Christianity and conservative Christianity, which holds those fundamentals in place, are the churches that grow, that grow around the world.

And you're quite right that at different periods, they haven't had political and cultural capital, and at times they've self-marginalized themselves by removing themselves from the academy and games and margins at other times they've been pushed out. But over the long view, over the decades, those are the churches which continue to grow. I think if you look to the British scene at the moment, there's a mixture of church decline and church growth in different areas across the country.

But the churches that are growing and the churches which are attracting the under 30s for their congregations, those who are sending new people into ministry, those who are planting new congregations, tend to be those which have those key fundamentals as a regular part of the gospel that they're preaching. And I mean, I'm biased in these things, but I don't think that should surprise us, because ultimately the gospel will always win. And then David, any last thoughts? What would you want someone to know about Christian fundamentalism past, present, or future? I was just following Andrew's point, really.

I was wondering whether perhaps it's not those convictions. There are plenty of churches who hold those convictions who are not growing. That's true.

And perhaps it's the addition of Pentecostal dynamic or a charismatic dynamic that transforms that belief into a growing church at times. And it's probably the case that most of those growing churches in the UK would be of that persuasion rather than of a more reformed persuasion, for example, where church growth would lie. So perhaps even that needs a little bit of nuance as well.

So we might say a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition to explore. Not on its own, perhaps. Church growth.

Yeah, certainly. And we don't want people to think that's the new magic formula. It does five things right and your church will grow.

But certainly in the States, I mean, there's so much written about the decline of the mainline that are literally dying off over the next decades because the congregations are aging and any churches overall are in decline in the United States as well. But you look at PCA, of which I'm a part, has had modest, but growth, which is something in this cultural climate. But to your point, it's the assemblies of God.

It's often the Pentecostal denominations that are growing at even faster rates or the non-denominational traditions. Andrew and David, thank you for the work that you're doing in your respective institutions in England and in Wales. Thank you for the work on

evangelicalism and early modern history and Lloyd Jones and other things that you've written and edited that I've appreciated.

Thank you for correcting lots of footnotes for the Rutledge book that you're a series editor for. And hopefully that will see the light of day. So thank you again.

This is the Oxford handbook of Christian fundamentalism. As these things go, it's not a cheap book, but try to get your library to get it. Or if you have a book budget, there are a lot of really great chapters in here and especially come into you the opening chapter from Andrew and David.

So thank you both for being on the program. It's a pleasure. Thank you very much.

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