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## **Evangelical Controversy: A Deeply Fragmented Movement**

Louis C. Midgley

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# EVANGELICAL CONTROVERSY: A DEEPLY FRAGMENTED MOVEMENT

*Louis C. Midgley*

*Review of Kevin T. Bauder, R. Albert Mohler Jr., John G. Stackhouse Jr., Roger E. Olson. Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism. Edited by Stanley N. Gundry, Andrew David Naselli, and Collin Hansen. Introduction by Collin Hansen. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011. 222 pp., with scripture index and general index. \$16.99 (paperback).*

*Abstract: Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism should be helpful to Latter-day Saints (and others) seeking to understand some of the theological controversies lurking behind contemporary fundamentalist/evangelical religiosity. Four theologians spread along a spectrum speak for different competing factions of conservative Protestants: Kevin Bauder<sup>1</sup> for what turns out to be his own somewhat moderate version of Protestant fundamentalism; Al Mohler<sup>2</sup> for conservative/confessional<sup>3</sup> evangelicalism; John Stackhouse<sup>4</sup> for generic evangelicalism; and Roger Olson<sup>5</sup>*

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1. Bauder is a research professor at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

2. In 1993 Mohler became the President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

3. The labels used to identify the brand of fundamentalism/evangelicalism for which each author speaks are somewhat problematic. For example, to me it seems that Al Mohler speaks for the Calvinist/Reformed version of evangelicalism which is currently in ascendance within the Southern Baptist Convention.

4. Stackhouse is professor of theology and culture at Regent College in Vancouver, Canada.

5. Olson is professor of theology at George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University.

*for postconservative evangelicalism. Each author introduces his own position and then is critiqued in turn by the others, after which there is a rejoinder. In addition, as I point out in detail, each of these authors has something negative to say about the faith of Latter-day Saints.*

## Fragmentation and Diversity of Opinion

Collin Hansen's introduction sets out the problem to be addressed in *Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism*. According to Hansen, even if, immediately after WWII, it once made sense to speak of evangelicals as a unified body, "simply labeling ourselves evangelical no longer suffices" (p. 9). Why? The movement currently known as evangelical was launched in the mid-1940s as a large umbrella under which both various diverse opinions and competing factions could join in a concerted effort to replace the older fundamentalism. However, what is currently known, especially in America, as the evangelical movement now includes, according to Hansen, "conservative, progressive, postconservative, and preprogressive evangelicals. We are traditional, creedal, biblical, pietistic, anticeedal, ecumenical, and fundamentalist. We are 'followers of Christ' and 'Red Letter Christians'" (p. 9). What this means, Hansen acknowledges, is that evangelicals "are everything, so we are nothing" (p. 9).

Hansen then provides his own account of the often told story of how the evangelical movement arose during and immediately after WWII as an effort to blunt the influence of the older movement known as fundamentalism.<sup>6</sup> At first those now known as evangelicals called their new movement "neo-evan-

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6. Douglas A. Sweeney traces the use of the label fundamentalism to a meeting in which biblical inerrancy was endorsed that was held in 1892 in Portland by a group challenging liberal ideologies. See his insightful *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 159. For relevant details, see my unsigned review of this book in *FARMS Review* 20/1 (2008): 254-258.

gelical,” indicating that their movement was a novelty, but they soon came to use the much older label *evangelical* for a new and hopefully much more sophisticated and culturally relevant, and less belligerent version of conservative Protestantism. This new movement was primarily an effort by Billy Graham and his friends (who created the magazine *Christianity Today* which became the flagship publication of the evangelical movement). The goal was to provide an alternative to the older fundamentalist movement.<sup>7</sup>

Al Mohler admits that what is currently known as the evangelicalism was “born out of a deep concern to identify a posture distinct from Protestant fundamentalism” (p. 69). This is, of course, a cautious reference to the fact that more than fifty years ago, Billy Graham and his wealthy associates established a kind of broad tent under which those with different conservative Protestant opinions could, without lapsing into Protestant liberalism, work in a common effort to move beyond fundamentalist ideology. Their efforts were intended to dampen the influence of the fundamentalism they saw as a seriously flawed version of conservative Protestantism. Granting that evangelicalism covers a wide variety of beliefs, or constitutes a wide *spectrum* of opinion, Hansen concludes that “if the descriptor *evangelical* cannot stand on its own, then it is of little use. There is,” he laments, “no coherent movement, only an endless collection of self-styled labels created by Christians for their Facebook profiles” (p. 9). Some evangelical scholars, such as David F. Wells, have even questioned whether an evangelical *movement* even exists (see pp. 9–10 n. 1).<sup>8</sup> Hence Hansen’s

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7. For Hansen’s version of this story, see pp. 12–16. Bauder sets out his own history of the movement he represents and its complicated relationship to the new evangelical movement (pp. 41–49). And Mohler describes his initial hostility towards and more recent rapprochement with fundamentalism (pp. 50–59).

8. D. G. Hart, a distinguished Presbyterian historian, has no use for the label. See his *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in*

question: “When tempted to leave behind the headaches of this eclectic movement with no leader and no membership, we pause and ask, ‘But where should we go?’” (p. 10).

### A Unity in the Diversity?

As the essays in *Spectrum* indicate, there is still no agreement on exactly what constitutes evangelicalism and what separates this movement from various “churches,” or even what clearly distinguishes it, other than style, from the older fundamentalism against which it was a reaction. The mutual concern of the three evangelical contributors to *Spectrum* is to identify what they consider a common core of essential defining beliefs. Each respondent draws somewhat different boundaries and even differs on what constitutes a minimal core of shared belief. They do not deny that there is a spectrum of belief even though a spectrum has no core or center.

As part of their efforts to describe and debate the diversity of opinion in contemporary conservative Protestantism, these four distinguished authors manifest a stereotyped anxiety about the faith of Latter-day Saints—each explicitly exclude The Church of Jesus Christ from what they insist is authentic Christianity. It seems that, if well-informed Protestant authors do not agree on what exactly constitutes the authentic conservative Protestant faith, then at least they agree on what to exclude. Put another way, the concern of these four authors about the faith of Latter-day Saints is part of conservative Protestant boundary maintenance. What these authors seem to agree on is the rejection of certain competing truth claims. They struggle over the soundness of theological speculation circulating within conservative Protestantism. What they agree on is that the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ are

not genuinely Christian, while they struggle over the soundness of theological speculation currently circulating within the conservative Protestant movement.

Bauder, speaking for a brand of moderate fundamentalism, grants that “no one can speak for all fundamentalists” (p. 19). (So it seems that there is much diversity of opinion even, or especially, in the older fundamentalist camp.) He is, however, confident that fundamentalists are concerned about the need for *separation* from fellowship with apostates (pp. 29–33)—that is, those who wrongly claim to be Christians and yet deny Bauder’s own fundamentalist understanding of the gospel. He sees the necessity of opposing theological systems that “claim to adhere to Christianity while they actually deny the gospel” (p. 31). And who exactly might do that? Bauder claims that what Latter-day Saints and other groups “preach as gospel contradicts the biblical gospel. Therefore, the adherents of these religions should not be recognized as Christians at all. They should be regarded as apostates” (p. 31). He also insists that “the Roman [Catholic] gospel . . . is false” despite the fact that, “unlike Arianism and Mormonism,” it “affirms the Trinitarian orthodoxy” (p. 31). Also, according to Bauder, “Catholicism represents an apostate, rather than a Christian, system of religion” (p. 32).<sup>9</sup> Bauder insists that “this perspective is hardly unique to fundamentalism” (p. 32 n. 13), which is true.

All of this for Bauder—the emphatic exclusion of Latter-day Saints, Roman Catholics and liberal Protestants from his understanding of Christianity—involves questions of “minimal Christian fellowship.” There are heretics with whom fundamentalists must not have even minimal fellowship. A fundamentalist must, he insists, avoid fellowship with those who, even while claiming to be Christian, actually deny the gospel. Bauder tends to mimic Mohler’s version of evangelicalism

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9. Elsewhere Bauder insists that, “inasmuch as it denies the gospel, Roman Catholicism is not Christianity” (p. 33).

on this issue. Only then does Bauder address the “maximal Christian fellowship” that a fundamentalist might wish to have with those who only more or less subscribe to his theology. He senses that Mohler’s writings “reverberate with fundamentalist ideas” (p. 45) on this and some other issues. Hence there is an accommodation between Bauder and Mohler at least on this issue, since Bauder opposes “hyper-fundamentalism” (pp. 43–45), and Mohler describes his own move away from an early strong hostility towards fundamentalism and hence his current affinity for Bauder’s version of that ideology (see pp. 52–55). Such are the tides of internecine theological warfare.

“Honesty requires,” Mohler insists, “that the term [*evangelical*] be defined by its necessity. In this sense, *evangelical* has been and remains a crucial term because we simply cannot live without it. Some word has to define what it means to be a conservative Protestant who is not, quite simply, a Roman Catholic or theological [Protestant] liberal” (p. 69). I take these rather opaque sentences to mean that boundary lines must be drawn to exclude those who presumably are not correctly Protestant and hence also not genuinely Christian.

Mohler, with his version of Five-Point Calvinism,<sup>10</sup> writes as if he speaks with a special authority for the entire evangelical movement, and hence for what he believes is authentic historical, biblical, creedal, orthodox Christianity.<sup>11</sup> But this collection of essays demonstrates otherwise. Instead of showing unity, *Spectrum*, as the name indicates, demonstrates fragmentation and diversity—that is, a wide range of competing be-

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10. Often but not always identified by the acronym TULIP, which stands for Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance.

11. Mohler may, of course, speak with some authority for an aggressive new faction of Five Point Calvinists within the Southern Baptist Convention, but not necessarily for the entire evangelical movement.



liefs<sup>12</sup> littering a battleground in which factions with different ideologies struggle for hegemony.

But even Roger Olson, who emphatically opposes Calvinism,<sup>13</sup> refuses to worship with those he does not consider authentic Christians—for instance, Latter-day Saints and Roman Catholics (p. 65). “Bauder and I agree,” Olson writes, “that the Roman Catholic Church teaches false doctrines and rejects true doctrines” (p. 65). Olson might, he indicates, attend a Roman Catholic Mass, but only as an observer (p. 65). He also reports that he has

attended ecumenical dialogue events with Mormons at Brigham Young University without worshipping with them. Like most evangelicals (and even so-called mainstream Protestants), I consider the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints [*sic*] a heretical sect and not a Christian denomination (to say nothing of the “fourth branch of Christianity”!). However, engaging in face-to-face dialogue with them has proven beneficial to me; I have had to revise some of my opinions about them, which is good because holding wrong opinions of others is a bad thing even if they are apostates or heretics. (p. 65.)<sup>14</sup>

Stackhouse also takes a swipe at the faith of Latter-day Saints. After describing what he considers five crucial “convictions” that he believes define what he considers

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12. For indications of this diversity, see especially pp. 9-10, 51-52, 98-99, 115, 186-188, and 213-216.

13. See especially Roger E. Olson, *Against Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

14. See Olson’s “Confessions of an Arminian Evangelical,” *Salvation in Christ: Comparative Christian Views*, ed., Roger R. Keller and Robert L. Millet (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2005), 183–203, which is one of two papers he read at BYU. The other paper was not published.

evangelicalism<sup>15</sup> and hence also who is an authentic evangelical, he admits that “certain Mormons can and do share all five convictions of evangelicals, but they are not evangelicals, because their beliefs, affections, and practices show them to be *not Christians*” (p. 137, emphasis in original).<sup>16</sup> He adds that he is “not presuming to pronounce on their state before God. I don’t mean ‘not Christian’ the way we sometimes mean it, namely, ‘unsaved’” (p. 137). But if the Saints are *not even Christians* because of their beliefs and practices, as Stackhouse claims, is this not an indication that they cannot possibly be saved? Or are some non-evangelicals saved despite not being authentic Christians?

Who exactly is saved and who wrongly imagines or only pretends here and now that they are saved is a sticky issue for Protestants, but it is not one that Stackhouse cares to address. He offers a reason: “For the purposes of this discussion,” he adds, evangelicals “need not enter into the mysterious realm of sorting out who will enter the kingdom of heaven and who won’t” (p. 137). He asserts that “Mormonism differs so markedly from orthodox Christianity that . . . , until rather recently, the vast majority of Mormons saw the two religious identities as not only different, but even competitive for the title of ‘true church of Jesus Christ’” (p. 137). What this statement seems to demonstrate is that Stackhouse believes that some evangelical version of Christian faith is normative. This assumption forms

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15. The labels he gives for these five characteristics are *Crucicentric*, *Biblicist*, *Conversionist*, *Missional*, and *Transdenominational* (see p. 124 for details). Others also strive to define an *evangelical*. For instance, see pp. 68–70, and pp. 207–10.

16. It is not uncommon for more knowledgeable evangelicals to grant that the faith of “some” Latter-day Saints—those they have either know or whose work they have read—have a profoundly Christ-centered faith. What they fail to acknowledge is that the Book of Mormon—the founding divine special revelation upon which the faith of the Saints—all faithful Saints—is grounded is Christ-centered.

the ground for the antipathy set out in *Spectrum* towards the faith of the Saints. But the fact is that conservative Protestants, much like Latter-day Saints, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox, each in their own unique way, all claim to be in some sense the true church of Jesus Christ, just as all competing versions of the fundamentalist/evangelical movement claim to be the authentic, apostolic, biblical, orthodox Christianity, against which all other claims must be measured and graded, as the essays in *Spectrum* demonstrate.

### Competing Master Narratives

According to Mohler, Stackhouse rejects the proper understanding of the label *evangelical*. But the proclivity to collapse one's own definition of evangelical into what constitutes orthodox Christianity is at least in part what has generated the *spectrum* of competing opinions being debated in this volume. The crucial issue is what constitutes authentic Christianity. Only when the boundary issues are settled, can these authors tackle the question of whether moderate fundamentalism or some competing version of the evangelical movement speaks for authentic Christianity. Hence the following bald assertion by Mohler: "Ruled out, . . . are heretics (who are not actually Christians at all) and those who hold to theologies that are simply not recognizably Christian (like the Mormons)" (p. 152). Stackhouse admits that at least "certain Mormons" share what he considers his crucial so-called five basic convictions that define evangelical faith (p. 137). But even these are not Christians.

It turns out that Bauder, Mohler, Stackhouse, and Olson set out objections to the faith of the Saints in their effort to set boundaries to exclude false claims to being Christian. This seems to me to have been done as part of what each considered the crucial defining attributes of their own version of conservative Protestantism, which each author considers the

best current embodiment of authentic Christian faith. Each of these four apologists for a different and hence competing brand of evangelical faith sees their way of being evangelical as the key to being genuinely Christian. Be that as it may, both Latter-day Saints, whom these authors deny are Christians, as well as Orthodox and Roman Catholics, do not care to be included under a label that merely identifies a movement within recent conservative Protestantism. In addition, both Roman Catholics and Latter-day Saints deny that contemporary Protestantism (or one of its competing factions) determines who may or may not use the word *Christian*, or what constitutes authentic Christian faith. The Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and Latter-day Saints each have their own narrative setting out their claim to be the most authentic Christian faith.<sup>17</sup>

By defending his Arminian objections to versions of Calvinism, Olson offers one possible alternative account of the conservative Protestant grounding narrative. This proclivity, which each author manifests, demonstrates and explains the diversity and quarrels found in *Spectrum*. In addition, each of the other major competing traditions makes a claim to being what Stackhouse calls “the true Church of Jesus Christ” (p. 137). Each of the competing claims, both within the evangelical movement and between the four major traditions—that is, Latter-day Saint, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox—are necessarily in competition. Instead of a unity of faith and hence a harmony, there is disputation and a cacophony, earlier signs of which once set young Joseph Smith on his prayerful quest for divine assistance, which led (from the LDS perspective) to the opening of the heavens and a new dispensation of the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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17. For a detailed examination of a typical Calvinist version of the Protestant narrative setting out the claim to being authentic Christianity, see Midgley, “Telling the Larger ‘Church History’ Story,” *Mormon Studies Review* 23/1 (2011): 157–71.

## The Extent of Radical Evangelical Controversy

Some differences between contemporary evangelicals tend to challenge what are often held to be the essential elements of the Protestant Reformation. Some of this shows up in *Spectrum*. For example, Mohler objects strongly to the position taken by N. T. (Tom) Wright, an Anglican and the foremost Protestant biblical scholar, who self-identifies as an evangelical. Wright insists that the stance taken on justification by Luther and Calvin, following Augustine—that a person is justified and in that sense saved the moment he or she confesses Jesus—is a radical misunderstanding of what was taught by the Apostle Paul.<sup>18</sup> Wright's position on this issue deeply troubles Mohler, who insists that "justification by faith *alone* is an evangelical essential, a first-order issue" (p. 93, emphasis in original). The fact is that Wright's views on justification fit rather well with what is clearly taught in the Book of Mormon.<sup>19</sup> Nothing in the Book of Mormon suggests that one is justified the moment one confesses Jesus, at which time one receives an alien righteousness while still remaining totally depraved. Instead, what is taught is that one's ultimate or final justification follows

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18. See, among a host of other essays and books on Paul by N. T. Wright, his *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009). See my review of this book in the *FARMS Review* 21/1 (2009): 216–20. To begin to compare Wright's arguments with one of the less acrimonious especially Calvinist responses, see my review of John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright*, in *FARMS Review* 21/1 (2009): 223–224. Wright was initially popular among evangelicals until they began to sense his total rejection of the Protestant obsession with the idea God imputes an alien righteousness to totally depraved sinners at the moment they confess Christ as Lord and Savior. Wright holds that one is ultimately only justified at the final judgment, if one has been true to the covenant that makes one a disciple of Jesus Christ.

19. For some details, see Midgley, "Debating Evangelicals," *FARMS Review* 20/2 (2008): xi–xlvii at xxxvi–xxxix; and Midgley, "The Wedding of Athens and Jerusalem: An Evangelical Perplexity and Latter-day Saint Answer," *FARMS Review* 21/2 (2009): xi–xliii at xxxii–xxxix.

the necessarily difficult process of seeking and allowing the Holy Spirit to purge, cleanse, purify, and hence sanctify the one who is thereby genuinely reborn through a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Latter-day Saints will, I believe, easily recognize both Wright's understanding of the Way of the Lord, and also Mohler's typical contrasting stance on this important matter.

Mohler also defends penal substitution—the dominant Protestant understanding of the Atonement—which is the theory that Jesus of Nazareth somehow became objectively guilty of every sin, past, present, and future—or his death would not have redeemed totally depraved humans by the imposition of an alien righteousness on sinners. Most of the ways of understanding the Atonement, of course, involve the idea that Jesus did for humans what they could not possibly do for themselves. But in the penal substitution theory Jesus is not seen as an innocent, sinless substitute for sinful humanity. He is, instead, pictured as somehow being guilty in a real way of all past, present and future sins of totally depraved humans—he became in our place the focused object of the wrath of God. Martin Luther (in a commentary on Galatians 3:13) insisted that

all the prophets say this, that Christ was to become the greatest thief, murderer, adulterer, robber, desecrator, blasphemer, etc., there has ever been anywhere in the world. He is not acting in his own Person now. Now he is not the Son of God, born of the Virgin. But he is a sinner, who has and bears the sin of Paul, the former blasphemer, persecutor, and assaulter: of Peter, who denied Christ; of David, who was an adulterer and a murderer, and who caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord (Rom. 2:24). In short, he has and bears all the sins of all men in his body—not in the sense that he has committed them but in the sense that he took those sins, committed by us, upon his own

body, in order to make satisfaction for them with his own blood. Therefore this general Law of Moses included him, although he was innocent so far as his own Person was concerned; for it found him among sinners and thieves. Thus a magistrate regards someone as a criminal and punishes him if he catches him among thieves, even though the man has never committed anything evil or worthy of death. Christ was not only found among sinners, having assumed the flesh and blood of those who were sinners and thieves and who were immersed in all sorts of sin. Therefore when the Law found him among thieves, it condemned and executed him as a thief.<sup>20</sup>

In the typical Protestant theory of the Atonement, Jesus Christ was both sinless and also the ultimate sinner. If his bloody death was to be efficacious either (1) for those pictured in Calvinist theology as predestined at the moment of creation out of nothing to salvation, or (2) potentially for all of mankind who may decide to confess Jesus as Lord and Savior (in other competing Protestant dogmas), Jesus had to be fully guilty of all human sins. This, of course, flies in the face of what is taught in the Book of Mormon, where Jesus is pictured as having made a wholly sinless sacrifice for all of humanity, which is something they could not possibly have done for themselves. He managed this with a glorious victory over all the demonic powers that beset human beings during their mortal probation by (1) defeating mortal death and thereby opening the door for an eventual universal resurrection, and (2) by also making available merciful forgiveness of sin for all those who choose

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20. Declan Marmion and Rik Van Nieuwehnove, *An Introduction to The Trinity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 135, quoting from Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535*, vol. 26, *Luther's Works*, eds. Jaroslav Pelikan and Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 277.

to follow him, seek and accept sanctification as genuine Saints, and endure faithfully to the end.

Mohler sees the penal substitution theory as essential to evangelical identity and hence to his understanding of what constitutes the authentic Christian faith. Those who reject the penal substitution theory of the Atonement, Mohler explains, do so mainly on moral grounds. They see no good reason to insist that God imputed all human sin to a sinless Jesus of Nazareth and then demanded, in Mohler words, “the blood sacrifice of his son to satisfy his divine wrath and display his righteousness” (p. 94). Mohler, however, also admits that critics of the penal substitution theory of the Atonement see this theory, as I do, as “a slander against God’s own character” (p. 94). In addition, he indicates that those who reject the Protestant penal substitution theory of the Atonement do so because “such a rendering of God is immoral. Some have gone so far as to claim that such a [penal] rendering of the atonement amounts to a form of divine child abuse” (p. 94). Mohler argues “that denying penal substitution as the central biblical concept for our [evangelical] understanding of the atonement is, in the end, fatal to our witness to the gospel” (p. 198).

Mohler insists that Jesus of Nazareth somehow actually became guilty of all human sin, thus drawing the justified wrath of God on him. This explains his brutal torture, extreme suffering, and bloody death. Put another way, God the Father had God the Son slaughtered to satisfy His wrath and thereby in some way reveal His righteousness, as well as make it possible for His righteousness to be imputed to totally depraved sinners, if they either confess His name or were predestined to salvation at the moment of creation out of nothing.

Stackhouse also insists that penal substitution is “a vital and nonnegotiable part of *Christian* theology in general, without which any understanding of salvation is seriously deficient” (p. 133). And he ends his treatment of the controversy over pe-



nal substitution by proclaiming that “evangelical theologians, therefore, must not jettison substitutionary atonement” (p. 135).

The Book of Mormon, I believe, sets out an account of the story of that Atonement that differs in crucial ways from the sophisticated Protestant speculation on this all-important matter. Latter-day Saints, I believe, may find the penal substitution theory of the Atonement especially odd, since the Book of Mormon makes it clear that the Holy One of Israel—the one known before His incarnation as Yahweh (YHWH)—was sinless and hence also an innocent victim of demonic powers over which He gained a final victory over both the death of our bodies and, on condition of our faithfulness, of our souls—the two deaths that all humans face. All of this is set out clearly in the Book of Mormon.

Roger Olson, who describes the central place of penal substitution in the Reformation (see pp. 93–94), cautiously mentions some negative reactions by unnamed evangelicals to it “primarily on moral grounds” (p. 93). He may even come close to agreeing with me in objecting to penal substitution, since he indicates, in an enigmatic remark, that “fundamentalists confuse their own interpretation of the Bible (e.g., penal substitution Atonement) with the Bible itself” (p. 65).<sup>21</sup> It would please me if, for Olson, it is not just petulant fundamentalists who insist that penal substitution is proclaimed in the Bible.

*Spectrum* also includes some responses to Al Mohler’s very negative estimates of what is called Open Theism (see pp. 92–93, 212), which challenges, I believe correctly, elements of classical theism. His rejection of Open Theism are shared by Bauder (pp. 30, 212), and also by Stackhouse, who describes the nasty controversy that has taken place within evangelical intellectual circles over Open Theism (see pp. 131–33).

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21. Olson offers some negative comments directed against Bauder (pp. 65–66) on this matter, but remains silent on the support for the penal substitution theory of the Atonement from both Mohler and Stackhouse.

### What or Who Really Speaks for Evangelicalism?

It is not clear to those who opine in *Spectrum* why Mohler insists that his stance is “confessional.” It is clear, however, that he is determined to define the evangelical movement in narrow strictly Calvinist terms. Moreover, he also seems to have in mind the great ecumenical creeds and later confessions which Protestants took over from the Orthodox and Roman Catholics. Be that as it may, he claims that “at the end of the day, the confessional church must do what the evangelical movement cannot—confess with specificity the faith once delivered to the saints” (p. 155). All of this, and more, is packed into an interesting conversation about the definition of *evangelicalism* in which Mohler’s critics contend that the movement is much broader than his Calvinist theological preferences permit. For him (as well as for the fundamentalist Bauder) the evangelical umbrella is too large for true Christian fellowship, since it includes heretics. Mohler demands a tighter circle. And Bauder chides Olson for having turned Billy Graham’s evangelical “broad tent” of vague family resemblances (with much diversity) into a “circus tent,” and not a “revival tent, or perhaps a menagerie of ecclesiastical oddities and curiosities” (p. 193).

Much of *Spectrum* is an effort to both understand the metaphor of embracing or facing a supposed center of belief and to delineate the extent of theological boundaries—that is, it is a quarrel over classification logic in which each of those who speak for a competing faction sets out their position in an effort to justify their own theological preferences. It is not clear who or what is to determine whether one is facing or embracing a center, or who or what determines what constitutes a center, or how one distinguishes secondary questions from truly fundamental beliefs. Beyond mere slogans, there is no agreement on what, if anything, constitutes the central core of belief. The center simply does not hold. One reason is that Protestantism has

no *magisterium*, being an anarchy from the start; it is, instead, among other things a diverse and shifting theological movement and hence has a broad spectrum of diverse beliefs. The fact is that those who self-identify as evangelicals are free to expand or contract the movement's assortment of competing beliefs in whatever way suits their fancy.

If this is close to being true, we must ask why evangelicals like Olson, whose historical scholarship is often congruent with the larger LDS historical narrative, insist on excluding the faith of the Saints from their understanding of authentic Christian faith. I do not see this proclivity as necessarily a sign of ignorance, confusion, or bigotry. I respect evangelical scholarship far too much to adopt that explanation. It is, instead, an indication of evangelical boundary maintenance. It may also be an effort on the part of evangelical scholars to avoid the kinds of ignominy heaped upon the genteel and gentle Calvinist Richard Mouw for his famous apologies to the Saints for the outrages of the countercult industry.<sup>22</sup> With all of this in mind, I strongly recommend *Spectrum* for those seeking a better understanding of the evangelical movement, and also why learned evangelicals find it necessary to distinguish their faith from that of Latter-day Saints, since they tend to differ with each other as much as they do with Latter-day Saints.

### A Hodgepodge of Competing Beliefs

Have I overstated the extent or significance of Protestant diversity? I don't think so. Without even considering liberal Protestantism, or the dramatic growth of Pentecostal religiosity (which had no voice in *Spectrum*), there is within conservative Protestantism an ongoing struggle between remnants of the old fundamentalism and the wide variety of opinion as-

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22. For the relevant details, see "'Bearing False Witness': A Brief Addendum," to Midgley, "Cowan on the Countercult," *FARMS Review* 16/2 (2004): 401–3.

sembled under the umbrella provided by Billy Graham when he and his associates set in place what is now known as the evangelical movement. There is, in addition to that to which I have called attention, additional evidence of diversity.

It simply will not do for evangelical apologists to insist that this diversity, and the controversy it generates, involves merely unimportant secondary issues, thus implying a solid agreement on core beliefs. Why? In addition to the evidence found in *Spectrum*, the InterVarsity Press (through IVP Academic) has published a series entitled *Spectrum Multiview Books*. These nineteen volumes<sup>23</sup> illustrate the wide variety of beliefs currently found in conservative Protestant circles. In addition, Zondervan has a similar sixteen volume *Counterpoint* series<sup>24</sup>

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23. See Robert G. Clouse, ed., *Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views* (1977); David Basinger & Randall Basinger, eds., *Predestination and Free Will* (1986); Donald L. Alexander, ed., *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification* (1989); Bonnidell Clouse & Robert G. Clouse, eds., *Women in the Ministry: Four Views* (1989); H. Wayne House, ed., *Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views* (1990); John Sanders, ed., *What About Those Who Have Never Heard?: Three Views on the Destiny of the Unevangelized* (1995); Edward W. Fudge & Robert A. Peterson, *Two Views of Hell: A Biblical and Theological Debate* (2000); Richard F. Carlson, ed., *Science and Christianity: Four Views* (2000); James K. Belby & Paul R. Eddy, eds., *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views* (2001); Gregory E. Ganssle, ed., *God and Time: Four Views* (2001); James K. Beilby & Paul R. Eddy, eds., *Nature of the Atonement: Four Views* (2006); P. C. Kemeny, ed., *Church, State and Public Justice: Five Views* (2007); Gordon T. Smith, ed., *Lord's Supper: Five Views* (2008); David F. Wright, ed., *Baptism: Three Views* (2009); James K. Beilby & Paul R. Eddy, eds., *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* (2009); Eric L. Johnson (ed.), *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, 2nd edition (2010); James K. Beilby, Paul Rhodes Eddy, eds., *Justification: Five Views* (2011); Stanley E. Porter and Beth M. Stovell, eds., *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views* (2012); R. Keith Loftin, *God and Morality: Four Views* (2012).

24. See Wayne A. Grudem, ed., *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views* (1996); Greg L. Bahnsen, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., David J. Moore, Douglas J. Moo, William VanGemeren, *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (1996); Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (1996); William Crockett, ed., *Four*

providing additional evidence of the competing beliefs held by evangelicals. Furthermore, Protestant scholars have broadened the scope of competing viewpoints beyond even what can be seen in these thirty-five volumes.<sup>25</sup>

Calvinists, like Al Mohler, are not pleased with the hodge-podge or jumble of Protestant beliefs. In the role of Gate Keepers of evangelical orthodoxy they tend to drift back closer to the older fundamentalism.<sup>26</sup> Those who both describe and

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*Views on Hell* (1996); Richard R. Reiter, Paul D. Fineberg, Gleason L. Archer, Douglas J. Moo, *Three Views on the Rapture*, revised edition (1996); C. Marvin Pate, ed., *Four Views on the Book of Revelation* (1998); J. P. Moreland & John Mark Reynolds, eds., *Three Views on Creation and Evolution* (1999); Darrell L. Bock, ed., *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond* (1999); Steven B. Cowan, ed., *Five Views on Apologetics* (2000); J. Matthew Pinson, ed., *Four Views on Eternal Security* (2002); C.S. Cowles, Daniel L. Gard, Eugene H. Merrill, Tremper Longman III, *Show Them No Mercy: Four Views on God and Canaanite Genocide* (2003); Paul E. Engle & Steven B. Cowan, eds., *Who Runs the Church? 4 Views on Church Government* (2004); James R. Beck, ed., *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, revised edition (2005); Kenneth Berding & Jonathan Lunde, eds., *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (2008); Gary T. Meadors, ed. *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology* (2009); and Gregory A. Boyd, William Lane Craig, Paul Kjoss Helseth, Ron Highfield, Dennis Jowers, *Four Views on Divine Providence* (2011).

25. See, for example, Gregory A. Boyd and Paul R. Eddy, *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic, 2002), which broadens and deepens the number of topics about which there is considerable disputation in evangelical circles. And see also Olson's remarkable *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*. I have addressed these two fine books in "On Caliban Mischief," xxv-xxxii.

26. Protestant fundamentalism rests in part on a series of papers published under the title *The Fundamentals*, ed. by R. A. Torrey, A. C. Dixon and others (that appeared in twelve volumes between 1910 and 1915, and is now available in various editions). While some large figures, for example, Benjamin B. Warfield, contributed, the essays in this series were generally by minor figures and also highly tendentious. See, for example, R. G. McNiece, "Mormonism: Its Origin, Characteristics, and Doctrine," which can be found in volume 4, pp. 109-124. [This essay can be accessed (as of 20 November 2012) at <http://www.biblebelievers.net/cults/mormonism/kjcmormd.htm> (also available at <http://user.xmission.com/~fidelis/volume4/chapter10/mcniece.php>).] McNiece, who claims to

celebrate diversity of beliefs are primarily not Calvinists who strive to shrink the range of permissible issues about which disagreement and debate is suitable. And it also explains their antipathy towards certain brands of contemporary Protestant theology such as Social Trinitarianism, Open Theism, and N. T. Wright's approach to Paul, all of which are much closer to LDS beliefs than Five-Point Calvinism.

Latter-day Saints are familiar with defections within their own community, and are also insistent on a debilitating Great Apostasy that made necessary the restoration of the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The apostasy was great but not total or complete. Latter-day Saints are not adverse to accepting the self-identification as Christian of virtually any individual or group. This is, however, not the case among contemporary conservative Protestants, who tend to have serious misgivings about the Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions. Roger Olson, whose historical scholarship I admire, while denying that the Church of Jesus Christ is Christian, will worship with Calvinists. The reason is that he believes they are Christ-centered.

My own experience with both Orthodox and Roman Catholic worship and dogmatic theology indicates that, despite the large differences from my own beliefs and mode of worship, they are both at their best clearly Christ-centered and hence Christian. I overlook the inevitable hypocrisy at the chapel or cathedral door. I look, instead, for signs of sanctification rather than proper presumably orthodox theology. Conservative Protestants, and those with fundamentalist proclivities such as those often found in the sectarian countercult industry, of-

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have been for twenty years the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Salt Lake City, ends his diatribe with the following remark: "It is difficult for any one to study this Mormon system as a whole, without coming to the conclusion that there is something in it beyond the power of man, something positively Satanic" (p. 124). The more extreme elements of the dreadful countercult industry build on this bizarre notion.

ten claim that the faith of Latter-day Saints does not comport with what they believe is biblical, historic, creedal Christianity. Unfortunately versions of this opinion turn up among distinguished evangelical scholars.

Even some who are aware of the rubbish spewed out against the Church of Jesus Christ by countercultists, and who have themselves been the targets of countercult revilement, are inclined to make a distinction between what they describe as the “mainstream Christian tradition” and what the Saints believe. Richard Mouw, for example, tells us that among what he calls “mainstream Christianity in all its forms”—that is, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant—there has always been a plethora of arguments “carried on . . . within the mainstream of Christianity.”<sup>27</sup> He illustrates his point by mentioning quarrels between Protestants and Roman Catholics over whether there “are additional sources of revealed truth” other than merely the Bible, or with Eastern Orthodox over “divinization” (or *theosis*).<sup>28</sup>

## Competing Master Narratives

The large branches of Christian faith—that is, the Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Latter-day Saints, as well as the various varieties of Protestantism, each have their own narrative (or, a complex of somewhat competing stories) with which they strive to distinguish themselves from other Christian traditions. *Spectrum* supports my belief that there is a wide array of competing beliefs on a host of important issues within contemporary conservative

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27. Richard Mouw, *Talking with Mormons: An Invitation to Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 48.

28. C. S. Lewis, an evangelical favorite, believed in *theosis*. And N. T. Wright finds it in the New Testament. See Midgley, review of Nicholas Perrin and Richard B. Hays, eds., *Jesus, Paul and the People of God: A Theological Dialogue with N. T. Wright* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), in *Mormon Studies Review* 23/1 (2011):180–183.

Protestantism. Master narratives make known each tradition (or, or in the case of Protestants, faction) to its own communicants by picturing itself as the authentic bearer of the original Apostolic Christian faith and hence the *true church*, while the other traditions are understood as flawed, as lesser or inferior versions of Christian faith, or as flatly false. Primarily because of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, the Latter-day Saints see themselves as the covenant people of God. This prevents both the Saints and also their sectarian critics from confusing the Church of Jesus Christ with some version of evangelicalism. I see this as both desirable and providential.

*Louis Midgley (PhD, Brown University) is an emeritus professor of political science at Brigham Young University. Dr. Midgley has had an abiding interest in the history of Christian theology. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on Paul Tillich, the then-famous German-American Protestant theologian and political theorist/religious-socialist activist. Midgley also studied the writings of other influential Protestant theologians such as Karl Barth. Eventually he took an interest in contemporary Roman Catholic theology, and was also impacted by the work of important Jewish philosophers, including especially Leo Strauss and his disciples.*









