

Dr. Roger Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 24, Neo-Orthodoxy and Social Crisis Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 24, Neo-Orthodoxy and Social Crisis, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Roger Green, part of a course on Reformation to the Present, introduces the topic of **20th-century evangelicalism**. It begins with a prayer and reflections on a past Reformation conference before identifying **key figures** like Billy Graham, Harold John Ockenga, Carl F. H. Henry, and Edward Carnell as influential in shaping the movement, particularly through the founding of **Fuller Theological Seminary**. The lecture then explores **defining forces**, such as the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the establishment of *Christianity Today*, which distinguished evangelicals from fundamentalism and provided their own voice. Finally, Dr. Green outlines **core tenets of evangelicalism** and discusses **weaknesses** acknowledged by evangelical scholars themselves, setting the stage for future lectures on theological developments.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 24 – Double
click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Church History → Reformation to the Present).**



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3. Briefing Document: Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 24, Neo-Orthodoxy and Social Crisis

Briefing Document: Dr. Roger Green on Evangelicalism

Overview: This lecture by Dr. Roger Green provides an overview of 20th and 21st-century evangelicalism, focusing on the forces that shaped it, key tenets that define it, and internal criticisms regarding its weaknesses. Green highlights significant figures, foundational organizations and publications, and current discussions about the movement's identity and future.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. Forces Shaping 20th-Century Evangelicalism:

- **Key Individuals: Billy Graham:** Recognized as a "real force shaping" evangelicalism, even into his later years.
- **Harold John Ockenga:** Played a "pretty prominent" role, especially as the first president of Fuller Theological Seminary and his association with Park Street Church.
- **Carl F. H. Henry:** Reared in fundamentalism, he "broke away" and became an important theologian for evangelicalism, influential in the founding of Fuller Seminary.
- **Edward J. Carnell:** Considered "the most important theologian of the evangelical movement," author of *What is Orthodoxy?* He also played a key role in Fuller Seminary.
- **Founding of Fuller Theological Seminary (1947):** Established to be the "lead evangelical seminary in the country" and to disseminate evangelical thinking by hiring influential scholars like Henry and Carnell with specific writing responsibilities.
- **Formation of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) (1942):** A crucial moment where evangelicals "separated themselves publicly from fundamentalism." While appreciating some fundamentalist doctrines, they disliked the "infighting" and perceived "anti-intellectualism" of the fundamentalist movement.

- **Establishment of *Christianity Today* (1956):** This publication provided evangelicals with their own periodical, contrasting with the liberal *Christian Century*. *Christianity Today* significantly outsold *Christian Century*, indicating the growing influence of evangelicalism. However, Green notes some contemporary criticism that *Christianity Today* has become less focused on deep theology and more on pastoral ministry ("a little bit more Christianity-lite").
- **Evangelical Churches, Colleges, and Seminaries:** Many churches (Baptist, Congregational, Anglican, non-denominational) primarily identify as "evangelical." Institutions like Gordon College (founded 1889, identifies consciously as evangelical, not fundamentalist), Barrington College (founded 1900, later merged with Gordon), Gordon-Conwell, Asbury, and Dallas Theological Seminaries also played a significant role in shaping the movement. Green raises the question of whether current students fully understand the term "evangelical" and its significance for their institutions.

2. Tenets of Evangelicalism:

- **Overcoming Anti-Intellectualism:** A primary aim of evangelicalism was to move beyond the "very powerful anti-intellectualism of fundamentalism" and embrace the intellectual capacity of humans created in God's image, emphasizing loving God with the mind.
- **High View of Scripture:** Evangelicals hold a strong belief in the "inspiration of the Bible" and its "authority." While not always agreeing on the term "inerrancy," there's a commitment to understanding the "intention of the biblical narrative," particularly in revealing Christ. Green quotes Alistair McGrath from *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*, emphasizing that respecting views "faithful to scripture" is evangelical, even if it leads to diverse doctrines on less clear issues (adiaphora). McGrath argues against demanding total uniformity and stresses that "all biblically legitimated viewpoints are to be treated with respect."
- **Lordship of the Holy Spirit:** While some traditions (Wesleyan, Pentecostal, Charismatic) emphasize the Holy Spirit more, a general emphasis on the Holy Spirit and Trinitarian theology is important to evangelicals, recognizing the Spirit's work in individual and church life.
- **Personal Conversion:** A central tenet is a personal "identity of some kind with Jesus Christ." While the nature and experience of conversion narratives may vary (immediate or gradual), this relationship with Christ is foundational.

- **Prioritizing Evangelization/Evangelism:** Making the spreading of the Christian message a priority, though the methods can vary widely (from large crusades to scholarly work like Mark Noll's). Green mentions the Alpha Course as a contemporary example of evangelism originating in the Anglican Church.
- **Strong Social Conscience:** Historically rooted in movements like Wesleyanism and 19th-century revivals, evangelicalism has generally held a "very strong social conscience," addressing issues like anti-slavery and women's equality. However, Green raises the question of whether this commitment has been retained.
- **Recognition of Truth Throughout Christendom:** Evangelicals acknowledge that "all truth is found throughout Christendom" in various denominations (Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism), reflecting a continuity with the Reformers. This leads to the idea that "evangelicalism is trans-denominational," an "umbrella term" for tenets found across different Christian traditions.
- **Discerning the Future:** Two key aspects for the future of evangelicalism are:
- **Shaping Public Policy:** Driven by the belief that "this is ultimately God's world," evangelicals should strive to bring about a "kingdom vision" through engagement in public policy. Green uses Walter Rauschenbusch as a historical example of an evangelical involved in social reform through political means.
- **Finding Common Ground on Ethical and Moral Issues:** Seeking alliances with other Christian traditions (Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox) where shared ethical and moral values exist.

3. Weaknesses of Evangelicalism (Identified by Evangelical Scholars):

- **Failure to Appreciate the Rich Tradition of the Church:** A tendency among evangelicals to disregard or undervalue the 2000-year history, tradition, and liturgy of the church, sometimes acting as if the church began with their local congregation.
- **Failure to Remain Faithful to Social Commitments of the 19th Century:** Drawing on Donald Dayton's *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, Green highlights the 19th-century evangelical commitment to social justice causes (anti-slavery, women's equality) and laments a perceived backing away from such commitments in the 20th century, particularly concerning the Civil Rights Movement.

- **Intellectual Shallowness:** As famously argued by Mark Noll in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, evangelicalism has often suffered from a lack of rigorous intellectual engagement and scholarship. Green notes the significant impact of this book as a "wake-up call" and suggests that contemporary evangelical scholarship reflects a response to this challenge. He also mentions Ron Sider's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* as a related critique on social action.
- **Accommodation to the Culture:** David Wells' *God in the Wasteland* is presented as a "searing" critique of evangelicals for becoming too similar to the broader culture and losing their prophetic voice, failing to be sufficiently "countercultural."

Conclusion:

Dr. Green concludes that despite past criticisms and ongoing weaknesses, evangelicalism has become a significant and enduring force in Christianity, exceeding the initial expectations of some mainline Christians. However, he emphasizes the importance of addressing the identified weaknesses to fulfill its potential and God's calling for the movement. The subsequent lecture will explore theological developments from Dietrich Bonhoeffer to the present, building upon this understanding of the state of evangelicalism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

4. Study Guide: Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 24, Neo-Orthodoxy and Social Crisis

Study Guide: Evangelicalism

Key Concepts:

- **Evangelicalism:** A Protestant movement characterized by a high view of scripture, the necessity of personal conversion, the centrality of Christ, and the urgency of evangelism.
- **Fundamentalism:** A conservative Protestant movement of the early 20th century that emphasized the literal interpretation of scripture and often adopted a more separatist and anti-intellectual stance.
- **National Association of Evangelicals (NAE):** Founded in 1942, this organization marked a public separation of evangelicals from the infighting and perceived anti-intellectualism of fundamentalism.
- **Christianity Today:** An influential evangelical magazine founded in 1956 as an alternative to liberal publications like Christian Century.
- **Fuller Theological Seminary:** Founded in 1947 with the goal of becoming the leading evangelical seminary, emphasizing scholarly engagement with evangelical theology.
- **Sola Scriptura:** A Reformation principle emphasizing the Bible as the sole infallible rule of faith and practice.
- **Lordship of the Holy Spirit:** An emphasis on the active role and power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individual believers and the church.
- **Personal Conversion:** The belief that a personal encounter with and acceptance of Jesus Christ is essential for salvation.
- **Evangelization/Evangelism:** The active sharing of the Christian gospel with the aim of leading others to faith in Christ.
- **Social Conscience:** A sense of moral responsibility to address social injustices and work for the betterment of society.
- **Ecumenism:** The principle or aim of promoting unity among the world's Christian churches.

- **Trans-denominationalism:** The idea that evangelicalism extends across various Christian denominations, united by core beliefs rather than specific denominational affiliations.
- **Anti-intellectualism:** A suspicion of or hostility towards intellectual pursuits, often seen as a characteristic that early evangelicals sought to overcome.
- **Inerrancy of the Bible:** The belief that the Bible in its original manuscripts is without error in all that it affirms.
- **Adiaphora:** Matters of indifference, referring to non-essential issues in which disagreement among Christians should be tolerated (coined by Philip Melancthon).

Quiz:

1. What were two primary reasons why early evangelicals formed the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942?
2. Explain the significance of Fuller Theological Seminary's founding in 1947 in the development of evangelicalism.
3. How did the publication *Christianity Today* contribute to shaping the evangelical movement in the mid-20th century?
4. Describe the evangelical understanding of scripture, mentioning key terms like "inspiration" or "authority" and their central focus.
5. What is meant by the "lordship of the Holy Spirit" as a tenet of evangelicalism, and which theological traditions have particularly emphasized this?
6. Explain the evangelical emphasis on "personal conversion" and acknowledge the diversity in how this experience is understood.
7. In what ways do evangelicals prioritize "evangelism," and what examples of evangelistic approaches are mentioned in the lecture?
8. According to the lecture, what was the historical stance of 19th-century evangelicals regarding social issues, and how did this contrast with the mid-20th century?
9. What was the main criticism presented in Mark Noll's book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, and what was its intended impact?

10. What does the lecture suggest about the future of evangelicalism in relation to public policy and finding common ground with other Christian traditions?

Answer Key:

1. Early evangelicals formed the NAE primarily to disassociate themselves publicly from the infighting they observed within fundamentalism and to distance themselves from what they perceived as fundamentalism's anti-intellectualism. They appreciated many fundamentalist doctrines but sought a different approach.
2. The founding of Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947 was significant because it aimed to be the leading evangelical seminary, dedicated to disseminating evangelical thinking within the broader scholarly community. By hiring theologians like Henry and Carnell with specific writing responsibilities, Fuller fostered intellectual engagement within evangelicalism.
3. *Christianity Today*, founded in 1956, provided evangelicals with their own influential periodical as an alternative to liberal publications. It initially focused heavily on theology and quickly gained a large readership, signifying the growing prominence of evangelicalism.
4. Evangelicals generally hold a high view of scripture, often using terms like "inspiration" or "authority" of the Bible. Their central focus is on the intention of the biblical writers, particularly in revealing knowledge about Jesus Christ as the enfleshed Word of God.
5. The "lordship of the Holy Spirit" as an evangelical tenet emphasizes the belief in God the Holy Spirit as part of the Trinity and the importance of the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of individual believers and the church. The Wesleyan, Pentecostal, and charismatic traditions have particularly emphasized this aspect.
6. The evangelical emphasis on "personal conversion" centers on the idea that a personal relationship and identification with Jesus Christ is crucial for salvation. While the centrality of this relationship is key, the lecture notes that conversion narratives can vary in terms of immediacy and how individuals describe their growing faith in Christ.
7. Evangelicals prioritize "evangelism" as a fundamental mission, seeking to share the Christian gospel and bring others to faith. This can take various forms, from large-scale public meetings (like Billy Graham's crusades) to scholarly work and local church initiatives like the Alpha Course.

8. The lecture indicates that 19th-century evangelicals, drawing from movements like Wesleyanism, were often deeply committed to social causes such as anti-slavery and women's equality. In contrast, by the mid-20th century, there was a noted backing away from social involvement by many evangelicals.
9. Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (1990) criticized the intellectual shallowness he observed within evangelicalism, arguing that there was a lack of serious scholarly engagement. The book aimed to be a wake-up call, urging evangelicals to love God with their minds and pursue rigorous intellectual work.
10. The lecture suggests that the future of evangelicalism involves discerning how to shape public policy based on the belief that the world belongs to God and engaging in ethical and moral issues by finding common ground with other Christian traditions like Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the key factors that led to the emergence of evangelicalism as a distinct movement from fundamentalism in the mid-20th century.
2. Discuss the core tenets of evangelicalism as presented in the lecture, explaining how these beliefs differentiate evangelicalism from other Christian traditions and movements.
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of evangelicalism as identified in the lecture, considering their implications for the movement's future.
4. Explore the historical engagement of evangelicals with social issues, contrasting the approaches of the 19th and 20th centuries and considering the reasons for any shifts in emphasis.
5. Assess the significance of intellectual engagement and scholarship within evangelicalism, referencing key figures and publications mentioned in the lecture, and discuss its role in shaping the movement's identity and influence.

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Evangelicalism:** A diverse Protestant movement emphasizing personal conversion, the authority of the Bible, the centrality of Jesus Christ, and the importance of sharing the Christian gospel.
- **Fundamentalism:** A conservative religious movement characterized by a strict belief in the literal interpretation of religious texts, especially the Bible, and often advocating for traditional doctrines and resisting modern secular influences.
- **Reformation:** A 16th-century movement that aimed to reform the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church and resulted in the establishment of Protestant churches.
- **Theology:** The study of the nature of God and religious belief.
- **Doctrine:** A set of beliefs or principles held and taught by a church, political party, or other group.
- **Seminary:** A theological school for training clergy.
- **Periodical:** A magazine or other publication that is issued at regular intervals.
- **Liberalism (Protestant):** A theological movement that emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries, emphasizing reason and experience alongside scripture, often leading to more progressive social and theological views.
- **Orthodoxy:** Generally refers to traditional or established religious beliefs and practices. In a Christian context, it can refer to Eastern Orthodox Christianity or a commitment to core Christian doctrines.
- **Denomination:** A recognized autonomous branch of the Christian Church.
- **Tenet:** A principle or belief held as part of a doctrine or ideology.
- **Social Gospel Movement:** A Protestant Christian intellectual movement that was most prominent in the early 20th century in the United States and Canada. The movement applied Christian ethics to social problems, especially issues of social justice such as economic inequality, poverty, alcoholism, crime, racial tensions, slums, poor hygiene, child labor, inadequate labor unions, poor schools, and the dangers of war.
- **Pietism:** A Protestant movement that began in the late 17th century emphasizing personal faith and religious experience over formal doctrine and ritual.

- **Wesleyan Movement:** A revival movement within the Church of England founded by John Wesley, emphasizing personal piety, evangelism, and social concern.
- **Pentecostalism:** A modern Protestant movement that emphasizes direct personal experience of God through the Holy Spirit, often including spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues and divine healing.
- **Charismatic Movement:** A movement within mainstream Christian denominations that embraces spiritual gifts similar to those found in Pentecostalism.
- **Ecumenical Dialogue:** Conversations and interactions aimed at fostering understanding and unity between different Christian denominations.

5. FAQs Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 24, Neo-Orthodoxy and Social Crisis, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about Evangelicalism Based on Dr. Green's Lecture

1. What were the key forces and figures that shaped 20th-century evangelicalism?

Several individuals and movements played crucial roles. Billy Graham's public ministry significantly shaped the movement. Harold John Ockenga was another important figure, prominent in early evangelical circles. Carl F. H. Henry and Edward J. Carnell, both theologians, were instrumental in providing intellectual foundations for evangelicalism. They, along with Ockenga, were influential in the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947, which aimed to be a leading evangelical seminary and disseminate evangelical thought through scholarship. The formation of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1942 marked a public separation from fundamentalism due to the latter's infighting and perceived anti-intellectualism. The establishment of the magazine *Christianity Today* in 1956 provided a prominent evangelical voice and significantly outsold its liberal counterpart, *Christian Century*, indicating the growing influence of evangelicalism. Furthermore, numerous churches, regardless of denominational affiliation, and colleges and seminaries, such as Gordon College and Fuller, identified as evangelical, further solidifying the movement.

2. What led to the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1942?

The NAE was formed by evangelicals like Ockenga and Henry who wanted to distinguish themselves from fundamentalism. While they often shared doctrinal similarities with fundamentalists, they were critical of the internal conflicts and what they saw as an anti-intellectual stance within the fundamentalist movement. They sought to create a broader, more intellectually engaged evangelicalism that could contribute positively to society without the constant internal strife they observed in fundamentalism.

3. What was the significance of Fuller Theological Seminary's founding in 1947?

Fuller Theological Seminary was established with the specific intention of becoming the leading evangelical seminary in the United States. Its founders strategically hired theologians like Carl F. H. Henry and Edward J. Carnell, providing them with good salaries and reduced teaching loads to facilitate their writing and engagement with the broader scholarly community. This was a deliberate effort to foster intellectual rigor within evangelicalism and disseminate evangelical thought more widely, building a strong academic foundation for the movement.

4. What are some core tenets or beliefs that generally characterize evangelicalism?

Evangelicalism is characterized by several key tenets. Firstly, it sought to overcome the anti-intellectualism often associated with fundamentalism, emphasizing the importance of the mind in understanding and loving God. Secondly, it holds a high view of Scripture, often emphasizing its inspiration and authority, with a central focus on the biblical narrative's intention to reveal Christ. While interpretations may vary, the Bible is seen as the Word of God. Thirdly, there is an emphasis on the lordship of the Holy Spirit and His work in the lives of believers and the church, rooted in a Trinitarian understanding of God. Fourthly, personal conversion and an individual's identity with Jesus Christ are central, regardless of the specific narrative of that conversion. Fifthly, evangelization or evangelism is prioritized, with a commitment to sharing the Christian faith in various ways. Sixthly, a strong social conscience has historically been a tenet, though its consistent application is debated. Seventhly, there's a recognition that truth and commitment to Christ can be found across various Christian denominations, leading to a trans-denominational nature of evangelicalism. Finally, there's a growing emphasis on discerning how evangelicalism can shape public policy and find common ground with other groups on ethical and moral issues to further a kingdom vision for the world.

5. According to the lecture, what are some notable weaknesses or criticisms of evangelicalism?

Several weaknesses of evangelicalism have been pointed out by evangelical scholars themselves. One is a failure to fully appreciate the rich 2,000-year tradition of the church, sometimes acting as if Christian history began with their local congregation. Another is a perceived failure to remain as faithful to the social commitments that were prominent in the 19th-century evangelical tradition, such as the fight against slavery and for social justice. Intellectual shallowness has also been identified as a weakness, with a call for greater scholarly rigor and engagement. Finally, there's concern about an increasing accommodation to the surrounding culture, leading to a diminished prophetic voice and difficulty in distinguishing evangelicalism from broader societal norms.

6. What was the significance of Mark Noll's book, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*?

Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, published in 1990, was a highly influential and critical assessment of the state of intellectual engagement within evangelicalism. Its opening line, stating that the problem with the evangelical mind is that there's not much of one, served as a stark wake-up call. The book highlighted a perceived lack of serious scholarship and intellectual depth within the movement and urged evangelicals to reclaim a commitment to loving God with their minds. It is credited with prompting significant reflection and contributing to a renewed focus on intellectual pursuits within evangelical circles.

7. How does Alistair McGrath view the future of Christianity in relation to evangelicalism?

Alistair McGrath, a committed evangelical scholar, believes that the future of Christianity lies significantly in the hands of evangelicals. He argues that evangelicalism's core commitments position it to lead the way forward for the Christian faith. He also emphasizes the importance of evangelicals engaging with public policy, believing that as stewards of God's world, they should work towards a kingdom vision in all areas of life. Furthermore, he advocates for finding common ground with other Christian traditions and even other groups on ethical and moral issues to advance shared values.

8. What is the "opening of the evangelical mind" as described by Alan Wolfe in his *Atlantic Monthly* article?

Alan Wolfe, a non-evangelical Jewish writer, researched evangelicalism for the *Atlantic Monthly* and wrote an article entitled "The Opening of the Evangelical Mind." His research, which included visits to evangelical institutions like Wheaton College and interactions with evangelical leaders and scholars, led him to be greatly impressed by the level of scholarship, commitment, and preaching he encountered. This "opening" refers to his unexpected discovery of intellectual depth and serious engagement within evangelicalism, which challenged his preconceived notions and demonstrated a more nuanced and thoughtful movement than he had anticipated, moving beyond the stereotypes he might have associated with fundamentalism.