

ABSTRACT

A Critical Biography of Bernard Ramm: An Exemplar of the Development
of a Neo-Evangelical-Baptist Identity in the American Baptist Convention

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Bernard Ramm (1916–1992) was an American Baptist (ABC-USA) theologian who lived during the heart of the twentieth century. His embrace of the neo-evangelical movement, which arose during the 1940s, led to the development of a unique neo-evangelical-Baptist identity. Through his own theological journey and crises, Ramm was instrumental in helping American Protestants break free of the confining theological commitments of militant and isolationist fundamentalism so that Christians would be able once again to re-engage with the culture and grow theologically.

This dissertation outlines a history of the American Baptist denomination as well as American Protestant Fundamentalism in order to set a context for the rise of the neo-evangelical movement and Ramm's place within it. The dissertation then offers a detailed biography of Ramm's life and the reasons behind his departure away from fundamentalism and toward neo-evangelicalism. Ramm's theological journey is particularly highlighted through his work on the rapprochement of science and Christianity, as well as through his professional and personal relationships and

subsequent writings. Ramm's place in Christian history is critical as one who helped to validate the neo-evangelical movement as well as the interplay between science and faith in order to help reclaim evangelical identity and history.

A Critical Biography of Bernard Ramm: An Exemplar of the Development
of a Neo-Evangelical-Baptist Identity in the American Baptist Convention

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC-USA	American Baptist Convention (“American Baptists”)
ABHMS	American Baptist Home Mission Society
ABSW	American Baptist Seminary of the West
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ASA	American Scientific Affiliation
BBU	Bible Baptist Union
BIOLA	Bible Institute of Los Angeles
BWA	Baptist World Alliance
CBA	Conservative Baptist Association of America
CBTS	California Baptist Theological Seminary
CVSS	<i>The Christian View of Science and Scripture</i>
EBTS	Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary
FCC	Federal Council of Churches
GARB	General Association of Regular Baptists
GARBC	General Association of Regular Baptist Churches
GMC	General Missionary Convention
GTU	Graduate Theological Union
NAE	National Association of Evangelicals
NBC	Northern Baptist Convention (“Northern Baptists”)
NCC	National Council of Churches
SAMBICA	Sammamish Bible Camp Association

SBC	Southern Baptist Convention
SCODS	Study Commission on Denominational Structures
USC	University of Southern California
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCFA	World Christian Fundamentals Association
YFC	Youth for Christ
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Introduction and Purpose

In the 1940s, American neo-evangelicalism emerged when conservative Christians and fundamentalists acknowledged that some of their number had become overly aggressive, militant, and separatist in relation to other Christians and towards American culture.¹ Rather than separate from the world, they sought to engage society as well as practice active evangelism.² They called themselves “new evangelicals” and came from all denominations, as evidenced by the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) during the early 1940s.³ Founding members of the NAE, which drew

¹ Use of the term “fundamentalist” (spelled with a lower case “f”) is to speak broadly of those who claimed to adhere to the five fundamentals (inerrancy, virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection, and visible return of Jesus) as well as those who identified with the teachings included in the multi-volume *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, Vols. 1–7, (Chicago: Testimony Publishing Company, 1910–1915), published by the Stewart brothers between 1910 and 1915. Those labeled as Fundamentalists (spelled with a capital “F”) will refer to those who were additionally militantly separatist with regards to other Christians as well as the broader American culture.

² A lengthy treatise on American Fundamentalism can be found in George Marsden’s *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) and *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) as well as Matthew Avery Sutton’s *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), which describe Fundamentalist withdrawal and separatism versus Evangelical engagement with the culture.

³ Using their own term of self-identification, “neo-evangelical” will be used to describe those in the movement emerging in the 1940s, especially as tied together through the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). These neo-evangelicals also referred to themselves as “evangelicals,” though they should be distinguished from the broader evangelical movement, which historians have traced back for several centuries in Western Christianity. The seminal text, George F. Marsden’s *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), describes the rise of neo-evangelicals and their characteristics. For an example of the broader evangelical history in the English-speaking world, see the five-volume series edited by David W. Bebbington and Mark A. Noll, *A History of Evangelicalism: People, Movements and Ideas in the English-Speaking World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003–2017). Marsden’s text *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* also aids in distinguishing between the two, pointing out unique characteristics of each.

from various denominations, sought to express their faith through adherence to orthodox belief, intimate re-engagement with the culture, and active evangelism. The NAE grew rapidly in the mid-1900s, with subsequent new members – on individual, church, or denominational levels – and this rapid growth reflected the popularity of the evangelical movement across longstanding, traditional denominational lines.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the interplay with and influence of the evangelical movement in the life of the American Baptist theologian Bernard Ramm (1916–1992). Specifically, the dissertation will explore his role in the development of a neo-evangelical-Baptist identity within the American Baptist Convention (ABC-USA), via his interest in and interaction with science, an examination of his writings, and his association with the membership of the ABC-USA and with other noteworthy neo-evangelicals. Ramm remained a committed and conservative Baptist throughout his life, but his approach to science as well as his collaboration with groups, such as the evangelical American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), and his work with neo-evangelical journals positioned Ramm to establish and demonstrate the presence of a neo-evangelical identity within the ABC. The ABC, like many denominations, displayed a spectrum of belief among its members, but as it moved in the early twentieth century towards a more progressive position, many conservative members of the ABC perceived the NAE as an enticing option. The NAE's focus on cooperating with other Christians, re-engaging with society, and grappling with the various issues that faced them, including science and evolution, appealed strongly to thoughtful conservatives like Ramm.⁴

⁴ H. Leon MacBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 563. The chapter on “Northern Baptists” also includes a description of the attacks, both external and internal, by Fundamentalists on Northern Baptists in the early and middle decades of the

As a youth, Ramm wished to pursue a career in science and planned to enter the University of Washington as an engineering student. It was his dramatic conversion to Christ, however, at a Christian summer camp before college that eventually turned him towards a life in theology. Despite his conversion, Ramm continued to participate in discussions over the scientific issues of his day.⁵ Ramm was unafraid and boldly confronted the difficult topics facing not only neo-evangelicals, but American Christians as a whole as well. Ramm was drawn towards and eventually identified himself among neo-evangelicals.⁶ He hoped to push fellow conservative Baptists to engage, rather than withdraw from, these issues. Thus, although the ABC never joined the NAE, Ramm remained within the ABC denomination and began to bring the ideas and approaches of neo-evangelicals into the ABC through his significant thought, writings, and theological work, and helped to create and sustain a neo-evangelical-Baptist identity as an option among American Baptists.

Historiography

The split between Fundamentalists and American evangelicals is well documented, and the study by Christian Smith is an example of others who have traced

twentieth century, further explaining the move of some in the denomination away from the militancy and separatism of Fundamentalists and the appeal of an evangelical position.

⁵ Ramm's father, a non-Christian, threatened to not support Ramm's college education financially if he chose to pursue religious studies. Ramm attended the University of Washington, Seattle, as an engineering student but dedicated much time to reading and study of religion. Ramm's combination of religion and science are seen in his master's thesis, "The Idealism of Jeans and Eddington in Modern Physical Theory" (1947), and Ph.D. dissertation titled "An Investigation of Some Recent Efforts to Justify Metaphysical Statements Derived from Science with Special Reference to Physics" (1950), which focused on the philosophy of science. Both degrees were completed at the University of Southern California.

⁶ It is striking that Ramm's last unpublished manuscript is titled, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind." This manuscript, which Ramm calls his "spiritual autobiography," as well as interviews with Ramm's children detail this move towards evangelicalism.

this rise and development of American neo-evangelicalism in the middle of the twentieth century.⁷ In histories of evangelicalism in America, emphasis is usually placed on significant figures such as Billy Graham and his evangelistic campaigns and the rise of institutions like Fuller Seminary. Indeed, they are almost “stock” examples of American neo-evangelicalism in the mid-twentieth century. What is missing from this American neo-evangelical tale, however, is mention of the American Baptist Convention and one of its key members, Bernard Ramm. Histories of the American Baptist Convention are sparse and usually stop at mid-century, and any descriptions of how the neo-evangelical movement affected this significant American denomination goes largely unmentioned. It is noteworthy that of the major recent Baptist histories, emphasis usually remains upon the Southern Baptist Convention, while the American Baptist Churches often receive little coverage. William H. Brackney’s *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective* gives four pages to the denomination, and C. Douglas Weaver’s *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story* provides ten. With the brevity of coverage comes almost no mention of how the denomination interacted with the American neo-evangelical movement.⁸ Brackney’s *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought: with Special Reference to Baptists in Britain and North America* references conservative Baptists and their thought, but Brackney offers nothing comprehensive that details the conservative

⁷ Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1998). Smith’s study is one among many studies that have traced the rise of neo-evangelicalism in America.

⁸ William H. Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006). C. Douglas Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008).

movement among Baptists, Northern or Southern, as a whole.⁹ H. Leon MacBeth's wide-ranging, two-volume *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* allocates forty-five pages to American Baptists beginning with its formation in 1908 onwards but has no discussion of any involvement with neo-evangelicalism and has a conspicuous thirty-five-year gap in his discussion on ABC engagement with the culture between the late 1940s and the early 1980s.¹⁰

Likewise, there are few biographies of Bernard Ramm, despite his importance as a Baptist theologian of the twentieth century. Lack of coverage on Ramm may be attributable to his absence from the public spotlight or the fact he did not hold primary posts of leadership in either ABC or neo-evangelical institutions or organizations. His importance, though, is palpable, since numerous texts cite his work and influence. Multiple encyclopedic texts, which include significant Baptists, usually have only brief mention of Ramm, his work as a theologian, his study with Karl Barth in Basel during a sabbatical year, and a summary statement regarding his extensive and prodigious writing career.¹¹ There exist a few dissertations on Ramm, but these address aspects of his theology; there is no book length investigation of Ramm, little to nothing about his

⁹ William H. Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought: with Special Reference to Baptists in Britain and North America* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004). As an example of this, Brackney discusses Ramm's work as "a leading, if not the premier voice among Neo-evangelicals," but does not describe Ramm's historical context or how Ramm made the move towards becoming a neo-evangelical.

¹⁰ H. Leon MacBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 563–608.

¹¹ Brackney's four pages on Ramm in *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought: with Special Reference to Baptists in Britain and North America* is an example of this. Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought: with Special Reference to Baptists in Britain and North America*, 499–503. Books on Karl Barth's influence in American evangelicalism usually cite Ramm, but focus more on Barth's neo-orthodox theological influence. An example is Philip R. Thorne, *Evangelicalism and Karl Barth: His Reception and Influence in North American Evangelical Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 1995).

involvement with the American Baptist Convention, and almost no mention of Ramm's work with the ASA and his work in science aside from Roger E. Olson's *20th Century Theology* and Christopher Rios's *After the Monkey Trial: Evangelical Scientists and a New Creationism*.¹² Aside from a single paragraph in Brackney's *Genetic History* and a mention in James Leo Garrett, Glenn Hinson, and James Tull's *Are Southern Baptists Evangelicals?* there is certainly no coverage on Ramm's involvement with the American neo-evangelical movement or how he married his studies in theology, his commitment to Baptist faith, and his interest in science to add to the developing American neo-evangelical identity in the nation as a whole or specifically within the American Baptist Convention.¹³ Alan Day's chapter on Bernard Ramm clearly identifies Ramm as a "new evangelical" but does not explain in detail how Ramm moved towards an neo-evangelical identity.¹⁴ With this critical biography of Ramm's life, gaps in the study of American neo-evangelicalism with regards to the ABC, Ramm's interest in and use of science, as well as Ramm's biographical history will be filled and will demonstrate his critical

¹² There are four separate dissertations - Alan Day (New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1969), David Wayne Miller (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982), Richard Albert Mohler, Jr., (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989), and Michael McGowan (The Claremont Graduate University, 2012) - that deal with Ramm's theological ideas. Two others discuss Ramm's views on nature and revelation, but also from a decidedly theological view, rather than historical viewpoint - Warren Harvey Johns (Andrews University, 2005) and Andrew M. Mutero (Andrews University, 2006). See section on Bernard Ramm in Roger E. Olson and Stanley J. Grenz's *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), and various pages on Ramm in Christopher M. Rios, *After the Monkey Trial: Evangelical Scientists and a New Creationism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

¹³ Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought: with Special Reference to Baptists in Britain and North America*, 503. James Leo Garrett, Jr. E. Glenn Hinson, and James E. Tull, *Are Southern Baptists "Evangelicals"?* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 213. It is striking that Ramm's name comes up in a discussion of Southern Baptists and evangelicalism, when Ramm was an American Baptist.

¹⁴ Alan Day, "Bernard Ramm," in *Baptist Theologians*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1990), 588-605. Day notes Ramm's identity as an evangelical as well as his continued pushing of fellow evangelicals towards "following truth, scientific or otherwise, wherever it led" (590). At the end of the article, Day states the need for a deeper and fuller investigation of Ramm's life and work (600). The chapter focuses heavily on Ramm's theology, which was the topic of Day's Ph.D. dissertation.

importance to both groups. For many historians of Christianity, Ramm was a significant figure, but his personal story and his work within the ABC denomination to develop a neo-evangelical identity remain untold.

Ramm was a highly prolific writer. He published twenty-four books and hundreds of articles, both scholarly and devotional, throughout his academic career. Ramm's theological books were widely used within seminaries, American and Southern Baptist as well as non-Baptist.¹⁵ Ramm's works, though utilized in several theological studies, have not been analyzed within an historical context. What made Ramm particularly well known in the evangelical community was the publication of his book, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, as well as his work with the American Scientific Affiliation.¹⁶ In the ASA, Ramm interacted with fellow Christian academics and scientists seeking to understand how to engage the Christian faith in a meaningful manner with the scientific world at large. In *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, Ramm put forth the idea that committed Christians can and should engage with scientific research and that evolutionary theories could be harmonized with scripture. Both Fundamentalists and non-Christian scientists chafed at this idea, but Ramm as a conservative American Baptist clearly worked to establish an identity that would engage fully with the culture and science while retaining conservative beliefs. Eventually Ramm became a contributing editor of the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, the ASA's periodical, contributed his own articles, and participated regularly in ASA meetings. Indeed, at the

¹⁵ An example of this is Ramm's *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics for Conservative Protestants* (Boston: Wilde, 1956), which was used in many seminaries both in America and internationally.

¹⁶ Bernard L. Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954).

end of his career, Ramm was feted with a festschrift not only from theological and religious peers, but from the ASA as well, recognizing the work and contributions he had made to the neo-evangelical organization.¹⁷ Thus, analysis of Ramm's works would provide historical contextualization for Ramm's work and the development of neo-evangelical thought and identity within the ABC.

Methodology and Significance of the Study

This study will serve as a thematic biography of Ramm's life, exploring how he contributed to the development of a neo-evangelical-Baptist identity within the ABC-USA. To do this, the study will begin with a historiographical background of American neo-evangelicalism and the ABC. Then the dissertation will move into a critical biography of Ramm's personal life, drawn from his own published writings, his unpublished "spiritual autobiography," and interviews with Ramm's surviving family members.¹⁸ Ramm's academic as well as devotional publications will develop a portrait of Ramm as a committed Baptist as well as a neo-evangelical who wished to help other Christians tackle and face dilemmas while engaging with the culture at large. By bringing Ramm's life and writings under greater scrutiny, this will not only aid in the understanding of Ramm as a key Baptist theologian and scholar, but will also create a bridge into greater study of the American Baptist denomination as a whole, as well as understanding of American neo-evangelicalism within the ABC.

¹⁷ Stanley Grenz, ed., *Perspectives on Theology in the Contemporary World: Essays in Honor of Bernard Ramm* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990). See also articles in honor of Bernard Ramm in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (formerly *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*) (Dec 1979).

¹⁸ The wording of the "spiritual autobiography" is from Ramm in his unpublished last book. I have interviewed Ramm's children, and have obtained a full copy of, as well as exclusive permission from the family to utilize, the manuscript.

Outline

This dissertation presents in six chapters a critical biography of Bernard Ramm's life, with an emphasis on investigating his dual identity as an American Baptist as well as a key member of the emerging neo-evangelical movement of the mid-twentieth century.

Chapter Two provides a history of the American Baptist Convention, beginning with the early organization of Baptists in America and their later division between North and South. The national division led to the development of different characteristics between the two large groups of Baptists, and the emphasis on church autonomy in the North provided Ramm with greater freedom to explore and develop new theological ideas. The Northern Baptist Convention (NBC) also experienced internal division due to diversity of views over theology, and militant conservatives within the denomination broke away to form their own organizations and assumed a Fundamentalist position. With the ABC leaning towards the liberal mainstream in its majority identity, there remained still a theologically conservative party among its members, within which Ramm worked and interacted with both American Baptists and neo-evangelicals. Conservatives who rejected Fundamentalism and remained within the NBC, such as Ramm, sought a theological position that would retain orthodoxy without falling into Fundamentalist isolationism or "obscurantism." The chapter then shifts to a historical background of American Protestant Fundamentalism and the emergence of the neo-evangelical movement as a reaction against it. The rise of the neo-evangelical movement in the 1940s appealed to conservatives like Ramm, and this chapter argues that he utilized aspects of the American Baptist and neo-evangelical identities to create space where he could develop his theology more freely.

Chapter Three begins with Ramm's personal history: his family background, his interests in science from a young age, his conversion to Christianity just before entering college, his college and post-graduate education, and the beginning of his ministry. Brief histories exist on Ramm, but much of the material comes from oral interviews with family members as well as a final, unpublished manuscript – his “spiritual autobiography” – written shortly before his death. Together, these sources help to demonstrate the theological turn away from his fundamentalist background and towards neo-evangelicalism, which began during the 1940s. This chapter argues that this turn in the 1940s, along with the publication of his book, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (1954), as well his study with Karl Barth during the 1957–1958 academic year proved to be key turning points for Ramm's theology.

Chapter Four deals specifically with Ramm's scientific views, beginning with his post-graduate work at the University of Southern California (USC) while simultaneously teaching at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA), and moving into the publication of his book, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. Through his studies at USC and his experience while teaching at BIOLA, this chapter will argue that Ramm realized the limitations of Fundamentalist views, especially in science, and abandoned them to forge a new philosophy of science and create a new model of understanding the relationship between science and Christianity, which were displayed through the publication of *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*.

Chapter Five builds upon the foundations of the previous chapters to grasp an understanding of Ramm's perspectives through an analysis of his work, writings, and interpersonal interactions. After his theological shift in the 1950s, Ramm's commitment

to neo-evangelical principles is illustrated through his subsequent works, such as his continued interest in science, while retaining his identity as an American Baptist. His identity as both a neo-evangelical and as an American Baptist is also demonstrated through his interaction with other significant historical figures in American Protestantism, such as Billy Graham, Carl F.H. Henry, and Edward Carnell, as well as his work in American Baptist institutions and his engagement with American Baptist leaders and events. This chapter argues that Ramm's developing dual identity not only allowed him to develop his theology, but also created space for other American Protestants to expand and develop their theology as well.

Chapter Six provides a conclusion that summarizes the impact of Ramm's writings and theology upon twentieth-century American Protestantism, especially among American Baptists and neo-evangelicals. Ramm's dual identity as an American Baptist and as a neo-evangelical reflected his willingness to venture into new arenas and engage with other Christians and helped subsequent Christians across the Protestant spectrum to expand and explore Christian theology in new ways.

CHAPTER TWO

The Context and Background of the American Baptist Convention and the Neo-evangelical Movement

Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to demonstrate that Bernard Ramm is an exemplar of a neo-evangelical presence within the American Baptist Convention (ABC).¹ Thus, it is necessary to provide a background of the theological and political conditions of the ABC during the time of Ramm's career. To do this, I will begin by sketching the history of Baptists from colonial America through the ABC's formation and consolidation during the first part of the twentieth century. Then I will explain the various changes and political clashes that occurred over theological issues and led to divisions within the ABC. Additionally, I will briefly trace the rise of the neo-evangelical movement, from its roots in Fundamentalism and reaction against it. By sketching these backgrounds, this will show how Bernard Ramm, who remained a part of the ABC throughout his lifetime, demonstrated both a conservative and neo-evangelical character, despite the fact that other conservative groups and denominations formed, which Ramm could have joined but did not. Ramm remained a member of the northern denomination and developed his influential theology and career within the ABC while in dialogue with members of the

¹ Throughout this dissertation, those in the Northern Baptist Convention, American Baptist Convention, or American Baptist Churches of the USA will be referred to interchangeably either as the Northern Baptist Convention (NBC) or Northern Baptists, or the American Baptist Convention (ABC) or American Baptists, depending on timeframe. The Northern Baptist Convention (NBC) formally incorporated in 1908, changed its name to the American Baptist Convention (ABC in 1950), and changed its name once again in 1972 to the American Baptist Churches of the United States of America (ABC-USA). When speaking of other Baptists or Baptist groups in America, the term "Baptists in America" or "Baptists in the United States" or a specific denominational term will be used to distinguish among them.

neo-evangelical movement. Because of his work, Ramm helped to create a space for conservatives remaining within the ABC, in which he and others later were able to explore new ideas and concepts and to interact with other Christians in an effort to develop theology and reconcile faith with rational understanding.

A Brief History of the American Baptist Convention

The Historical Roots of Baptists in America

Baptists in America trace their roots to the venerable Roger Williams, who, by living out his convictions regarding religious freedom, left the Massachusetts colony in 1636, purchased land from the Narraganset tribe, and established a settlement at Providence.² There, Williams founded the first Baptist church in America and created an environment of religious freedom for the residents of what would later become the Rhode Island colony. In his excellent history of the Baptists, C. Douglas Weaver notes that Williams had four “particularly dangerous” assertions: 1) the lands being absorbed into the colonies belonged to the Native Americans, which necessitated payment by the settlers; 2) governments should not and cannot require anyone to swear or pray; 3) the colonists needed to completely separate from the English religious establishment; and 4) the authority of government was limited to the “second table” (civil laws) of the Ten Commandments.³ Adoption of such radical ideas aimed to separate the church from the dominion of the state, and loyalists to the state church understandably rejected any such

² C. Douglas Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 33–35. Weaver’s second chapter is an excellent recounting of the historical developments surrounding the Baptists in America with an emphasis on Baptists’ adherence to scripture and historical tendency towards restorationism of the early church.

³ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 33–34.

notions. Others, such as John Clarke and Anne Hutchinson, followed Williams along similar ideological paths and found refuge in the nearby Providence settlement.⁴ Although it would take another century for the concepts of religious liberty to be incorporated legally by the Constitution of the United States, this understanding of church freedom and individual freedom of conscience became engrained deeply into Baptist faith in America. Despite the persecution of religious leaders in the neighboring colonies, Baptists continued to grow slowly at first but steadily in number over the next two centuries and spread into the other regions as they held to their beliefs of freedom of conscience and church independence.

In the late eighteenth century, as the rise of appeals for representative government as well as the revivalistic “Awakenings” spread throughout the colonies, Baptist principles became more appealing to colonists. Baptists believed that their dependence on the Holy Spirit and palpable conversion events matched with their ecclesiological emphases of voluntary adult decisions and personal experience. Also, the soteriological principle of complete religious liberty for believers (and non-believers) of any kind paralleled the calls for political sovereignty from the English monarchy.⁵ The Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689 and the Act of Toleration under William and Mary relieved the

⁴ Thomas S. Kidd and Barry Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 9–18.

⁵ The principles established by English Baptists and later Baptists in America, like Roger Williams, set a precedent of being willing to resist the state government for principles of conscience. Leaders such as Thomas Helwys and his 1612 book, *The Mystery of Iniquity* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1935), along with Roger Williams and his 1644 publication, *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience: Discussed in a Conference Between Truth and Peace, who, in All Tender Affection, Present to the High Court of Parliament, (as the result of their discourse) These, (among other passages) of Highest Consideration*, ed. Richard Groves (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001), demonstrate such convictions.

oppression of Baptists by giving freedom to Protestant Christians in the colonies.⁶ Baptist evangelists began to preach freely and effectively and gain more converts. The turn towards emphasis upon the personal revival experience influenced many towards churches that were comprised of confessed believers, who were then baptized. Led by zealous preachers such as Shubal Stearns and his sister Martha, as well as firebrands like John Leland, Baptist churches spread quickly throughout the southern colonies. What was once tens of churches in individual colonies soon became hundreds of congregations with thousands of members.

As Baptists continued to spread and grow, a cooperative, organizational structure was implemented in order to help Baptist churches maximize their effectiveness. Soon, Baptist associations and voluntary societies cautiously emerged, taking great care not to appear to be hierarchical powers along the lines of the Anglican and Catholic hierarchies they so vehemently rejected.⁷ Associations did not have the power to enforce church doctrine upon individual churches, but they could exclude, or “disfellowship,” churches believed to be in violation of core tenets of the faith.⁸ The associations helped churches to offer wisdom and counsel to one another over difficult issues and to organize efforts and

⁶ Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America*, 22.

⁷ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 54, 89. In its third chapter, William Brackney’s history of Baptists in North America offers an excellent summary of the growth of Baptists in the English colonies starting with their cooperation through voluntary associations. William H. Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006). Bill Leonard briefly, but masterfully, traces the rise of the associations in Baptist history in Bill J. Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 155–156.

⁸ Written evidence for the practice of disfellowshipping churches is recorded at times in various associational minutes, particularly over controversial issues. Elizabeth Flowers makes note of this practice in her text on the controversy surrounding the ordination of female preachers and deacons in the Southern Baptist Convention during the 1980s in *Into the Pulpit: Southern Baptist Women and Power Since World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 111–112. Also see Deborah Vansau McCauley’s description of the 1926 disfellowshipping of a “disruptive” pastor in Ducktown, Tennessee, in *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 94, 302.

resources related to missions. Although Baptists coordinated with one another through the associational structure, the independence and autonomy of local congregations remained central to Baptist identity.⁹ Additionally, Baptist preachers like John Leland and Isaac Backus continued to preach freedom and responsibility of the individual conscience and separation from the influence of a coercive state upon religious belief.¹⁰ People arriving in the English colonies seeking greater personal freedoms could find a place for expression of individual liberty among Baptists. Thus, as the move towards political revolution gained steam in the latter half of the eighteenth century, culminating in armed conflict, the Baptist principles of freedom aligned with the mood of the nation and helped Baptists to gain prominence among the people of the new republic.¹¹

With newfound freedom and vast tracts of territory being incorporated into the fabric of the nation, Baptist revivals and mission work spread rapidly on the ever-expanding frontiers.¹² People living in the “land of liberty,” especially on the edges of the country, embraced a faith that empowered their freedom.¹³ This democratic and populist

⁹ These freedoms of the individual conscience, or “soul,” and the autonomy of the local church are identified by Walter B. Shurden as two of four core freedoms essential to Baptist identity in chapters 2 and 3 of *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1993), 23–44. Leonard also counts these among six Baptist distinctives he defines in Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003), 88–90. These six parallel E.Y. Mullins’s six religious “axioms” defined in E.Y. Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion: A New Interpretation of the Baptist Faith*, ed. C. Douglas Weaver (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010).

¹⁰ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 66–68. Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 99.

¹¹ In his entry on “American Baptists in the U.S.A.,” J. Gordon Melton in *The Encyclopedia of American Religions* (Wilmington, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1978), 357, 366, notes that some characteristics that increased the appeal of Baptists were their freedom to engage in civic life, unlike the Anabaptist traditions, a voluntary clergy, and a revivalism rooted in the free-will decision of adults to believe.

¹² Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 88.

¹³ The first chapter of Hatch’s text also discusses the parallelism between the emerging democratic republic of the United States and its religious expression in groups that were perceived to most reflect democratic and populist principles, particularly the Methodists and Baptists.

impulse propelled the Baptists outwards into the new territories. Soon, Baptist mission work led to Baptist churches spreading throughout the American South and West.¹⁴ This sense of individual and church freedom would never vanish from the Baptists in the northern states and would later figure into the controversies that would engulf Baptists over the next two centuries. This freedom led to rapid growth of Baptist congregations on the frontiers, and the rapid spreading of Baptist churches soon led to calls for organization, cooperation, and discussion among Baptists so as to most effectively utilize resources and manpower.¹⁵

Early Baptist Organization and Division

Though cooperative efforts had occurred prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century, American Baptists most strongly trace their roots to the formal emergence of the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1814.¹⁶ The Philadelphia group had actually organized several decades earlier, but the gathering of thirty-three prominent Baptist leaders and representatives in May 1814 expanded the group's reach and led to the first nationally centralized gathering of Baptists in the United States.¹⁷ These leaders met with

¹⁴ Hatch notes that the population of Baptists grew tenfold between the American Revolution and the early 1800s and that the number of Baptist churches grew from 500 to 2,500 during the same period. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 3.

¹⁵ Hatch notes that by 1813, there were more than two thousand churches, representing over two hundred thousand Baptists, cooperating through over one hundred associations. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 94, 271n.90.

¹⁶ Most texts readily cite this date as an organizational watershed for Baptists in America. See Edward Caryl Starr, "American Baptist Convention," in *Baptist Advance: The Achievements of the Baptists of North America for a Century and a Half*, ed. Davis Collier Woolley, et al (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1964), 29–30; also in Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 93–95; in Norman H. Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1968), 31; and in Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 91–92.

¹⁷ Maring records the original founding of the Philadelphia Association in 1707. Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 42.

the purpose of helping the various and scattered voluntary associations throughout the country to organize and streamline their missional and ministerial efforts in the most effective manner possible.¹⁸ Since the hope was that this meeting would be replicated every three years, the group soon became known as the Triennial Convention or General Missionary Convention (GMC), as its initial focus was on support of foreign missionary work.¹⁹ The Triennial Convention soon included other efforts under its organizational umbrella, such as the founding of educational institutions across the country to help train and prepare Baptist ministers. Hopewell Academy and Rhode Island College (later Brown University) had been established in 1756 and 1764, respectively, but some Baptists believed in the need for more training institutions.²⁰ In his history of the American Baptist Convention, archivist Edward Caryl Starr notes, “At the meeting of the Convention in 1820... delegates from educational societies were added, and the Board was specifically directed to erect buildings, appoint instructors, and determine salaries when the Convention had selected a site for a theological institution.”²¹ Christian literature and Bibles were also needed for new Baptist believers, so a publishing house was established in 1824 to help meet those needs as well.²² Efforts such as these, though,

¹⁸ Mission boards were elected to coordinate mission activity between the triennially-held conventions. Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 30. Maring notes that each state had its own educational society to encourage ministerial education; coordination of and cooperation between these societies was an aim. Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 31.

¹⁹ Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 30. Domestic missions was entrusted to a separate voluntary society, the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, in 1832. See also Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 90–91.

²⁰ Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 30. Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 44.

²¹ Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 31.

²² *Ibid.*, 33; Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 117–118. Deborah Van Broekhoven writes about the work of the American Baptist Publication Society and the Bible societies.

were not without debate; establishment of any consolidated entities were met with resistance, as many Baptists eyed movement toward centralization suspiciously as a gateway to tyranny and oppression of individual churches.²³ The tendency, generally, was that Baptists in the South, such as Richard Furman, favored a centralized denominational structure, while Baptists in the North, such as Francis Wayland, favored the less threatening, decentralized associational model. Nonetheless, the cooperation of these education and publication societies helped Baptists to spread rapidly in the new territories.²⁴

Because of the efforts of the Triennial Convention throughout the nineteenth century, Baptists continued to grow nationwide, but the conflict over slavery, which roiled the country and would soon escalate into warfare, eventually became a divisive force among Baptists as well.²⁵ By the 1840s, the conflict between Northerners and Southerners came to a head as some anti-slavery Baptists from the North elevated their rhetoric and refused to fellowship with Baptists from the South.²⁶ The Alabama Baptist

Deborah Van Broekhoven, "American Baptists," in *The Baptist River: Essays on Many Tributaries of a Diverse Tradition* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006), 29.

²³ Starr, "American Baptist Convention," 32–33. Weaver also notes this tension between voluntarism and society work versus centralized denominational structure. Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 89–90.

²⁴ In his landmark history of Baptists in America, Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, Third Edition (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1950, 1963, 1978), 445–446, describes the growth of educational institutions in the expanding country. Most relevant to the life of Bernard Ramm would be the founding of Bethel Theological Seminary in 1871, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1925, and California Baptist Theological Seminary in 1944, which merged with American Baptist Seminary of the West in 1974.

²⁵ Weaver's fourth chapter outlines the growing tension between North and South over the issue of slavery in antebellum America. Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 101–113. Also in Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 48.

²⁶ William H. Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 65.

Association in turn refused to submit funds to the Triennial Convention.²⁷ During the Triennial Conventions of 1841 and 1844, abolitionists and slavery supporters were often at loggerheads in terms of how to address the issue of slavery among its members. Each side, obviously, wished to impose its views upon the Convention as a whole, and cautious diplomatic efforts led to carefully crafted statements that, it was hoped, would keep the divisive issue at bay so that the focus could remain on missions and support of missionary activity. With the 1841 meeting of the GMC, tensions were temporarily relieved with the formulation of the so-called “Baltimore Compromise,” which resolved to focus on “sending the glad tidings to the heathen,” and again at the 1844 GMC meeting with an agreement to avoid “all sanction of slavery or anti-slavery.”²⁸

The conflict was not so easily settled, however, as the Georgia Baptist Convention put forth a test case of missionary James Reeves, a slaveholder, within days after the close of the 1844 convention.²⁹ Southerners put forth Reeves’s application to the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) as a missionary to Native Americans to see if the “Compromise” would really apply. By doing so, both Baptists in the North and South would know clearly where they stood on the issue. The Board of the ABHMS, which was dominated by Northerners, voted along regional lines and refused to approve Reeves’s application. Later that same year, Alabama Baptists sent requests to the GMC, asking for support for their foreign missionaries, citing that all GMC missionaries – slave

²⁷ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 288. The Alabama Baptist Association threatened to withhold funds from Board of Foreign Missions if they remain connected to abolitionist groups.

²⁸ The attempted compromise is corroborated in both Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 289, and in Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 110.

²⁹ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 291; Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 110. Torbet records the missionary’s name as “Reeves,” while Weaver cites it as “Reeve”; other historical accounts vary between the two versions as well.

holding or not – were entitled to support under the GMC constitution.³⁰ The foreign secretary, Solomon Peck, stated that the GMC would “never be party to any arrangement which would imply approbation of slavery.”³¹ With the battle lines clearly drawn, the conflict between Baptists in the North and South was headed towards separation, and ultimately Baptists in the South withdrew from fellowship with Baptists of the North, citing irreconcilable differences and “unconstitutional” actions taken by the GMC board. Baptists in the South eventually banded together around their common social and economic interests, and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) formed in 1845.³²

Division between Baptists in the North and South continued throughout and after the Civil War to the end of the nineteenth century, leading to a distinct contrast and division between the two groups. As stated above, the South tended to favor centralized denominational structure, while the North favored a voluntary associational model.³³ Because of the final division between North and South due to the war, this allowed the Baptists in each region of the country to implement their structural models freely. Despite the South’s military loss, the SBC soon centralized and mobilized, growing rapidly in number.³⁴ Hundreds of new congregations formed, and members filled the pews of SBC

³⁰ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 287.

³¹ Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 66.

³² Numerous histories discussing the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention exist. In keeping with the scope of this dissertation, I will forego any discussion of the matter aside from the SBC’s formation as a contrast to activities of Baptists in the North. A presentation surrounding the South’s specious “unconstitutional” claims exists in a paper by Andrew Kim, “The Dubious Legacy of William B. Johnson in the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention,” presented at NABPR, 23 May 2016.

³³ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 92–93.

³⁴ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 296–297, notes that the outcome of the war was only one factor among many that caused the permanent separation of Southern Baptists from Northern Baptists. Torbet also notes regional and sectional differences, a sense of neglect of the South by the North during Reconstruction, and the establishment of Southern organizations that separated them from the Northern societies.

churches. In the North, growth also continued, but at a rate not equal to that of the South. Although the North and the South were somewhat comparable in terms of number of churches and total church population, the South was growing by a greater percentage rate, and it would not be long before the exponential growth of members in the South would outnumber the North in the mid-twentieth century. To illustrate the shift quantitatively, in 1864, fifty years after the first Triennial Convention, Baptists in the North numbered approximately 5,800 churches with 441,000 members, while the South numbered approximately 10,400 churches and 746,000 members. A century later, the numbers had tilted greatly in favor of the South. In 1964, Baptists in the North numbered approximately 6,200 churches with 1,545,000 members, while the South numbered 33,000 churches with 10,193,000 members. Within 100 years, the centralized South had outgrown the North by more than 20,000 churches and almost 8.5 million members.³⁵ Baptists in the North were not blind to the numerical growth of their brethren in the South, and it would not be long before organizational changes would occur in the North as well.³⁶

During the heart of the nineteenth century, though, Baptists in the North, unlike their cousins in the South, continued to resist the formation of a centralized convention until the late 1800s. After the Great Reversal of 1826, in which those wary of

³⁵ Statistics in 1864 are based on calculations from totals of the entire United States and number of congregations and members in “Southern” states, or states that belonged to the former Confederacy (SC, MS, FL, AL, GA, LA, TX, VA, AR, NC, TN, KY, MO). Numbers for 1964 are from the Year Book of American Churches. Data is shown in *Baptist Advance*, 498–499. The disparity in overall membership continued through the end of the twentieth century, with ABC-USA churches claiming approximately 1.5 million members and the SBC claiming 15.9 million members in 1999. Frank S. Mead and Samuel S. Hill, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 11th edition, ed. Craig D. Atwood (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 48, 64.

³⁶ O.K. Armstrong and Marjorie Moore Armstrong, *The Indomitable Baptists: A Narrative of Their Role in Shaping American History* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967), 234–259.

centralization pushed for a return to the associational or societal model, Baptists in the northern states upheld their structure as credence in the autonomy of the local church and as a belief that the best way to honor that autonomy was by remaining unencumbered by central authorities that might seek to impose their will upon the churches from afar.³⁷ Baptists in the North engaged in numerous polemical tracts that criticized Roman Catholics for their “popishness” and various aspects of their “imposed” faith.³⁸ The centuries-long history of conflict between Protestants and Catholics was based on the abuse of centralized authority in the name of “order.” Though the intentions of church centralization may have been good and might have offered convenience in terms of “effectiveness,” Baptists in the North felt the potential for abuse was too great and had to be avoided at all costs.

Because of this fear of potential abuse and corruption, until the late 1800s, Baptists in the North continued to remain affiliated through a network of voluntary societies, such as the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, which oversaw mission work on the North American continent.³⁹ These societies cooperated with one another on various tasks such as foreign missions, domestic missions, church publications, educational curriculum, and various other needs and tasks. One notable push for Baptists in the North was an effort to expand into the newly formed western territories. This effort in the West and Pacific Northwest is what enabled the Baptists in

³⁷ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 91–97.

³⁸ For an example, see John Quincy Adams, *Baptists, the Only Thorough Religious Reformers* (New York: E. H. Fletcher, 1854), 50–51, 53, 71, 76, 78, 119, 123, 152.

³⁹ Bill Leonard records the main societies as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, the Woman’s American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, the American Baptist Home Mission Society, the Woman’s American Baptist Home Mission Society, the American Baptist Historical Society, the American Baptist Education Society, and the American Baptist Publication Society. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 390–391.

the North to establish new churches and church camps in the region, eventually leading to the conversion of many, including Bernard Ramm. Starr writes, "In 1800, in the whole Northwest Territory (west of the Ohio River) there were fewer than 2,000 Baptists. In 1859, there were 100,000 Baptists in this area, and in one generation northern Baptists spanned the Continent from the Mississippi to Oregon and California.... At the close of the first half century, therefore, according to reliable estimates, there were approximately 400,000 Baptists in the Free (or northern) states. This was more than a fourfold increase in the fifty years. This increase was not due (as in the case of many religious groups in this period) primarily to immigration, but to evangelism, a simple polity, and a technique congenial to the frontier."⁴⁰ For the majority of the 1800s, as Baptists in the North increased in number but remained scattered across the nation, the societal model implemented through associations and state conventions appeared to remain sufficient for organizational purposes.

The Move Towards a Northern Denomination

With the increases in the number of Baptist churches and members across the country, however, greater organization became a pressing need. Individual churches continued to attempt to work with one another in various endeavors through the cooperative societies, but it soon became clear that shortcomings and overlapping efforts occurred. Historian Norman Maring writes, "The need for a national organization became apparent. Associations could handle problems in their own localities, but it was beyond their ability to produce literature and provide missionaries for western frontiers or for

⁴⁰ Starr, "American Baptist Convention," 36, 43.

overseas fields.”⁴¹ Churches were sending missionaries abroad but soon found that people were being placed and monies were being spent inefficiently and ineffectively, and missionary reports and church meetings soon revealed the redundancies.⁴² Maring continues, “By 1890, the competition and wastefulness of the society system had become so pressing that something had to be done. At first it was hoped that more systematic, cooperative fund raising would be sufficient, and in 1896 a plan to that end was devised. In the ensuing years, it became apparent that more unity was needed than this plan afforded.”⁴³

Because of this realization and decision, society leaders began to consider the need for a centralized structure. Accompanying the rise of the industrial revolution, the rise of the corporate mentality encouraged the mindset of “efficiency” within and between the societies: the use of manpower and resources in the most effective and impactful manner possible.⁴⁴ By the dawn of the twentieth century, Baptists in the North began to consider the creation of a centralized denominational structure, just as many other denominations, including Baptists in the South, had already implemented years prior.⁴⁵ As the turn of the century occurred, plans were set in motion to create a centralized Northern Baptist structure.

⁴¹ Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 73.

⁴² Pamela R. Durso and Keith E. Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States* (Brentwood, TN: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2006), 150.

⁴³ Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 75; see also Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 106.

⁴⁴ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 120.

⁴⁵ Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 106–107.

As the South continued to grow at a remarkable pace, in part because of the advantages that its centralized denominational structure afforded it, Northerners could no longer ignore this fact.⁴⁶ After the turn of the twentieth century, Baptists in the North began to delineate the formation of a parallel Northern denomination that would allow similar cooperation and functionality. Though the Triennial Convention (now called the American Baptist Missionary Union) offered some centralization of efforts among Baptist associations around the country as well as the various societies and organizations, the late-nineteenth century move towards “efficiency” created greater incentive for (or put greater pressure on) Baptists in the North to organize on a more extensive level.⁴⁷

As the twentieth century opened, with high hopes for what was perceived to be the beginning of a “Christian century,” Northern Baptists gathered and began to discuss the formal implementation of a denominational structure.⁴⁸ Several meetings took place during the first several years of the 1900s. The first significant meeting took place in 1901 in Springfield, Massachusetts, as representatives of the general societies discussed coordination.⁴⁹ The members of the newly founded “Commission on Coordinating” were appointed to enhance communication among the leaders and members of the various agencies and programs.⁵⁰ In September 1906, exploratory committees were formed with the aim of determining whether unification among the various voluntary societies and

⁴⁶ Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Indomitable Baptists: A Narrative of Their Role in Shaping American History*, 259-260.

⁴⁷ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 120.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 114, 120.

⁴⁹ Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 57.

⁵⁰ Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 391.

regional associations would be favorable.⁵¹ Baptist historian Bill Leonard described the final moves towards centralization “The Chicago Baptist Association approved a resolution in 1906 calling for ‘more coherence in our missionary work’ and greater ‘denominational unity.’ ... The proposed organizational conclave was scheduled for May 1907, when provision would be made ‘for a permanent organization of a general association or convention representing all Northern Baptist churches.’ Similarly, the executive secretaries of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, the Home Mission Society, and the Publication Society expressed a willingness to create a new denominational organization.”⁵² At the annual meeting of Baptists in the North in May 1907, at Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., delegates determined that a “permanent organization of a general association or convention representing all the Northern Baptist Churches” would be proper.⁵³ A preamble, constitution, and bylaws were drafted. The following year, delegates from the five major societies as well as state and local associations gathered in Oklahoma City to ratify the plan.⁵⁴ Finally, in 1908, the Northern Baptist Convention (NBC) was formally incorporated with New York governor Charles Evans Hughes appointed as the denomination’s first president.⁵⁵ Northern Baptists now had a centralized structure through which churches would be able to

⁵¹ Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Indomitable Baptists: A Narrative of Their Role in Shaping American History*, 260.

⁵² Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 391; Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 94; Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 150.

⁵³ Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 57. Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 107.

⁵⁴ Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 391; Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 151.

⁵⁵ Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 58; Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 120; Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 391–392.

communicate and coordinate the efforts that had long been run by the voluntary societies. The societies were not dissolved; they continued to function as they had previously but were folded into the denominational structure gradually in order to respect the societies' various leaders and their longstanding history. The leaders of the newly founded denomination were careful to leave "to the Societies the management of the great missionary and publication work which they are now conducting."⁵⁶ After working out the finer details of structure and administration, the new denomination indeed centralized its operations and plunged forward with its work.

Northern Baptist Challenges

While the denomination continued to grow, within a few years of its founding the denomination began to encounter and tackle its first set of serious challenges. The first major challenge would be the interaction of the NBC with other major Christian groups and denominations in the country. The issue was whether Northern Baptists would cooperate with other denominations in a spirit of ecumenicity, or remain separated in order to retain a distinctive Baptist identity and ecclesiology. The second major challenge came in the form of biblical and theological disputes that would separate and divide the more liberal constituency from the conservative faction within the NBC. Within the next twenty years of the NBC's existence, disputes over the acceptance of biblical criticism and the teaching of certain scientific theories, such as evolution, threatened to separate the newly formed denomination.⁵⁷ The response of members and churches would force

⁵⁶ Starr, "American Baptist Convention," 57.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 59, 60. Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 50–51.

the NBC (as well as other denominations) to take decisive positions that would lead to dispute and separation.

Overall, the liberal position within the NBC could be summarized as having been more in favor of ecumenical dialogue and cooperation and being willing, or even welcoming, parties to the study of biblical criticism and evolutionary theory.⁵⁸ In general, the older seminaries were more receptive to scientific advances than the younger seminaries; the University of Chicago stood at the forefront of this trend under the direction of leaders such as Shailer Mathews (1863-1941) and Shirley Jackson Case (1872-1947).⁵⁹ In contrast, conservatives could generally be described as being resistant to ecumenicity and fearful of, or even violently opposed to, biblical criticism and scientific theories surrounding evolution.⁶⁰ It also did not help that liberals such as Harry Emerson Fosdick (unfavorably) characterized all Fundamentalists as premillennialists and antievolutionists and that, in return, Fundamentalist rhetoric mercilessly targeted liberals such as Fosdick.⁶¹ The moderate component of the NBC, which often does not find a voice in histories of the convention but is reflected and represented in its voting history, tended to side with the liberal camp if only because the conservatives made their

⁵⁸ Starr, "American Baptist Convention," 59, 71. This relationship with outside ecumenical organizations has been reaffirmed repeatedly throughout the history of the ABC. Weaver writes that Northern liberals were receptive to modernism "in an attempt to make Christianity intellectually respectable." Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 122.

⁵⁹ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 129–130; Starr, "American Baptist Convention," 60; Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Indomitable Baptists: A Narrative of Their Role in Shaping American History*, 234–235. Leonard also notes the influence of Shailer Mathews, who claimed that modernism was the evangelical use of science for the modern mind. Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 51, 53.

⁶⁰ Starr, "American Baptist Convention," 69. Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 172–176.

⁶¹ Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 185–186.

presence oppressive and militantly inflexible.⁶² These disputes must be discussed in some measure because they partially lay the groundwork for the emergence of the neo-evangelical movement and the background of Bernard Ramm.

The first dispute over ecumenicity arose as a result of the grand Christian vision that enraptured many believers in the early twentieth century. It was hoped that a great, unified missions movement among all Protestant groups would allow evangelism to take place across the globe and usher in the kingdom of God. Major international conferences during this period reflected this optimism. The Edinburgh conference of 1910 gathered Christians from around the world and spoke to the vision of a united effort that would reach the “heathen” in various lands and bring the world to Christ.⁶³ The Jerusalem conference of 1928 only added to the shared hope that international cooperation would permit the Christian faith to spread to all lands. Many leaders within the NBC joined in this expectation, but some conservatives remained skeptical and aloof from those who held such high hopes.⁶⁴ Many Baptist conservatives, such as J.C. Massee, W.B. Riley, I.M. Haldeman, J.R. Straton, and T.T. Shields, balked at the international joining movement because they believed that “true” Baptist theology was being sacrificed in the name of unity.⁶⁵ The long historical precedent of Baptists being “come-outers,” or people

⁶² James Leo Garrett, Jr.’s text clusters Baptist theologians into three groups of conservative, moderate, and liberal positions in relation to the various theological and modernist disputes of the day. James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 283–326, 339–341. Discussion of this “militant” approach will come later in this chapter.

⁶³ Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Indomitable Baptists: A Narrative of Their Role in Shaping American History*, 336.

⁶⁴ Leonard notes that at several points in the history of the Northern Baptist Convention, conservative members moved to withdraw from the FCC and WCC.

⁶⁵ Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 69. At this point in the dissertation, people like Riley, Straton, and Shields will be called “conservatives” until discussion of the origin of the term

who would withdraw from fellowship with those seen as being in error or beholden to theological untruth, led many Baptists to resist the push to unite.⁶⁶ This continued push among liberals for ecumenical unity was met with an equal if not more energetic resistance to such unity by conservatives. The differences would only deepen and become more severe in the decades ahead.

During the first half of the 1900s, though, the majority of Northern Baptists would wholeheartedly embrace the ecumenical movement, evidenced by their participation as a charter member in the Federal Council of Churches (FCC), founded in 1908.⁶⁷ The aim of the FCC and its member groups was to cooperate as one for the purpose of mission work. FCC groups worked to help prevent overlap and unnecessary duplication of efforts in the mission field. Tacit agreements to avoid “sheep stealing” (although this did happen) from one another would ensure unhindered mission work by missionaries from various denominations.⁶⁸ As the FCC gave way to the National Council of Churches (NCC) and World Council of Churches (WCC), the NBC would remain a faithful member, also signing on as a member of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and committed to ecumenical cooperation throughout its history.⁶⁹ The change of the NBC’s name to the American Baptist Convention in 1950, and later to the American Baptist Churches in the

“Fundamentalist” is mentioned below. Even further defining of the term “Fundamentalist” will occur in the section on American Protestant Fundamentalism later in this chapter.

⁶⁶ Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 146.

⁶⁷ Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 95; Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 108; Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 154.

⁶⁸ Interestingly, the SBC never joined the FCC, and “sheep stealing” among Baptists within the United States occurred as the SBC expanded its frontiers into “Northern territory.”

⁶⁹ Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 407; Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 154; Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Indomitable Baptists: A Narrative of Their Role in Shaping American History*, 336; Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 142.

U.S.A. (ABC-USA) in 1972, reflected a hope among Northern Baptists that reunification with Southern Baptists might be possible, that sectional and regional differences might be left behind, and that a united “American” Baptist unity might emerge.⁷⁰ Because of Baptists’ emphatic insistence upon autonomy of the local churches and longstanding historical divisions, this would never be the case, but the hope of cooperation and unity with other Baptists and other Christians remained strong.⁷¹ This continued push for inter-denominational cooperation, though, would remain a constant source of division between liberals and conservatives within the denomination.⁷²

Ironically, although conservative Baptists resisted cooperation with other denominations in missions, they would find willing conservative partners in other denominations, with whom they would cooperate, in matters of theology and biblical interpretation.⁷³ Historian Ferenc Szasz points to three key changes in American Protestant theology at the close of the nineteenth century, which led to serious challenges for all Protestant denominations: the rise of liberal theology, the use of the historical-critical method in analyzing the Bible, and the introduction of evolutionary theory in biology as a challenge to the creation narrative of Genesis.⁷⁴ Members of various

⁷⁰ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 119; Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 163–165. Brackney notes that Baptists hoped for reunification as the Methodists had experienced in 1939. Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 131. Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 35–36, 95–96. One hope of the ABC-USA’s Study Commission on Denominational Structure (SCODS) of 1972 was that a reorganization and emphasis on common goals would allow for such reunion between Baptist churches throughout the U.S. This was not to be the case.

⁷¹ Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 95.

⁷² Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Indomitable Baptists: A Narrative of Their Role in Shaping American History*, 336–337.

⁷³ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 427.

⁷⁴ Ferenc Morton Szasz, *The Divided Mind of American Christianity, 1880-1930* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1982), 1. Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 278–279. Garrett agrees with Szasz on the latter two points of higher criticism and evolution.

denominations reacted differently, but all denominations experienced a rise in the number of and activity of conservatives as a reaction against the perceived threat of these three forces. Northern Baptists were no exception, and the conservatives among their number would join in the fights against these perceived threats.

In the early decades of the 1900s, those who called themselves “Fundamentalists,” believers who would “do battle royal for the fundamentals of the faith,” emerged as a unified presence in America.⁷⁵ These Fundamentalists came from several different denominations and found common cause around belief in a set of several core theological and doctrinal principles that they believed to be essential orthodoxy.⁷⁶ Being funded by several prominent businessmen and supported by a number of significant religious figures in the country, the Fundamentalists were able to disseminate their beliefs and gain momentum as a group, and among their number were several notable Northern Baptists.⁷⁷ William Bell Riley and other conservative Northern Baptist leaders, listed above, formed the “Fundamentalist Fellowship” as a subgroup within the NBC to push back against the threats that they perceived.⁷⁸ Because of the ecumenical

⁷⁵ Curtis Lee Laws, “Convention side Lights,” *The Watchman Examiner* 8, no 27 (July 1, 1920): 834. This quote from Laws’s journal, *The Watchman Examiner*, is cited in numerous historical texts on the Fundamentalists such as George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*, 159. Interestingly, despite this quote, historian Bill Leonard refers to Laws as one who “represented a group of irenic conservatives within the NBC who rejected liberalism but hoped to avoid a split in the denomination” (Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 399).

⁷⁶ Bill Leonard outlines these core beliefs, saying, “Fundamentalists agreed on traditional orthodoxy and often were as concerned as modernists to prove the rationality of their systems. These beliefs were extensive but often were summarized in a series of “points,” including biblical inerrancy, the virgin birth of Christ, Christ’s substitutionary atonement, his bodily resurrection, his miraculous powers, the need for all persons to receive him as Savior, and the uniqueness of the Christian revelation above all other world religions. Some included a belief in Christ’s premillennial second coming.” Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 400.

⁷⁷ *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*.

⁷⁸ Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 159. In 1919, Riley, along with T.T. Shields and J. Frank Norris, led the founding of the World Christian Fundamentals Association.

movement and doctrinal drift among missionaries and seminary professors, conservatives at one point called for an “investigation” of the schools to root out potential sources of heterodoxical teaching.⁷⁹ Such actions only fueled the growing dispute within the NBC and would lead to divisions and separations in the denomination. Historian Winthrop Hudson states that from the early 1900s, Northern Baptists were the most deeply divided denomination over the Fundamentalist controversy, and both Edwin Scott Gaustad and William Brackney state that Northern Baptists were the most divided denomination due to disputes over Fundamentalist tactics.⁸⁰

Conservatives in the NBC would eventually make a concerted effort to extract favorable decisions over theological ultimatums during denominational meetings. At the 1922 NBC convention, conservatives called for the adoption of the New Hampshire Confession as a “test” for the theological purity and orthodoxy of its missionaries.⁸¹

Interestingly, Riley would later debate with Harry Rimmer, another Fundamentalist, about whether the “days” of creation were literal days, Rimmer’s position, or “aeons, ages, geological days, [or] days of God,” thus showing that there was a diversity within the Fundamentalist camp as well. Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 320–322. Additionally, Riley, along with fellow Fundamentalists Straton, Laws, J.C. Massee, and A.C. Dixon, formed the National Federation of Fundamentalists, which operated among the Northern Baptists. Bynum Shaw, *Divided We Stand: The Baptists in American Life* (Durham, NC: Moore Publishing Company, 1974), 146; Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 330.

⁷⁹ Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 69; Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 160. Maring notes that the investigation, which took place in 1925, returned with “glowing terms” about the missionaries and schools. Ironically, Curtis Lee Laws was one of the main investigators. Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 90. Leonard records that four missionaries were dismissed from their posts as a result of the investigation. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 401.

⁸⁰ Winthrop S. Hudson, *Baptists in Transition: Individualism and Christian Responsibility* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 120 (also cited in Bill Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 52). Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 116; Edwin Scott Gaustad, “North and South in American Religious History: Baptists and Beyond,” *Review and Expositor* 92, No. 3 (1995): 291.

⁸¹ James E. Carter, “American Baptist Confessions of Faith: A Review of Confessions of Faith Adopted by Major Baptist Bodies in the United States,” in *The Lord’s Free People in a Free Land: Essays in Baptist History in Honor of Robert A. Baker*, ed. William R. Estep (Fort Worth, TX: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1976), 60, 62. Carter records how the New Hampshire Confession has been used several times as a litmus test to exclude or distinguish between members, by New Hampshire Calvinistic Baptists against Free Will Baptists, by conservatives within the NBC, and by the SBC against “liberals.” See also Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 69; and Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 134–135.

Alarm had arisen that missionaries in foreign fields were teaching theologically unsound doctrine, and conservatives wanted to “ensure” that such teaching would not continue by forcing missionaries to ascribe to a fixed set of theological doctrines, as espoused in the New Hampshire Confession of 1833.⁸² Many prominent voices, such as Helen Barrett Montgomery, President of the NBC, stridently opposed the use of creeds in order to preserve the Baptist distinctive of individual freedom of conscience.⁸³ While the matter was discussed and debated during the convention, a counter-proposal was introduced by Cornelius Woelfkin, who insisted that Baptists should not require a sworn set of beliefs. This, he posited, was creedalism, the very source of conflict and oppression that led to the emergence of Baptists in England centuries prior. The only creed that was needed, Woelfkin said, was the Bible. Thus, Woelfkin masterfully framed the vote as a dispute between supporting an enforced New Hampshire Confession or the Bible. The Fundamentalist proposal was soundly defeated by a vote of 1264 to 637.⁸⁴

While the measure was defeated, this did not quell the alarm that conservatives felt or their growing sense that the denomination was becoming too liberal. Because of this concern, a significant contingent of the denomination decided to form the General Association of Regular Baptists (GARB), which did not initially separate from the NBC, but lived as a separate entity, with members holding dual membership in hopes that they

⁸² Melton notes the significance of the New Hampshire Confession of 1833 (revised in 1853) in Baptist history as a general restatement of Calvinist theology and the authority of the scripture. Melton, “American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.,” 361–365.

⁸³ Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 187–190; Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 161.

⁸⁴ Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 69; Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 430. Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 90; Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 332; Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 401; Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 189–191; Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 117.

might remain part of the NBC and turn the direction of the convention back towards fundamentalist orthodoxy that included premillennialism.⁸⁵ Historian J. Gordon Melton notes the strong premillennial beliefs and militant attitude of the GARB that eventually required its members “to withdraw fellowship from and refuse cooperation with any organization or group which permits modernists in its ranks,” and that led to increasing separation from the Northern Baptists.⁸⁶ Ultimately, the GARB members believed that the theological differences between them and the NBC as a whole were too great, and, adhering to their unyielding and militant position, the members of the GARB broke away to form their own, separate denomination in May 1932.⁸⁷ This division was significant, in that approximately fifty churches broke away, representing approximately several thousand former Northern Baptist members, and future conservative efforts within the NBC would be met with greater attention and force.⁸⁸

Almost two decades later, beginning in 1943 and later at the 1946 and 1949 Conventions, again the matter of orthodoxy and theological belief came up as an issue among Northern Baptists.⁸⁹ Assuming the leadership of the Fundamentalist Fellowship, a

⁸⁵ Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 69.

⁸⁶ Melton, “American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.,” 377.

⁸⁷ Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 155; Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 69; Melton, “American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.,” 378; Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 48–49; Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 404; Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 162. Garrett notes the differences included a “firm embrace of premillennial dispensationalism and... a strict tenet of absolute separation from those who are in any way connected with theological liberalism.” Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 334.

⁸⁸ Armstrong and Armstrong note that within thirty years the GARBC grew to approximately 150,000 members. Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Indomitable Baptists: A Narrative of Their Role in Shaping American History*, 235.

⁸⁹ Maring notes that a theological current within the NBC began to move away from the liberal position. It is noteworthy that the stirrings of both the CBA and National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) happened in the same year, 1943. Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 91. The NAE will be discussed in the following section.

new group of conservatives emerged within the Northern Baptist Convention. This time, the effort was led by William Bell Riley and Chester Tulga, who believed that the liberals in the denomination, such as Harry Emerson Fosdick, were overly tolerant of teachings that undermined the literal understanding of the Bible.⁹⁰ Again, conservative doctrinal positions were proposed for official adoption by the denomination during the convention meetings, and again the issue came to a vote. This time, the conservative push was met more forcefully and more strategically. Conservative efforts were rebuffed, though, and, again, another faction of NBC members left to form the Conservative Baptist Association of America (CBA, later CBAmerica) in 1947.⁹¹

Conclusion

The overall direction of the NBC was to remain in the hands of the liberal contingent, which continued to stress ecumenical cooperation and rejection of restrictive creeds or theology. Because of this, many conservatives within the ranks of the NBC would leave to form their own conservative denominations, the GARB in 1933 and the CBA in 1947. For these Baptists, there was no path towards reconciliation, no middle ground of moderation in belief, and no willingness to set aside differences in favor of affirming commonalities.

⁹⁰ Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 147. Melton notes that Tulga became one of the leaders of the Conservative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), a constituent agency within the CBA. Melton, “American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.,” 378; Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 199–200.

⁹¹ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 121; Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 49, 91; Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 334; Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 406; Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 200; Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 163; Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Indomitable Baptists: A Narrative of Their Role in Shaping American History*, 236.

Some Baptists within the NBC, however, wished to retain both their membership in the NBC and their conservative theology. For these Baptists, it was hoped that some path or some venue might emerge that would allow them the ability to retain their beliefs freely, without persecution and according to their conscience in good Baptist fashion, while also remaining part of the larger Baptist tradition and history.

As shown above, the dynamic between Northern Baptist societies and associations was always carefully balanced with the effort to preserve the autonomy of the local churches. This tension created a freedom that allowed Baptists like Bernard Ramm, who eventually sought a more moderate position, to hold ideas that were against the majority, minority movements, or Baptist power structures, even though it also gave people within the majority the freedom to reject or ignore individuals. This is why some moderates within the denomination, like Ramm, were able to continue to think freely and operate within Baptist fellowships while simultaneously creating struggle for those people to exist within those fellowships.

The emergence of the neo-evangelical movement in 1943 provided an even greater possibility to create free spaces, and Northern Baptists who had hoped for such a venue, like Ramm, found a group with whom they could freely fellowship but retain their Baptist identity. For this, it becomes necessary to discuss the background of the rise of the neo-evangelical movement and its formal entity, the National Association of Evangelicals.

A Brief History of the Neo-evangelical Movement

The Rise of the Neo-evangelical Movement as a Response to Theological Challenges

In a thesis focused on the theological identity of Bernard Ramm, it becomes necessary to depict the changing landscape of denominations, particularly in terms of how these changes affected members of the Northern Baptist Convention. This section will outline how the emerging Northern Baptist Convention faced challenges within its own ranks from conservatives who perceived threats to orthodox Christian belief and the response taken by leaders in the denomination. Beyond Baptist identity alone, they believed that rising theological threats undermined their very identity as Christians as evidenced by the similar reactions of other conservatives within other denominations during the same time period. Conservatives in other denominations banded together as well, initially within their own denominations and later cross-denominationally, to fight against these threats.⁹²

Conservatives emerged from significant “mainline” groups, including Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists. The rise of this movement, whose members eventually referred to themselves as Fundamentalists, led to stark divisions, vitriolic debates, and eventual division. Fundamentalists formed their own extra-denominational organizations, publications, and institutions in order to “safeguard” what they believed to be orthodoxy under assault from heretical beliefs.

Other conservatives in the Northern Baptist Convention, and eventually in other denominations, observed these Fundamentalist efforts and recoiled from them, believing

⁹² Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 158.

the Fundamentalist program to be excessively militant and separatist.⁹³ As a counter-response to the Fundamentalist movement, other conservatives assumed a more measured response that would still hold to orthodox teaching but not demonstrate the excessive emotion and vitriol of their Fundamentalist brethren.⁹⁴ From this number emerged a second group that fought to uphold what it believed to be orthodoxy, and this group came to be known as the neo-evangelical movement.⁹⁵ It is with this latter conservative group that Bernard Ramm found the most affinity.

This section will focus on the rise of the Fundamentalists, particularly among the NBC: the threats they perceived, the actions they took, and the separations that occurred. Then, I will trace the response of the neo-evangelicals against the Fundamentalists, which promoted conservative belief but also strove to uphold a mediating denominational position. From this background, the place of Bernard Ramm as one of the few early neo-evangelicals within the Northern Baptist Convention, and the space for fresh theological thought and progress that was created through his collaboration with neo-evangelicals, will become clear.

Defining American Protestant Fundamentalism

Defining and understanding religious “fundamentalism” is the topic of the edited volume by Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby titled *Fundamentalisms Observed*. In it,

⁹³ Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 515. In describing the Fundamentalist movement, eminent historian of Christianity George Marsden uses the word “militant” no fewer than forty-five times, bringing clear emphasis to the movement’s unyielding resolve and unwillingness to compromise on certain core beliefs. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925*, 4.

⁹⁴ Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 515.

⁹⁵ For an early history detailing the formation of the NAE and its emphasis on conservative beliefs and interdenominational cooperation, see James DeForest Murch, *Cooperation Without Compromise: A History of the National Association of Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956).

there is a glossary of terms, but the term “fundamentalist” is noticeably absent.⁹⁶ This is because the book addresses a number of different types of religious fundamentalism, including Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Confucianist, and American Protestant, with the latter group being the focus of this section. The contributors to this volume each describe various “fundamentalist” movements in different religions and how they differ from one another, and the editors helpfully include a general description and a distillation of five specific traits that can be applied to the varied fundamentalist groups. In their introduction, the editors quote two contributors, who say that the distinction between a “fundamentalist” and a “conservative” member of a religious group is that the fundamentalists “no longer perceive themselves as reeling under the corrosive effects of secular life. On the contrary, they perceive themselves as fighting back, and doing so rather successfully.”⁹⁷

Marty and Appleby further delineate this conflict by saying that fundamentalists have taken an offensive position by “fighting” in five particular ways. First, they “fight back.”⁹⁸ Religious fundamentalists perceive challenges, which threaten their core identity. These threats are not frivolous or peripheral; rather they are threats that are

⁹⁶ In this chapter, “fundamentalism,” with a lower-case “f,” will be used for those in the general category of religious fundamentalists or religious fundamentalism as defined by Marty and Appleby, while “Fundamentalism,” with a capital “F,” will be used to represent the group of American Protestants that arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who sparred with modernism, later described by Ammerman. The same distinction is also made by Maxie B. Burch, *The Evangelical Historians: The Historiography of George Marsden, Nathan Hatch, and Mark Noll* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1996), 3.

⁹⁷ Samuel C. Heilman and Menachem Friedman, “Religious Fundamentalism and Religious Jews: The Case of the Haredim” in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

⁹⁸ Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, “Introduction: The Fundamentalism Project: A User’s Guide” in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), ix.

central to the group, and if “they lose on the central issues, they believe they lose everything. They react, [and] they fight back with great innovative power.”⁹⁹ Second, they “fight for.”¹⁰⁰ Fundamentalists will fight for the way of life they perceive to be orthodox, in contrast to the options represented in the defined threats. They will fight within and through various institutions, and when the threat is perceived to be sufficiently serious, “they will fight for a changed civil polity. If nothing else works, as a last resort they may fight for territory, or the integrity of their social group, by using the instruments of war.”¹⁰¹ Third, they will “fight with.”¹⁰² Various instruments of battle are utilized to solidify group identity and counteract the threat. This can include the use of group movement, isolation, doctrinal definition, and creation of particular writings, icons, and rituals.¹⁰³ Fourth, they will “fight against.”¹⁰⁴ The enemy can be generalized, as in modern society as a whole, or specified, by pointing out particular traits or behaviors within another group. The enemy may also be those who offer “compromise, middle ground, or a civil ‘agreement to disagree.’” Interestingly, the moderate may be the target of more efforts than those of the group that is their polar opposite.¹⁰⁵ Finally, they will “fight under.”¹⁰⁶ Fundamentalists will unite under a deity or transcendent reference and

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., x.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

carry out what they believe to be that authority's purposes against challengers to their group.¹⁰⁷

From these five characteristics, it is not difficult to apply each of them to the cross-denominational group of American Protestants that arose in the early twentieth century. Sociologist of religion Nancy Ammerman describes the historical rise of the Fundamentalists and how their actions accorded with the characteristics that Marty and Appleby provide. She writes: "In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, many leaders in American Protestantism were actively seeking ways to adapt traditional beliefs to the realities of 'modern' scholarship and sensibilities. They were met head-on, however, by people who saw the adaptations as heresy and declared that they would defend traditional beliefs from such adaptation."¹⁰⁸

Ammerman describes how these American Christians developed into the group known as "Fundamentalists" as they adhered to a series of early 1900s scholarly essays titled, *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, a twelve-volume set of books published over a five-year period between 1910–1915 that contained what was portrayed as orthodox views of Christian doctrine and belief.¹⁰⁹ This significant effort to unify conservative Christians across the country was funded by the Stewart brothers, two oil tycoons from California.¹¹⁰ The brothers used their sudden wealth both to found the Los Angeles Bible Institute and to send a set of *The Fundamentals* to "every pastor,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Nancy Tatom Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. The rise of the Fundamentalists and the significance of *The Fundamentals* are detailed in many religious histories, such as Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 427–429 and Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 57.

¹¹⁰ Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 141–142.

evangelist, theological student, Sunday School superintendent, YMCA and YWCA secretary in the English speaking world, so far as these addresses can be obtained,” free of charge.¹¹¹ This series of essays, in its title, captured the idea that there were certain Christian basic ideals that needed to be defined and that were being threatened.¹¹² Theologically, Fundamentalists “drew upon several theological and philosophical resources such as revivalism, dispensationalism, and the so-called ‘Princeton Theology.’”¹¹³ The esteemed leader of this latter effort was Charles Hodge, the well-respected Presbyterian theologian, who quickly perceived and identified the modernist impulse as a common enemy threatening orthodox Protestant Christianity in America.¹¹⁴ This theology was a formulation of ideas that focused on the literal quality and interpretation of the Bible. When encountering Darwinism in the early 1860s, for example, Hodge quickly pronounced, “it is atheism.”¹¹⁵ By defining what was orthodoxy in this manner, those who subscribed to Princeton Theology were able to create quick litmus tests as to who held orthodox beliefs and who did not. The boundaries thus

¹¹¹ Norman F. Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954), 12. Also noted in Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 115. Brackney also records that the Los Angeles Bible Institute, founded in 1927, was a GARBC school. Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 156.

¹¹² Examples of titles from *The Fundamentals* that give an idea of the contents include, “The Fallacies of the Higher Criticism,” “Science and Christian Faith,” “The Inspiration of the Bible—Definition, Extent, and Proof,” and “Tributes to Christ and the Bible by Intelligent Men Who Were Not Known as Active Christians.”

¹¹³ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 130.

¹¹⁴ Although it was termed “Princeton Theology,” not all theologians received Darwin’s theories the same way. For example, Princeton president and theologian James McCosh received Darwinism favorably, believing that religion had no reason to fear science. Bradley J. Gundlach, “McCosh and Hodge on Evolution,” *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 75 No. 2 (Summer 1997): 86.

¹¹⁵ Charles Hodge, *What Is Darwinism?* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1874), 177. A review of the book, *What Is Darwinism?*, was published in *The New York Times* repeating Hodge’s declaration of Darwin’s theories to be atheism. No title, *The New York Times*, July 2, 1874.

facilitated the formation of a tightly knit group with a clear and distinct identity based on a shared theology.¹¹⁶ Additionally, the rise of various publications, such as the aptly named newspaper, *The Watchman Examiner*, founded by Curtis Lee Laws in 1913, helped to disseminate conservative beliefs to their readers. Within the various conservative publications, numerous topics were covered, from the proper reading – that is, a literal reading – of the Bible, to an explication of evolutionary belief. Ministers and readers were instructed on how to view and respond to the various threats of modernist belief. In 1920, Laws, editor of *The Watchman Examiner* from 1913–1939, wrote that a “fundamentalist” is a person willing to “do battle royal” for the fundamentals of the faith. It was both a description and a call to action, and the name remained.¹¹⁷ The targets of the “battle royal” were those who either permitted or welcomed modernist influences into the churches and evolution into the schools.¹¹⁸ Specifically, in the case of evolution, Fundamentalists worried that their children were being taught that they were descended

¹¹⁶ As an example of the boundaries that began to form among conservatives, one can look at the Presbyterian heresy trial of Charles Augustus Briggs in 1892 as an effort to identify and prosecute a theological “outsider.” The expulsion of Hebrew professor Crawford H. Toy from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1879 is a similar case among Baptists.

¹¹⁷ Ammerman, “North American Protestant Fundamentalism,” 2. It should be noted that Ammerman intentionally defines this term very carefully in the opening pages of her chapter, to allow for variance in classification of the involved groups along with the actions they take. Also, from footnote 96, Laws is referring to “big-F” Fundamentalists.

Also in Marty’s text, Leslie Smith (193–194) defines Fundamentalism as an internalized, psychological experience of perception as the main defining characteristic. Leslie E. Smith, “What’s In A Name? Scholarship and the Pathology of Conservative Protestantism,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 20 (2008): 191–211. Clyde Wilcox notes that the definitions can have serious implications, not only for religious life, but also in socioeconomic status and politics. He emphatically states that the definitions need to be imposed cautiously. Clyde Wilcox, “Fundamentalists and Politics: An Analysis of the Effects of Differing Operational Definitions,” *Journal of Politics* 48 No. 4 (November 1986): 1041–1051.

Further difficulties in legally defining the terms “fundamentalist” as opposed to other religious groups in the United States is historically detailed in David McKenzie, “The Supreme Court, Fundamentalist Logic, and the Term ‘Religion,’” *Journal of Church & State* 33 No. 4 (Autumn 1991): 731–746.

¹¹⁸ Ammerman, “North American Protestant Fundamentalism,” 11. The battle over evolution in the schools continues to some extent even today.

from apes, and that humans' status as beings specially created by God was being undermined.¹¹⁹

Because of this perceived threat to Christian doctrine and understanding, the solution was to appeal to some form of unshakeable authority, which for Fundamentalists was scripture. Just as Martin Luther had insisted upon the authority of scripture several centuries earlier, due to its written status, the Fundamentalists believed that they appealed to the authority of the written word of God in a similar way. From such authority-laden scripture, Fundamentalists reconciled biblical interpretations with observed reality to form a coherent worldview. Ammerman writes:

The more people are immersed in this fundamentalist community of discourse, the more easily they accept the Bible as completely accurate. They are more likely to question the validity of science than to doubt the unfailing Word of God. Some aspects of modern science, of course, are not questioned (the earth's roundness and orbit around the sun, for instance). The interpretive task fundamentalists undertake, then, requires a careful balancing of facts about the world presumed by moderns to be true with the assumption that *the Bible contains no factual errors*.... For those who remained true believers, fundamentalism offered a comprehensive and satisfying explanation for the complexities of life.¹²⁰

Thus, for Fundamentalists, the use of scripture as authority and the view of scripture as inerrant became mutually reinforcing; scripture was authoritative because it had no errors, and it had no errors because it was scripture.¹²¹ Ammerman writes, "Fundamentalist beliefs about the Bible therefore reflect both continuity and discontinuity with the patterns that existed before them. While it is true that most Christians before the nineteenth century had accepted Scripture as a reliable record, it

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹²⁰ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 28. Emphasis added.

¹²¹ Peter W. Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, Third Edition (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1990, 1998, 2002, 2008), 274–275.

was not until the latter part of that century that a doctrine defending the inerrancy of the Bible became central to Christian belief.”¹²² Accordingly, Fundamentalists gradually moved towards an increasingly “literal,” or word for word, interpretation of the Bible that, according to Marty and Appleby’s third characteristic above – “fighting with” doctrinal definitions set by a particular collection of documents, in this case an inerrant Bible – helped to define those in the Fundamentalist movement.¹²³ For many Fundamentalists, the proper “literal” reading of scripture meant that Genesis 1 and 2 was a description of events exactly as they occurred: the six days of creation represented six twenty-four-hour days, and objects and organisms in the cosmos and on the earth were created in the manner and order listed in the texts.¹²⁴

Fundamentalists claimed that in reading the texts this way, they remained true to the traditional and historical – i.e. correct – interpretations of the texts and resisted the speculative readings of modernist, German scholars, whose higher criticism of the biblical texts led to error-laden and ultimately heretical interpretations. In his essay from *The Fundamentals* titled, “My Personal Experience with the Higher Criticism,” J. J. Reeve wrote, “To maintain that the modern view is a development and advance upon the Biblical view, is absurd.... To say that the [higher] critical position and the Biblical position, or the traditional evangelical view which is the same as the Biblical, are

¹²² Ammerman, “North American Protestant Fundamentalism,” 15.

¹²³ For an articulate explanation of how the term “literal” must be defined carefully when speaking of Genesis, see an interview with N. T. Wright, interview by Pete Enns, September 8, 2010 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxQpFosrTUK>. (accessed May 1, 2017).

For a fuller description of these gradual moves towards defining the movement and those in it, see Peter J. Bowler, *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons: Evolution and Christianity from Darwin to Intelligent Design* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

¹²⁴ There were Fundamentalists who did not believe in six literal days of creation, William Jennings Bryan among them.

reconcilable, is the most fatuous folly and delusion.”¹²⁵ Reeve was not alone; many of the essay writers, who contributed to *The Fundamentals*, reaffirmed Reeve’s views.¹²⁶

Thus, the identity of American Protestant Fundamentalists became that of a group who faced an outside threat and who defined and used scripture to help combat those threats. By using scripture as a common base, conservatives in different denominations were able to find unity against a common foe. They “fought back” against those who would challenge orthodox beliefs and “fought for” their preservation by “fighting with” a tightly defined understanding of scripture and its authoritative status. What becomes important to understand is who and what they “fought against” and how they “fought under” a commonly defined authority and cause in the name of upholding orthodoxy.

The Threat of Modernism and the Rise of Fundamentalism

At the turn of the twentieth century, some conservative Christians perceived the greatest threats to orthodox belief to come from various facets of the modernist movement. Ferenc Szasz, in *The Divided Mind of American Protestantism: 1880–1930*, describes the three main challenges that these Christians faced from modern society: comparative religion, higher criticism of the Bible, and evolutionary theory.¹²⁷ Although

¹²⁵ J. J. Reeve, “My Personal Experience with the Higher Criticism” in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth Vol. III*, ed. A. C. Dixon and Reuben A. Torrey (Chicago: Testimony Publishing Co., 1910–15), 101. Reeve is one example among many who give voice to this position.

¹²⁶ Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 159.

¹²⁷ Szasz, *The Divided Mind of Protestant America: 1880-1930*, 1. While Szasz’s book offers a compelling argument for these three as the greatest challenges to American Protestantism, there were certainly others that were just as pressing, considering the many tumultuous economic, social, and political issues, both domestic and international, in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Bill Leonard describes the Fundamentalist movement as being birthed from “a lineage that included revivalism, conversionism, and support for biblical authority and the creeds and confessions of historic Christianity,” and defending against “the impact of new science on biblical authority and Christian doctrine.” Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 54. Kidd and Hankins define the struggle of Fundamentalists against liberal and

outside religions introduced in the United States, particularly at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, certainly presented challenges to Christians, they were external entities from the church that would take more than half a century to gain a significant foothold in the country.¹²⁸ The latter two, however – higher criticism and evolutionary theory – which were associated with “liberal” Christianity, were absorbed by believers and represented internal threats to the church. These two challenges eroded what conservatives believed to be the unquestionable authority of scripture. By holding to some or all of these theories, the authority of the Bible – *sola scriptura*, one of Luther's three foci during the Protestant revolution of the 1500s – was in danger of being lost.¹²⁹ Baptist historian Bynum Shaw writes, “To suggest that the earth was untold millions of years old and that man over a period of millions of years had evolved from lower orders, was regarded by religious conservatives as direct contradiction of Holy Writ.”¹³⁰ As discussed above, these conservative Christians believed that if the Bible could not be relied upon for its textual integrity, then the authority of the Bible, and of the faith built upon it, would be destroyed. Of the two, it is important particularly to discuss the threat of evolution, not only because the controversy over evolution during the early 1900s helped set the stage for the rise of neo-evangelicalism, but also because it played a significant role in the life and theology of Bernard Ramm.

modernist theology within northern denominations, and against evolution in the larger culture. Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 192.

¹²⁸ Szasz, *The Divided Mind of Protestant America: 1880-1930*, 11. Szasz notes that the influx of other religions into the country initially garnered some attention as a subject of study, but that “the scholars’ praise for the comparative analysis of other faiths was not shared by ordinary citizens.” Ironically, the increase of interest in other religions and other cultures instead fueled the explosion of the international Christian missionary impulse of the late 1800s and 1900s.

¹²⁹ Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 85.

¹³⁰ Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 141.

During the heart of the 1800s, new scientific theories and discoveries created challenges to literalist interpretations of the Bible, particularly the creation narratives in Genesis. Charles Darwin's theories of evolution challenged the idea that humans had been created by God, and Charles Lyell's geological theories undermined the belief that the world had been created in seven literal days.¹³¹ Christian belief had long held that humanity occupied a special place in creation, as the pinnacle of God's creative work. When Darwin first published his theories in 1859, in *Origin of Species*, and later expanded upon them in 1871, in *The Descent of Man*, not only was humanity's place in God's creation threatened, but the role of God in nature – and even God's very existence – came into question.¹³² The conclusion of some was that if the world was created by natural processes, which did not require divine action or intervention, then life did not owe its existence to God or require belief in God at all. Baptist historian Robert G. Torbet writes, "From European universities came a rationalism which challenged the adequacy of faith as a way of knowing God's revelation to men. From England came Charles Darwin's theory of biological evolution with its emphasis upon the 'survival of the

¹³¹ Charles Darwin's first publication, *Origin of Species*, was published in 1859 and sparked debate over the role of God in nature and creation. The idea of fixity of species had been challenged before, but with Darwin's book debate became more intense. With the publication of *The Descent of Man* in 1871, however, Darwin's theories took a much bolder step in asserting that man may have developed from certain simian species rather than being created separately or specially. Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species, Or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray, 1859). Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1871).

Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, published in 1830, challenged the idea of a young earth. Based on extensive geological work and vertical ground sampling, Lyell proposed the concept of uniformitarianism, which stated that processes that shaped the earth required long periods of time. By proposing this, the earth was no longer created in stages, but took shape over eons. This challenged belief in a "young earth" (dated by Archbishop Ussher to 4004 BC) that was created in seven literal days. Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology: An Attempt to Explain the Former Changes of the Earth's Surface, by Reference to Causes Now in Operation* (London: John Murray, 1830).

Szasz notes that while these scientific controversies began to emerge, they were limited to the academic world and did not affect the majority of Christians until after the turn of the century.

¹³² Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 142–143. Also in Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, 257; and Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 84–85.

fittest,' the impact of which was felt in religious circles. Man's position as the special creation of God, endowed with full mental and spiritual capacity from his beginning, was challenged."¹³³ Naturally, conservative Christians balked at such suggestions.¹³⁴ While some Christians, such as Yale's William Graham Sumner and biology professor, and later president, of Wake Forest University William Louis Poteat, would ponder these ideas and made efforts to see how they might agree or even harmonize with scientific data, staunch conservatives reacted violently to evolutionary theory, seeing it as a threat that would undermine the faith of believers.¹³⁵

Three figures particularly embodied the Fundamentalist response, serving as key leaders in the national reaction against evolutionary teaching: John Roach Straton, William Bell Riley, and William Jennings Bryan.¹³⁶ Straton, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York City, and Riley, pastor of the First Baptist Church and president of the Northwestern Bible School in Minneapolis, were Northern Baptist and Fundamentalist leaders.¹³⁷ Both Straton and Riley were appalled by the liberal teaching

¹³³ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 425. Peter Williams adds, "On the moral plane, it reduced humanity to the level of beasts, engaged in a continual struggle for the 'survival of the fittest.'" Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, 258.

¹³⁴ Maring, *American Baptists: Whence and Whither?*, 87.

¹³⁵ Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 149–153. Shaw details the work and teaching of Poteat and the Fundamentalist efforts to have him publicly "tried" in 1922 before members of the local churches in order to have him removed as president of Wake Forest University. Shaw records Poteat's eloquent defense, which led to a defeat of the Fundamentalists and greater donations and giving to Wake Forest. Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, 258. Kidd and Hankins offer a helpfully nuanced view of Baptists, showing how "Denominationally oriented Baptist fundamentalists tended to follow the moderate lead of Laws, while the more militant, interdenominational, and increasingly antievolution Baptists followed Riley." Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 192.

¹³⁶ Another key figure in the Fundamentalist fight against evolution was J. Frank Norris. Because the dissertation focuses on figures in the North, only Straton and Riley, Northern Baptists, and Bryan, a nationally known figure, will be discussed here.

¹³⁷ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 427. The irony of Riley's life and work at Northwestern Bible School is that as he approached his death, he appointed his successor to be Billy Graham, one of the key leaders of the neo-evangelical movement. See Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 201;

and influence of their fellow Northern Baptists, such as Shailer Mathews, dean of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, and Harry Emerson Fosdick, pastor of Riverside Church in New York City.¹³⁸ Both Fosdick and Mathews were open to ideas related to evolution, and in response, Straton and Riley saw their work not only focused on the spread of the (orthodox) gospel, but also upon the fight against error-laden teaching coming from liberal sources both within and outside of the Baptist denomination.

Riley's work resulted in the formation of a large and influential Fundamentalist church in the Minneapolis area with thousands of members, and the foundation of the World Christian Fundamentals Association in 1919, which focused its energies on the promotion of premillennial dispensationalism as well as opposition to the teaching of evolution. Despite this opposition, Riley did not argue for a biblical literalism. In fact, in his debates with anti-evolutionist Harry Rimmer, who argued for a literal reading of Genesis 1 and 2, Riley instead argued that the "days" of creation represented "Aeons, not Solar Days."¹³⁹ For Riley, this was not a concession but a reasonable way to read the scriptures in accordance with geological information. The Fundamentalist position, although militant, had a spectrum of positions held by various members.¹⁴⁰ Riley also founded the Bible Baptist Union (BBU), and after joining efforts with Fundamentalist J.

Grant Wacker, *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 10.

¹³⁸ Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, 374.

¹³⁹ Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2012), 82.

¹⁴⁰ For an example of the spectrum held by various Baptist leaders, see Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*.

Frank Norris, the BBU eventually gave rise to the General Association of Regular Baptists (GARB), which broke ranks with the NBC.¹⁴¹

J.R. Straton, along with Riley, J.C. Masee and Curtis Lee Laws, editor of *The Watchman Examiner*, led in the organization of the Fundamentalist Fellowship during a two-day rally prior to the Convention meeting of the NBC in 1920.¹⁴² This rally would set the stage for annual pre-Convention meetings to discuss Fundamentalist strategies. As an example of such strategies, Straton, like Riley, agreed to engage in debates about evolution with other scholars, such as Henry Fairfield Osborn, the Professor of Zoology at Columbia University and Curator of the American Museum of Natural History, and later with Kirtley Fletcher Mather, Professor of Geology at Harvard University. Historian James Leo Garrett describes Straton's approach as "defend[ing] the Bible as 'the infallible Word of God' [due to] its preservation and circulation, its 'unique universality,' its 'unity in diversity,' its 'fulfilled prophecies,' its 'claims concerning itself,' and its 'self-authenticating authority.' He took the negative in the debate on the proposition 'that the earth and man came by evolution' and sought chiefly to answer the claims of evolutionists and to pose as ultimate the issue of cause and design versus chance."¹⁴³ Straton also cooperated with Riley in the formation of the BBU in 1920. Straton remained within the NBC for some time, in hopes of retaining a Fundamentalist influence among his Northern Baptist brethren, but he eventually took a harder line against evolution and set the stage for these Fundamentalists to leave and join the GARBC in

¹⁴¹ Paul Matzko, "Bible Baptist Union," The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA), http://www.thearda.com/timeline/events/event_101.asp. (accessed March 6, 2017).

¹⁴² Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 429. Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 330–331.

¹⁴³ Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 323.

1932.¹⁴⁴ As is evident, Fundamentalists cooperated and coordinated efforts in order to advance their agendas, both among Baptists and with Fundamentalist leaders in other denominations.

One such Fundamentalist leader, who was a giant among conservatives, was William Jennings Bryan, the Populist leader, three-time Democratic nominee for president, and Secretary of State under President Woodrow Wilson.¹⁴⁵ Eminent historian of science, Ronald Numbers, says that within the anti-evolutionary movement there were many leaders, but none stood out more than Bryan.¹⁴⁶ While Bryan, a Presbyterian, was obviously well known because of his political career, he was also personally well connected with the American populace because of his regular interaction with them on the Chautauqua speaking circuits. The Chautauqua circuits were traveling shows that featured various celebrity orators and performers.¹⁴⁷ Among the Chautauqua speakers, Bryan was unrivaled for his popularity, and during the first decades of the 1900s, a common theme in Bryan's speaking was his stance against Darwinism and evolution.

¹⁴⁴ Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 332, 341. Many Fundamentalists left the NBC to join the GARBC and CBA, but Riley remained as a full member (and Fundamentalist gadfly) within the NBC until his death in 1947, just after the official formation of the GARBC.

¹⁴⁵ Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 142–143. There are many other examples of outspoken Fundamentalists, but Bryan stands out because of his speeches, his national prominence alongside his active work to debunk Darwinist beliefs, and his later involvement in the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925. Shaw also notes the work of Northerners W.B. Riley and J.R. Straton, and Southerners T.T. Martin and J. Frank Norris.

¹⁴⁶ Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc., 1992), 41. Any study of the religious debates surrounding evolution must include a reading of Numbers's text, winner of the 1991 Albert C. Outler Prize in Ecumenical Church History. Numbers defines the main leaders of the anti-evolutionary movement as Riley, Straton, J. Frank Norris, T. T. Martin, and Bryan.

¹⁴⁷ The Chautauqua circuits originated from the educational programs held at Lake Chautauqua in New York State. Because of its popularity, other organizations emerged, using the name "Chautauqua" to boost their own popularity, although they were not affiliated with the New York program. At certain points, dozens of "traveling Chautauquas" appeared across the country, with varying speakers and quality of presentations.

Initially, Bryan's stance against evolution stemmed from his fear of what it would do to the faith of young people, but later, his reservations hardened into staunch opposition because of what he believed to be direct effects of evolution as manifested in World War I.¹⁴⁸ Historian LeRoy Ashby writes, "Starting around 1915, he viewed Darwinism's baneful effects with growing alarm. [After World War I, h]is earlier reservations hardened into determined opposition."¹⁴⁹ After the conclusion of World War I, Bryan began to target Darwinism specifically as a key evil, referring to it as a "menace" and equating it with smallpox.¹⁵⁰ Bryan felt that Darwinism was dangerous because it undermined the foundations of faith and stripped young people of hope for the future. If humans were simply animals, there was no reason to live morally, and every reason to fight "brutally" for survival by any means. Lawrence Levine writes, "Bryan's former toleration of the evolutionary theory, which had been wearing thin gradually, finally came to an end, and he issued a series of attacks upon the doctrine which instantly placed him in the forefront of the fundamentalist forces. The most important of these was Bryan's lecture, 'The Menace of Darwinism,' which was the lengthiest, the most

¹⁴⁸ According to historian Lawrence Levine, Post-war reports about World War I confirmed Bryan's suspicions regarding Darwinism as he read about the influence of evolution in Germany on its leaders and youth and saw the aftermath of the war in Europe. "Two books which he read in this period—the first an American war relief worker's account of his conversations with German officers, which showed the positive influence of Darwin upon their thinking, and the second an elaborate attempt to trace a straight line from Darwin through Nietzsche to the growth of German nationalism, militarism, and materialism—convinced Bryan that his original analysis [about evolution as a danger] had been correct." Lawrence W. Levine, *Defender of the Faith William Jennings Bryan: The Last Decade 1915–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 262.

¹⁴⁹ LeRoy Ashby, *William Jennings Bryan: Champion of Democracy* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 183; Levine, *Defender of the Faith*, 262.

¹⁵⁰ William Jennings Bryan, "The Menace of Darwinism" (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1922), 4.

effective, and, as its title indicates, the most hostile attack Bryan had yet delivered.”¹⁵¹

From 1921 to 1925, Bryan delivered another speech titled “Brother or Brute” almost daily on the Chautauqua circuits that also pointed to the dangers of Darwinism.¹⁵²

Because of his staunch anti-evolutionary stance Bryan soon became the champion of Fundamentalists who believed that public action needed to be taken to protect Christians. As evolutionary theory spread into the schools, Bryan represented a conservative backlash that moved to protect young people from the contaminating influence of evolutionary teaching, and he championed a series of laws that were passed in several Southern states outlawing the teaching of evolution in schools.¹⁵³ Although these laws were largely understood to be symbolic efforts, an ill-advised effort to prosecute the anti-evolution law in Tennessee led to the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925.¹⁵⁴ Bryan’s efforts were seen as a clarion call for Fundamentalists and a means to gain publicity for their beliefs, but the effects of Bryan’s work and the actions of other

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 264. “The Menace of Darwinism” speech was printed in a pamphlet form. It was part of a lecture series delivered by Bryan in 1921, which was published in a book titled, *In His Image*. The “Menace” speech is 14,000 words, compared to the 8,000 of “Prince.” Numbers, *The Creationists*, 42.

¹⁵² “Traveling Culture – Circuit Chautauqua in the Twentieth Century,” University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa Digital Library, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/search/collection/tc/searchterm/bryan!bryan%2C%20william%20jennings%2C%201860-1925/field/all!person/mode/all!all/conn/and!and/order/person/ad/asc> (accessed February 22, 2013). This comes from an examination of ten Chautauqua circuit programs.

¹⁵³ This effort refers to public schools in the various states. Thirty-seven anti-evolution bills were introduced in twenty state legislatures, mostly in the South, between 1921–1929. Denominational schools, however, were not affected by such laws; they had already been warned of the dangers of Darwinism, and many had begun to remove texts from the schools that taught about evolution. See Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 144, 153–155.

¹⁵⁴ For a more complete grasp of the event surrounding the Scopes Trial, one must consult Edward J. Larsen’s *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America’s Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). Shaw notes that Tennessee’s legislature was “not one of the most enlightened,” even toying with idea of passing a law declaring the earth to be flat. Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 153–154.

Fundamentalists, such as Riley and Straton, would result in a tarnished public reputation that would take decades to repair.

The Scopes Monkey Trial, National Exposure, and Recovery of a Tarnished Reputation

In many ways, the Scopes Trial was a court case that was never intended to occur. In his Pulitzer-Prize winning history of the trial, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion*, author Edward Larsen points out how Bryan himself warned anti-evolution proponents against ever bringing cases against such laws to trial.¹⁵⁵ The civic leaders of Dayton had originally intended the case to be a means of promoting the city's profile, but circumstances surrounding the trial quickly spun beyond the control of city leaders and the case and the city took on a circus atmosphere.¹⁵⁶ Eventually, the trial became a nationally viewed arena in which Fundamentalists and modernist ideas clashed.¹⁵⁷ Outsiders like John Roach Straton and William Bell Riley were already familiar with the issues at hand: Straton had already proposed anti-evolutionary legislation in the state of New York in February 1922, and Riley had lobbied for similar bills in states across the country through the newsletters of his World Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA). Prominent outside organizations and personalities soon became involved and overshadowed the local attorneys and civic leaders. Bryan, through the suggestion and influence of Riley's WCFA, offered his services as a consulting attorney to the prosecution to face the defense team led by the

¹⁵⁵ Larsen, *Summer for the Gods*, 43, 54, 221.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 152. Barbeque pits, hot dog stands, and portable organs filled the town square, people could have their pictures taken with monkeys, and planes would fly overhead and occasionally buzz the town.

¹⁵⁷ Larsen, *Summer for the Gods*, 88–92.

fledgling American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Chicago attorney Clarence Darrow.¹⁵⁸ Although Bryan had not practiced as a litigator for several decades, his presence among the prosecutorial team could not be refused due to his national prominence. Bryan still had years of experience behind him, though. While Riley and Straton argued strictly on moral and religious grounds, Bryan was more tactful and argued the case against evolutionary teaching based on populist ideals, saying “Teachers in public schools must teach what the taxpayers desire taught... The hand that writes the pay check rules the school.”¹⁵⁹ Darrow’s notoriety as a ruthless trial attorney had gained national attention, and his role as lead counsel for the defense served as the perfect foil to the crusading Bryan. The players had assumed the stage, and the case tumbled forward. With Bryan taking the stand as an “expert” witness on the Bible, Darrow demonstrated Bryan’s clear lack of biblical “expertise,” and by the end of the questioning, Bryan’s testimony was scattered and befuddled, utterly discrediting Bryan and the conservatives who supported him.¹⁶⁰ The trial became a complete embarrassment and discrediting of Bryan and the Fundamentalists in the national eye.

Even though the prosecution “won” the trial, the conservative position held by Fundamentalists had taken a sound beating in several ways. First, the way in which Bryan had handled the case virtually crippled the Fundamentalist position in the public’s eyes.¹⁶¹ National newspaper coverage, especially the vitriolic coverage by *Baltimore Sun*

¹⁵⁸ Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 57–60, 62; Larsen, *Summer for the Gods*, 48. Numbers explains some of the cooperative efforts between churches, Bryan, and the WCFA. Numbers, *The Creationists*, 49.

¹⁵⁹ Larsen, *Summer for the Gods*, 88–92.

¹⁶⁰ Following the trial, Riley and other Fundamentalists had to make concerted efforts to recover from the damaging testimony of Bryan during the trial. Larsen, *Summer for the Gods*, 222–223.

¹⁶¹ Williams, *America’s Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, 263.

reporter H.L. Mencken, made Bryan and his supporters out as backwards and uneducated.¹⁶² The trial was also the first to be broadcast over radio; WGN, the fledgling Chicago radio station, had set up a microphone within the courtroom, and listeners had been able to hear much of the action that had occurred within the courtroom.¹⁶³ The final critical expert witness testimony offered by Bryan had been broadcast in the court of public opinion, and he had badly fumbled his opportunity. Second, with the national exposure of the law being tried in Tennessee, similar measures in other states gained a notorious reputation. Some states, like Arkansas and Florida, had similar measures inserted into their state laws, but they were eventually struck down as unfairly favorable to particular religious groups (i.e. Fundamentalists) and subsequently declared unconstitutional. Third, expert scientific testimony had been excluded from presentation in front of the jurors during the trial. Although never presented before the jury, affidavits by Christian scientific experts had eventually been read orally and allowed into the court records.¹⁶⁴ These affidavits explained how creation might have occurred through a theistic evolution, which involved God in ways different than previously considered. Listeners were able to hear how the Bible could be interpreted in other ways other than a literal reading, and though many local Tennesseans still disagreed, many of the numerous members of the public in the courtroom, listening on the radio, and reading the newspaper accounts were undoubtedly influenced. Fourth, the publicity from the trial resulted in an overall tenor of Fundamentalism as a whole, and not just its anti-

¹⁶² Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, 281–282. Williams records that Mencken witheringly referred to Fundamentalists as the “Booboisie” and the South as the “Sahara of the Bozart” (making a pun of the “beaux arts”).

¹⁶³ Larsen, *Summer for the Gods*, 142.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 185–186.

evolutionary views, being viewed as outdated and backwards. While Bryan had once proudly represented the strength of the Fundamentalist cause, he now represented the glaring weakness of a Fundamentalism that became overly reliant on the authority of biblical literalism and avoided serious intellectual engagement.

Despite the considerable damage to the Fundamentalist reputation, in no way did Fundamentalist efforts die in 1925.¹⁶⁵ Their activity certainly did not end with the Scopes Trial, and conservatives carefully reconsidered how they would engage with the broader American culture.¹⁶⁶ During the late 1920s and 1930s, Fundamentalists began to withdraw from engagement with the broader culture.¹⁶⁷ They withdrew from a culture that was viewed as recalcitrant and contaminating, and a “double separation” took place, in which a good Fundamentalist not only separated from modernists and liberals but also from other Christians who refused to completely break with modernists and liberals.¹⁶⁸ By doing so, Fundamentalist leaders were able to shield themselves and their members from destructive influences.¹⁶⁹ Although they did this, these same leaders also knew that they had to sustain themselves. To do this, one concrete step that was taken was to develop and expand their institutions of higher learning, such as Moody Bible Institute and the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA), where Fundamentalists continued to

¹⁶⁵ Leonard, *Baptists in America*, 62–63.

¹⁶⁶ Larsen explains how, as a result of the Scopes Trial, Fundamentalists were far from defeated, and how they simultaneously withdrew and engaged with the culture in different ways. Larsen, *Summer for the Gods*, 229, 233–266.

¹⁶⁷ Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 7–8. Marsden outlines this slow and deliberate withdrawal from the American culture between the Scopes Trial and World War II. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925*, 184–195.

¹⁶⁸ Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, 7.

¹⁶⁹ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 67.

develop their theology. Additionally, they also continued to involve themselves in political matters as well, but in ways that would aid their isolationist stance. Historian Matthew Avery Sutton, in his book *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism*, describes how Fundamentalists, after World War I had ended, became obsessed with a protectionist, or even isolationist, stance that pitted them against “outside” groups such as Jews, Catholics, and African Americans who threatened the purity of their faith and land. Even while simultaneously hoping and working for a restoration of the Jewish homeland as part of an apocalyptic vision of the end times, they did so with the belief that Jews would return to “their” land and depart from America.¹⁷⁰ The rise of the Catholic Democratic nominee Al Smith in the late 1920s and the growing involvement of Catholics with the Democratic Party pushed Fundamentalists away from the increasingly liberal tone of the Democrats and towards involvement with and eventual support of the Republican Party in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁷¹ Slowly, Fundamentalists aligned their religious views with political views and acted and supported those views accordingly. While they faded temporarily from the spotlight, over the next several decades, American Protestant Fundamentalists carefully reorganized their institutions and efforts until they once again emerged strongly again in the public eye during the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ This is the argument put forth in chapters 4–7 of Sutton’s *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism*. An unfortunate outcome of Sutton’s text is that the title and much of the book’s contents confusingly conflate the terms “Evangelicalism,” that is neo-evangelicalism, and “Fundamentalism.” Early Fundamentalism and early neo-evangelicalism had distinctly different origins and aims, and neo-evangelicals sought to distinguish themselves from the Fundamentalists. Sutton is correct, though, in describing the isolationist approach that many Fundamentalists adopted in the post-Scopes era.

¹⁷¹ Weaver notes that Northern Baptists as a whole tended to be wary of Catholics during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 142.

¹⁷² Williams, *America’s Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, 274.

Just as Fundamentalist conservatives had restructured themselves and formed new organizations to stabilize and protect their beliefs, conservative Northern Baptists did the same. As stated above, members of Northern Baptist Convention withdrew to form the GARBC in 1932 and the CBA in 1947, of which most members held Fundamentalist beliefs. By withdrawing from the NBC, which they believed was moving in an irreversibly modernist direction, these Fundamentalists decided that they, too, had to withdraw from the denomination. In doing so, they followed the historical pattern of Baptist “come-outers” who withdrew from groups, rather than risk being infiltrated and contaminated by heterodoxy. As an illustration of this position, one need look no further than one of the founding documents of the GARBC by Dr. Robert T. Ketcham, GARBC National Representative (1948–1960), titled, “The Necessity for the Formation of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches,” in which Ketcham states the need to obey “the command to separate from apostates.” The “apostates” that Ketcham quotes in this document to prove his argument are all prominent members or seminary leaders of the Northern Baptist Convention.¹⁷³ Thus, leaders of the GARBC and CBA believed that the only way to remain free of this secular pollution was to remain separate from groups that put them and their members at risk. To educate their own ministers, these newfound Fundamentalist denominations founded their own institutions, such as the CBA-supported Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary in Denver, established in 1950, and Western (Conservative) Seminary.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Robert T. Ketcham, “The Necessity for the Formation of the General Association of Regular Baptist Church,” (n.p., n.d.). GARBC website, http://www.garbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/necessity_of_garbc.pdf. (accessed October 30, 2016).

¹⁷⁴ Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 336.

While some conservatives in the NBC decided to follow this tactic of withdrawal, many conservatives decided to remain in the denomination. Part of this was due to the denomination's decision to recognize and acknowledge the conservative position within the denomination through the founding of more conservative seminaries, such as Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago in 1913, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (now Palmer Seminary) in Philadelphia in 1925, and California Baptist Theological Seminary in 1944.¹⁷⁵

Within this list, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (EBTS) is of particular interest because the school not only represented the NBC response to the appeals of conservatives in the denomination for the establishment of a conservative school but also was where Bernard Ramm received his initial theological training. EBTS was founded in the midst of “an era with landmark sociological developments, most notably Darwinism and the Industrial Revolution.”¹⁷⁶ For conservatives in the NBC, the seminary was intended to be a place of moderate position where traditional orthodoxy could be taught, in contrast to what was seen as increasingly liberal tendencies, or openness to higher criticism and evolution, in other seminaries such as the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, where Shailer Mathews was president. The planners and founders of EBTS “determined that liberalism could not be held in check in the denomination's older institutions. And they wanted a better alternative to the Bible schools that were springing up across the land as a response to liberalism,” leading to the establishment of the new

¹⁷⁵ Starr, “American Baptist Convention, 70; Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 330; Durso and Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States*, 151, 160; Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History*, 401. Confirming its conservative character, Weaver notes that Eastern required its faculty and trustees to affirm a doctrinal confession. Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 138.

¹⁷⁶ Randall L. Frame, *Praise and Promise: A Pictorial History of The Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company, 2000), 9.

institutions.¹⁷⁷ To further ensure this conservative position, the school developed a “Doctrinal Basis” that outlined a set of conservative Christian and Baptist beliefs.¹⁷⁸ Although Baptists usually shunned creedal statements, all members of the faculty and Board of Trustees signed the “Doctrinal Basis” annually.

Although established as a conservative response, the new seminary also was careful to not lean too greatly towards the position of “ultraconservative extremists, who despite some overlapping points of agreement [with moderates], were hot in pursuit of their own, distinct agenda.”¹⁷⁹ The leaders of the seminary “were known for their ability to disagree without being disagreeable, to challenge without being caustic or unkind.”¹⁸⁰ Additionally, as part of its progressive character, the faculty included women in its number and the seminary admitted women in its initial class.¹⁸¹ Women were welcomed to take any classes the same as men, and were also welcomed to work towards any degree offered by the seminary.¹⁸² Images of the first graduating class appear to consist of approximately half women.¹⁸³ As a result of this “Conservative but Progressive” position,

¹⁷⁷ Frame, *Praise and Promise*, 12.

¹⁷⁸ The text of the “Doctrinal Basis” is included in Appendix A.

¹⁷⁹ Frame, *Praise and Promise*, 10. It is important to note that Frame refers to the moderate conservative founders of EBTS as “Fundamentalists” (with a capital F), and refers to Fundamentalists, as defined in this dissertation, as “ultraconservative extremists” (10, 14). Frame says, “those who took on the name *Fundamentalist* eighty years ago were in many ways the moderates of their time” (10, italics original) in contrast to those who subscribed to the “faith-destroying effects of radical theological liberalism” (11).

¹⁸⁰ Frame, *Praise and Promise*, 15.

¹⁸¹ Although women were included as faculty, it is not clear how they were involved in the teaching or what classes they taught.

¹⁸² Information for this is taken from an image of a letter sent from the seminary president to a prospective female student. Frame, *Praise and Promise*, 22.

¹⁸³ Frame, *Praise and Promise*, 26–27.

the seminary received the support of people throughout the denomination.¹⁸⁴ Within five years, EBTS showed success as 127 alumni had served or were serving as pastors in congregations throughout the country and 158 students enrolled in classes during the 1929–1930 school year.¹⁸⁵ Thus, although some Fundamentalists had engineered controversy and division among Northern Baptists, the NBC had withstood these, and many conservatives remained in the denomination and its schools.

These seminaries were “conservative in theology, but solidly committed to the fellowship of the Convention.”¹⁸⁶ These conservatives also tended to reject the tactic of withdrawal taken by the more militant Fundamentalists.¹⁸⁷ They wanted to remain in touch with the broader American and world cultures and to engage actively through ministry and missions. They were not alone. Conservatives in other denominational groups also thought similarly, and with the formation of a new organization, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), conservatives found a new venue through which they would be able to commune with fellow conservatives but actively engage with the world.

¹⁸⁴ This is the title of Norman Maring’s history of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in *What God Hath Wrought: Eastern’s First Thirty-Five Years*, ed. Gilbert Guffin (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1960), 15–45. One of the seminary’s early supporters was Curtis Lee Laws, while no opinion emerged from “extremists” such as Riley, Norris, or T. T. Shields. Laws’s strong affiliation with and support of Eastern demonstrates a less-militant position he held compared to Riley, Norris, and Shields.

¹⁸⁵ Frame, *Praise and Promise*, 37.

¹⁸⁶ Starr, “American Baptist Convention,” 70.

¹⁸⁷ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*, 4.

Formation of the National Association of Evangelicals

By the 1940s, a new group of conservatives emerged who desired to break with the more militant Fundamentalists, who had withdrawn into cultural isolationism.¹⁸⁸ These conservatives wished to re-engage with the culture actively intellectually, socially, and missionally.¹⁸⁹ Sociologist Christian Smith describes this group as a “growing network of restless evangelists, scholars, and pastors [who] began to formulate a critique of their own fundamentalist subculture and a vision for its transformation.”¹⁹⁰ They were driven by three main desires: the desire for active evangelism, the aspiration of voicing a distinctly respectable Christian position to the intellectual debates of the day, and the hope of bringing Christianity to bear on the urgent social and political needs of the day.¹⁹¹ Historian of Christianity George Marsden describes how this group of conservatives viewed Fundamentalists as willing to abandon active missions and evangelism for the sake of fighting for doctrinal purity.¹⁹² They also saw, especially in the wake of the Scopes Trial, how Fundamentalism had failed “to provide a sound philosophical defense of the Christian world and life view,” resulting in almost embarrassing intellectual

¹⁸⁸ Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism*, 50; Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, 9. Weaver notes that the withdrawal of Fundamentalists led to the formation of several Fundamentalist Bible Institutes. Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 131–132; see also Derek J. Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals? Tracing the Roots of Today's Movements* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), 69–70.

¹⁸⁹ Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 515.

¹⁹⁰ Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, 9.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 9–10. Although the Social Gospel had been advanced several decades prior by Walter Rauschenbusch, neo-evangelicals took up social ministry from a distinctly different theological viewpoint. Instead of viewing social work as part of a post-millennial perfection of earthly institutions, neo-evangelicals saw social work as an avenue for evangelism and conversion.

¹⁹² In Chapter VI of *Reforming Fundamentalism*, Marsden details the consequences of Fundamentalist militancy and withdrawal. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 94–118.

arguments presented at the trial and afterwards.¹⁹³ Finally, they also looked at the world, emerging from the ruins of Great Depression and the aftermath of World War II, and saw that Christians should not and could not ignore the very desperate social and economic situation people faced in war-torn countries.¹⁹⁴ In all three aspects, whereas Fundamentalists saw these situations as the consequence of modernist and liberal failings and were content to withdraw from the culture into (temporary) insularity, these conservatives believed that Christianity was the answer for the world and that they needed to bring Christianity more broadly into the culture.¹⁹⁵ In forming a new group, these conservatives believed that they would be able to adhere to, and spread, orthodox teaching and principles without fear of contamination by the world, while still engaging actively with people from different backgrounds. Historian Robert G. Torbet describes this sentiment among Baptists:

The tragic years of World War II made it increasingly clear that the basic ill of civilization is spiritual maladjustment of men to God and society.... Some pronouncedly divergent tendencies have characterized the efforts of the Christian church to cope with the world situation. Among many, there has come a growing emphasis of the gospel and the need for an ecumenical witness to the world. This we may call the leftist tendency. With equal force, a strong reactionism has arisen

¹⁹³ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 72. In addition to the lack of intellectual engagement by Fundamentalists, Torbet describes increasing frustration of Baptists with the lack of education among the clergy. Torbet writes, “Within a generation general education had arisen to a new level in American life, creating profound need for a professionally educated ministry in the churches. The accelerated growth of church membership and support which had been mounting since the war had begun to level off by the early 1960’s, and there were signs of impatience with the irrelevancy of church programs and the platitudes of innocuous clergymen.... A Protestantism which basked in the achievements of the nineteenth century was ill-prepared for the rapid changes of the twentieth century.” Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 458. Brackney notes the historical shortage of trained and educated ministers among Baptists going back to the 1800s. Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective*, 78–79, 91–101.

¹⁹⁴ Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, 10; Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals?*, 70. Marsden notes how Ockenga’s trip to Europe in 1947 cemented the critical importance of this goal. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 61–63.

¹⁹⁵ Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2001), 18–19.

within a segment of Protestantism known as Fundamentalists, who prefer to emphasize primarily the individual expression of the gospel and the need for a non-denominational, fundamentalist witness to the world. This we may term the rightist tendency. A less vocal but none-the-less significant middle group who represent the old-line denominational alignment of Protestantism prefer to combine the emphases of the two extremes in an effort to save the world through the impact of the organized agencies of the churches for evangelism, missions, education, and social action.¹⁹⁶

It was from this “middle group” that Torbet describes among the Baptists, as well as other denominations, that a new movement would form.

In 1942, conservative leaders from across the country gathered in St. Louis at the invitation of J. Elwin Wright.¹⁹⁷ Over the previous decade, Wright had helped to establish the interdenominational New England Fellowship among conservative leaders in the Northeast. Through the formation of the New England Fellowship, Wright had been able to meet like-minded conservatives, such as Harold John Ockenga, Carl F.H. Henry, E.J. Carnell, and Charles Fuller, who also desired greater missional cooperation and increased interaction with civic authorities.¹⁹⁸ Encouraged by the cooperative spirit he found among other conservatives leaders, Wright envisioned the expansion of the New England Fellowship into a national organization.¹⁹⁹ After conversations with these other leaders, an exploratory committee was formed in October 1941 to see if a national organization could be formed. After working through the winter, the St. Louis meeting in April 1942 became the first National Conference for United Action Among Evangelicals. After

¹⁹⁶ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 386–387. Following this passage, Torbet limits his discussion to activities of the Baptists, particularly through the Baptist World Alliance, but by looking at the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals and their mission, the description Torbet offers is apt.

¹⁹⁷ “History,” NAE Website. <http://nae.net/about-nae/history/> (accessed November 5, 2016).

¹⁹⁸ Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity*, 19; “History,” NAE Website. <http://nae.net/about-nae/history/> (accessed November 5, 2016).

¹⁹⁹ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 69. “History,” NAE Website. <http://nae.net/about-nae/history/> (accessed November 5, 2016).

gathering, the 147 leaders who came were inspired by messages from Ockenga of Park Street Church in Boston, William Ayer of Calvary Baptist Church in New York, and Robert G. Lee of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis. Attendees were stirred to action and agreed to set aside denominational differences in order to demonstrate unity in Christ. Peter Williams writes, “The National Association of Evangelicals... represented a more ecumenical attempt to bring together conservatives of various stripes.”²⁰⁰ Declining the efforts of the militant conservative Carl McIntire, who insisted upon the members joining his American Council of Churches, they drafted a tentative constitution and agreed to meet the following year in Chicago. More than one thousand participants gathered in May 1943, potentially representing almost fifty denominations and fifteen million Christians in the United States. The NAE, like the Fundamentalist movement it emerged from and reacted against, was also non-denominational and composed of members across numerous denominations. After passing several amendments, the final draft of the constitution was passed, and the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was formed with Harold Ockenga elected as its first president.²⁰¹ Historians Thomas Kidd and Barry Hankins write:

Represented by the National Association of Evangelicals and later identifying with Fuller Theological Seminary and *Christianity Today* magazine, neo-evangelicals held on to conservative theology while moving away from the militant and separatist spirit of fundamentalism. Neo-evangelical leaders such as Baptist theologian Carl F. H. Henry believed that doctrinally conservative Christians should become a more positive, reforming force in the world rather than distinguishing themselves by their attacks on liberals and denunciations of mainstream society. Henry believed conservatives should stop berating each other

²⁰⁰ Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, 376.

²⁰¹ Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 48; “History,” NAE Website. <http://nae.net/about-nae/history/> (accessed November 5, 2016).

over differences in interpretation of end-times prophecy and expend more energy presenting a winsome, intellectually respectable witness to the larger culture.²⁰²

To implement their three goals of active evangelism, developing a distinctly and respectably Christian voice to the intellectual debates of the day, and bringing Christianity to bear on the urgent social and political needs of the day, the NAE quickly sprang into action. To help support their evangelistic efforts, a compromise was reached between the national organization and local churches. The NAE would promote evangelical work, but actual evangelism was done by individual organizations, parachurch groups, and individual and associated churches.²⁰³ The most famous speaker to emerge from the neo-evangelical movement was Billy Graham.²⁰⁴ A member of the early organization, Graham was also the first full-time evangelist for the Youth for Christ (YFC) movement from 1945.²⁰⁵ Beginning in May 1944, Graham spoke to youth rallies that averaged 2,000–2,500 people per week for twenty-one weeks, and culminated his work that year with a “Victory Rally” in Chicago Stadium before a crowd of 20,000. The YFC rallies moved around the country and overseas to equal success.²⁰⁶ Thousands came to hear Graham and other neo-evangelical preachers at rallies and stadium gatherings in cities around the world. It was a matter of time before Graham would launch his own evangelistic ministry in 1950 and speak directly to tens of millions to share the gospel.

²⁰² Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 200–201.

²⁰³ “History,” NAE Website. <http://nae.net/about-nae/history/> (accessed November 5, 2016).

²⁰⁴ Graham’s influence in the neo-evangelical movement cannot be overstated. Although beginning as a Youth for Christ pastor before several thousands in the Midwest, his impact would eventually reach hundreds of millions worldwide, bringing recognition and credibility to neo-evangelicals.

²⁰⁵ Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals?*, 70.

²⁰⁶ Art Deyo, “Celebrating 70 Years of Youth for Christ,” Youth for Christ website, http://www.yfc.net/images/uploads/general/YFCs_History_by_Dr._Art_Deyo_-_Final_Version.pdf (accessed November 5, 2016).

Eminent religious historian Grant Wacker traces the history and progression of change in the evangelist's life. Wacker depicts the fundamentalist characteristics of Graham's younger life, the "growing rift between him and his fundamentalist friends into a permanent and unbridgeable chasm," and clearly defines Graham by the 1950s as one of the "new evangelicals, as they sometimes called themselves, [who] affirmed most of the doctrinal cornerstones that fundamentalists affirmed, but with less dogmatism and with little inclination to fall into arcane debates about how the world would end. At the same time, they placed more emphasis on evangelism, social reform, and cooperation with other Christians."²⁰⁷ Other neo-evangelical parachurch movements also emerged at this time, such as Campus Crusade for Christ, the Navigators, and World Vision, to name a few, also dedicated to spreading the gospel message.²⁰⁸

To help bolster the intellectual front of the movement, Harold Ockenga and Charles Fuller worked together to help found Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, in 1947.²⁰⁹ The seminary was envisioned to be "the Cal Tech of modern evangelicalism,' producing scholarship the quality of which would parallel that of the giants of Princeton Theological Seminary in its former glory days, before orthodox evangelicals were edged out by liberals."²¹⁰ Other schools, some of which predated the emergence of the neo-evangelical movement, were drawn towards neo-evangelical influence such as Gordon-

²⁰⁷ Wacker, *America's Pastor*, 14. When describing Graham's fundamentalism, much influence initially comes from his association with conservatives in his first year of college at Bob Jones College, but this slowly transforms over time as he changes schools to Florida Bible Institute and Wheaton College and his encounter with L. Nelson Bell (and his daughter and future wife, Ruth).

²⁰⁸ Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, 12-13.

²⁰⁹ Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 51. Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals?*, 70-71.

²¹⁰ Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, 11. Chapter III of Marsden's *Reforming Fundamentalism* is a must-read for details on the construction and planning of Fuller Seminary. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 53-68.

Conwell Theological Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Calvin Theological Seminary, North Park Theological Seminary, Covenant Theological Seminary, and Asbury Theological Seminary.²¹¹ Conservatives thus had more places for study and theological development. Trained in these institutions, neo-evangelicals hoped to once again thoughtfully engage with scholars over the significant and pressing intellectual matters of the day, such as the relationship between science and religion. Led theologically by Carl F.H. Henry, who published *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* in 1947, neo-evangelicals clarified and crystallized their call to fresh engagement with the culture.²¹² Additionally, numerous neo-evangelical periodicals emerged to help advance the education and awareness of regular church members. *Christianity Today*, established in 1956 under the editorship of L. Nelson Bell, Billy Graham's father-in-law, was one among other neo-evangelical publications such as *Eternity* magazine, the *Christian Scholars Review*, *Sojourners* magazine, and *Christian Life* magazine. Publishing houses were also established, such as Zondervan, Inter-Varsity Press, Baker Book House, Word Books, Thomas Nelson Publishing, and William B. Eerdmans to produce evangelical books and literature.²¹³ Christian music continued to be used during revivals and in church services, but over time, Christian music production and recording companies emerged as well to produce modern hymnody. While "Christian Rock" is often associated with the Jesus People and the Pentecostal movement of the

²¹¹ Smith lists these schools (and others), but does not include Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary or Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, 12.

²¹² Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals?*, 70; Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 72.

²¹³ Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, 376. Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, 12–13; Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 70.

1970s, neo-evangelical membership of and cooperation with Pentecostal groups quickly welcomed modern Christian music into churches and other worship settings. Recording companies such as Myrrh, Sparrow, Word, and Dayspring helped to spread songs written by, published by, and well-used among those in neo-evangelical circles.²¹⁴

To expand their social and political work, the NAE opened an office in Washington, D.C., to help support neo-evangelical chaplains both during and after WWII, to work with the Federal Communication Commission to protect and expand religious broadcasting, and to defend religious liberty. Religious broadcasting was a major part of the neo-evangelical movement, best exemplified by Charles Fuller and his “Old Fashioned Revival Hour.” His radio show was broadcast along the West Coast from the late 1930s until just before his death in 1968.²¹⁵ Because of Fuller’s program and others like it, successful evangelical preaching soon spread into the new medium of television and, in particular, Graham’s evangelistic “Crusades,” which were often televised as much for the preaching as for the spectacle of Graham preaching before crowds of thousands in packed athletic stadiums. By 1945, four additional regional offices were established in Detroit, Minneapolis, Portland, and Los Angeles to help support the work of neo-evangelicals across the nation. With the regular invitation of NAE representatives such as Graham to the White House by President Eisenhower and subsequent presidents, along with the place NAE leaders had at the National Prayer

²¹⁴ For a history of the Jesus People movement and music used in the Pentecostal movement in the 1970s, see the excellent history by Larry Eskridge, *God’s Forever Family: The Jesus People Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²¹⁵ The use of radio to broadcast Christian messages long predated the neo-evangelical movement, and the radio was utilized by numerous Christian groups that did not necessarily identify themselves as neo-evangelical. An example would be Aimee Semple MacPherson’s radio station, KFSG (with the FSG representing her Foursquare Gospel denomination).

Breakfasts, the NAE soon established itself as a powerful and influential presence among religious leaders in post-WWII America.²¹⁶

Northern Baptist Reaction to the National Association of Evangelicals

For conservatives in Northern Baptist Convention in the mid-1940s, the newly-founded NAE presented a tantalizing possibility. These conservatives saw the NAE as a more favorable alternative to cooperation with the Federal Council of Churches. Samuel Hill and Robert Torbet write that historically in the NBC, “There was distaste among the more reactionary [Fundamentalist] segment of the Convention to the social pronouncements of the Council. Further, the hostility was partly due to a fear that Baptists would lose their unique and historic witness by membership in the Council.”²¹⁷ Fundamentalists who had remained in the NBC after the GARB split in 1932 felt that cooperation with the Federal Council of Churches pushed the denomination in a dangerously liberal direction. Cooperation with the NAE seemed to be a more tolerable alternative to the FCC for Fundamentalists.

Thus, at the annual meeting of the NBC in 1947, a proposition was put forward “to consider the advisability of appointing a committee to study a possible relationship between the Northern Baptist Convention and the National Association of Evangelicals and to report at a subsequent session of this Convention.”²¹⁸ After discussion, the

²¹⁶ Gary Scott Smith, *Faith and the Presidency: From George Washington to George W. Bush* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 240–242.

²¹⁷ Samuel S. Hill, Jr. and Robert G. Torbet, *Baptists North and South* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1964), 31.

²¹⁸ *Yearbook of the Northern Baptist Convention 1947 Containing Historical Documents and Tables; Minutes of and Reports Submitted at The Fortieth Meeting of the Convention Held at Atlantic City, New Jersey, May 19-23, 1947* (Philadelphia, PA: The Judson Press, 1947), 68.

majority of NBC members decided to retain their historic connection to the FCC. It was decided: “Be It Resolved, That, without prejudging the merits of the proposal, since we are already involved in conferences concerning our relations with other interdenominational groups with which we are already connected... no committee be appointed at this time relative to possible relations with the National Association of Evangelicals.”²¹⁹ It was at this point that NBC Fundamentalists who felt that the Convention was moving towards too liberal a direction would decide to break away and form the Conservative Baptist Association of America (CBA).²²⁰

To accommodate the conservatives who decided to remain, the Convention decided that those who wanted to support either the FCC or the NAE financially through the NBC general fund could do so by designating their offerings. The Convention decided in good Baptist fashion “That thereafter financial contributions to the National Association of Evangelicals and the Federal Council of Churches be received and remitted only on a ‘designation basis’ through our Unified Budget, thus enabling each local church to exercise the autonomous right of determining the organization in which it shall thereafter be represented.”²²¹ By deciding to act in this manner, the Convention avoided another conflict within the denomination as it had fifteen years prior with the

²¹⁹ *Yearbook of the National Baptist Convention 1947*, 71.

²²⁰ Association with the FCC was not the only reason for CBA members leaving the NBC. Other issues involved the continued presence of liberal members, differences over doctrinal standards among missionaries, organizational principles, and the effort “to conserve (to keep, to retain) the basic biblical distinctives that have historically distinguished Baptists as a people of God.” From Bruce L. Shelley, “Those People Called Conservative Baptist” and Stephen LeBar, “Historical Perspective,” CBnorthwest website, <http://www.cbnw.org/about/identity/history.cfm> (accessed March 10, 2017). LeBar is identified as the executive director of CBAmerica in 2006. Shelley distinguishes between the “evangelistic” element of CBA members, who cooperated with the NAE and Billy Graham, and the more “militant” members of the CBA who were “fundamentalist.”

²²¹ *Yearbook of the National Baptist Convention 1947*, 88.

GARB, while also retaining the Baptist principle of church autonomy. Conservatives would be free to decide what to do without forcing the denomination in a conservative direction. Frustrated and disgruntled Fundamentalists would depart for the CBA, but conservatives who remained within the NBC would be free to decide how to move forward based on the principles of church autonomy and individual freedom of conscience.²²²

The NBC would never join the NAE, instead formally retaining its historical ties to the FCC/NCC/WCC and the Baptist World Alliance. This did not stop individual members of the denomination, though, from supporting and interacting with the NAE. Conservatives within the denomination were free to designate their financial support to the NAE through the general fund, and individual conservatives were free to interact with members of the NAE. Undoubtedly, some conservatives within the NBC did interact with or were affected by the NAE. Hill and Torbet, writing in 1964, describe the character of the “present” American Baptist Convention saying,

Classical liberalism is on the wane—it was probably never as strong as some have maintained, though a good portion of the leaders of early twentieth-century religious liberalism were Baptist. Conservatives predominate, but the average American Baptist conservative is of a particular sort. He clings lovingly to the Bible, he embraces traditional theology, he believes in personal conversion, and he testifies to his faith openly. Yet he is not excessively dogmatic in spirit, nor vocally anti-ecumenical, and usually has a spirit of involvement in, rather than withdrawal from, the world.²²³

This description strongly echoes the organizing principles and aims of the NAE. The growth and influence of the NAE certainly made an impact on the NBC/ABC, and members of the NBC/ABC were freely interacting with NAE members. Among them was

²²² Hill and Torbet, *Baptists North and South*, 32, 73–75.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 86–87.

Bernard Ramm, and numerous texts testify to his impact in both the neo-evangelical movement as well as Baptist theology.²²⁴ Although Ramm, a lifelong ABC member, never formally joined the NAE, he interacted with NAE members on a regular basis and was one who helped to embody a neo-evangelical presence within the NBC. It is to this history that we will now turn.²²⁵

Conclusion

While the neo-evangelical movement began slowly with fifteen relatively small denominations and approximately half a million members, the NAE would quickly more than double the number of denominations represented and triple the number of church members within its first fifteen years.²²⁶ The organization's desire to break from the militancy of the Fundamentalists and the strategy of providing membership to individuals, churches, organizations, or denominations proved to be highly effective in attracting new associates. By creating openness to members on all levels this way, Christians were able to join the NAE without needing to leave their "home" organization. This openness also created for conservatives from different denominations a "place" in which they could interact with other conservative Christians without fear of being labeled

²²⁴ Smith notes Ramm as one of the significant leaders of the new neo-evangelical movement. Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, 9. Texts listing important theologians – Baptist or not – usually include Bernard Ramm, citing both his identity as a Baptist and as a theological influence in the neo-evangelical movement. See Day, "Bernard L. Ramm," 588–605.

²²⁵ Ramm's decision to never join the NAE will be discussed in the next chapter.

²²⁶ Figures vary on initial membership. Marsden reports the membership in 1947 as thirty denominations representing 1.3 million members. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 70. As a comparison figure provided by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A General Assembly, according to the 1946 edition of the *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, the FCC consisted of twenty-five denominations and had a total membership of 27,749,967 people. See *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, (New York: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1946).

a “heretic,” a “liberal,” or a “Fundamentalist.”²²⁷ The moderate-conservative identity that the NAE established for its members created space for Christians to hold onto orthodoxy while simultaneously exploring new ideas and new concepts. Smith writes,

What the evangelical movement did accomplish was to open up a ‘space’ between fundamentalism and liberalism in the field of religious collective identity; give that space a name; articulate and promote a resonant vision of faith and practice that players in the religious field came to associate with that name and identity-space; and invite a variety of religious players to move into that space to participate in the ‘identity-work’ and mission being accomplished there.²²⁸

Baptist historian C. Douglas Weaver remarks, “Looking at American Baptists through the lenses of the search for the New Testament church will continue to be fruitful, and will most likely continue to uncover widely divergent pictures.”²²⁹ Bernard Ramm certainly helps to diversify the portrait of American Baptists. While many Baptists joined the militant conservatism of the Fundamentalist movement, and others followed the liberal leadership of theologians like Fosdick and Mathews, Ramm was part of a moderate group that wished to retain traditional orthodox teaching and doctrines but engage and advance intellectually with the culture. Although remaining a member of the Northern Baptist Convention, which never joined the NAE, the theologically conservative Ramm found a fellowship among NAE members, with whom he would cooperate and work fruitfully for the next fifty years of his life. For this reason, we now turn to a history of Bernard Ramm’s personal background and his attraction to the NAE.

²²⁷ Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Indomitable Baptists: A Narrative of Their Role in Shaping American History*, 234.

²²⁸ Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, 14–15.

²²⁹ Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 185.

CHAPTER THREE

The Personal History of Bernard Ramm

Introduction

Bernard Ramm was born and raised in the American Pacific Northwest, but he moved frequently from city to city throughout his career. Not only did he journey physically, but spiritually and theologically as well. Becoming a Christian just before entering college, Ramm was soon introduced to fundamentalist principles, to which he held during the early years of his theological vocation. As he investigated further, however, he realized that the fundamentalist tenets he held were insufficient for making sense of God and the world around him. As a result, Ramm moved away from fundamentalism, which he believed limited his thinking, towards neo-evangelicalism, which he found to be more open and welcoming to new avenues of thought and discovery.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace a biography of Ramm's life and focus in particular on the transition that Ramm made as a Christian: from fundamentalism to neo-evangelicalism. This biography will begin with an exploration of his family history and the early influences upon Ramm's life. The biography will then follow Ramm into his early career and explore the reasons why he believed that he had to make a theological move away from fundamentalism to neo-evangelicalism. Finally, the chapter will broadly sketch the outcomes of this transition, in terms of his later career, leaving particular details of his changing views, especially in the realm of science, to the following chapter.

Bernard Ramm's Family Background

To better grasp the path that Bernard Ramm took in life, a fuller picture of his family background is helpful. By understanding the influence that Ramm's family had upon him, the directions he followed and the decisions he made become clearer. For most people, one's family background has a profound impact upon the outcome of a person's life, and Ramm was no different. His father, mother, and older brother ultimately played a significant role in shaping the contours of his career and life, and their stories must be interwoven into the tapestry of Ramm's life.¹

Bernard Ramm's father and mother each came separately to the United States in the final years of the 1800s or early 1900s.² Bernard's father, Bernardo Pianezzi, was born into a peasant family of sheep and goat herders that lived in the small village of Pioi, near the town of Domodossola, in northern Italy.³ After arriving in the country and passing through the immigration centers in the East, most likely Ellis Island, his name was registered as William P. Ramm.⁴ Family stories characterize him as a roustabout and troubling character when he was a young man. After entering the country and

¹ Much of the personal information and background on Bernard Ramm's grandparents and family come from multiple separate interviews with each of Ramm's children, Dr. Elizabeth Ramm Attig and her younger brother, Stephen Ramm. Interviews were conducted over the phone and in person over 2015 and 2016, and details were confirmed over email as well.

² Dates of Bernard Ramm's parents' individual arrivals are somewhat unclear, but their arrivals almost certainly occurred in this window of time.

³ Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, January 15, 2015. Details confirmed through Elizabeth Attig, e-mail messages to author, March 24, 2017 and April 10, 2017.

⁴ Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, November 27, 2016. The father changed his name after arriving in North America, at some time in the late 1800s or early 1900s. The family name may have been changed to "Ramm" due to his prior life as a herder. For the purposes of this dissertation, he will be referred to as "William," the name by which his family knew him. The family possesses a certificate that notes his date of birth as 10 October 1866, but the death certificate, for some reason, notes his birthplace as California, which is almost certainly incorrect.

accumulating enough resources, William desired to find a wife and settle down.⁵ His instincts led him to return to Italy and seek a wife from his home region. In the first years of the new century, William traveled back to the border area between Switzerland and Italy, and there his brother introduced him to Angelina Croppi, who was from the Swiss canton of Ticino, just a few miles to the west of his hometown. The couple married in 1902 and sailed from the port city of Genoa to return to the United States.

William was eager not only to make a living, but also willing to move in search of a lucrative future, causing the family to move several times over the next few years. After re-entering the country with his new bride, Ramm spent time in Boston and then slowly made his way westward to Ohio, where his first two children, John and Lawrence, were born in the city of Lansing.⁶ At some point over the next few years, the family made its way towards the Pacific Northwest, and the couple had their third child, Anne Elizabeth, who was born in Spokane, Washington.⁷ Shortly after her birth, the family moved further west, and another brother, Joseph, was born to the couple in Seattle in 1911.⁸ Further desire to succeed financially took the family to the mining towns of Montana. These mining towns of the northwestern United States were attractive destinations for young men willing to work in the mineral-rich hillsides and mountains. The reward for the rough and risky work was there for the taking, but the labor and lifestyle in these towns

⁵ Where William Ramm lived and how he made his living in the years between his initial arrival in the United States and the time of his return to Europe in search of a bride is unclear.

⁶ John was born on 11 February 1905. His brother, Lawrence, was born on 23 November 1906.

⁷ Anne Elizabeth Ramm was born on 16 August 1910.

⁸ Joseph was born 26 April 1911.

was difficult. William decided to take the risk, and the family moved once again. After settling in the city of Butte, their fifth and last child was born on 1 August 1916.

This last surviving child, Bernard, was born in a miner's tent. His parents did not expect him to survive childhood, with his father going so far as to purchase a small coffin for the infant, but Bernard lived.⁹ He and his four elder siblings grew up in the miner's town amid the harsh Montana weather and limited resources. Neither parent was an expert at raising children nor aware of how to care physically for the young ones. Two children born prior to Bernard had already died from pneumonia due to poor care. During a visit to the doctor, Bernard's mother was told that her son was at risk of dying from pneumonia, as the two children had before him, if not kept properly warm. He had already been sick several times, because the parents were negligent in keeping the children properly dressed and covered in the Montana climate.¹⁰

In addition to the harsh environment, the home climate was difficult for Bernard as well. The marriage between William and his bride was not smooth, and arguments often erupted.¹¹ Later in life, both of Bernard Ramm's children recalled that their parents never argued with one another by raising their voices, largely attributable to the loud arguments that Bernard had observed between his own parents as a child and wanted to avoid in his own marriage.¹² At certain points, William would beat the older children and even take out a gun that he owned and brandish it at his wife during especially vitriolic

⁹ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, January 6, 2015.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, March 24, 2017.

¹¹ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, January 6, 2015; Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, March 24, 2017.

¹² Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, January 6, 2015.

fight, although it was never actually discharged.¹³ William was temperamental and often overly harsh in his treatment of the children as well, and as young Bernard grew up, he often faced rough treatment from his father, with William often unreasonably berating his youngest son. Bernard received little to no protection from his mother and would often cry himself to sleep in the midst of this environment.¹⁴ Bernard's oldest brother, John, took it upon himself to shield Bernard from his father's harshness, and it was usually John, along with his sister, Anne, who looked after Bernard to make sure that he was well and provided for in all aspects of his life.¹⁵ This trend of having his oldest brother and sister taking care of him and providing for Bernard's needs would continue throughout his high school years and formal education.

Lack of finances was not an issue, though, as William made a relatively decent living as a miner in the mineral-rich area of Butte. The father even saved enough of his money to make an attempt at investing in real estate and corporate stocks, only to later lose that portion of his money in the 1929 stock market crash.¹⁶ Despite this loss of investment capital, and though the mining work in Butte was difficult, over time, William, Angelina, and the young family managed to survive.

Eventually, their father came to the realization that he would not be able to quickly accumulate the wealth he had envisioned, and that his children would need a fuller education to succeed on their own, so he once again moved the family to Seattle in hopes of creating a better life situation. William hoped that, by moving his children

¹³ Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, January 26, 2017.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, March 24, 2017.

¹⁵ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, January 6, 2015.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, January 15, 2015.

within closer proximity of the University of Washington in Seattle, his children would be more inclined to attend college and possibly succeed in the business world.¹⁷ The family moved within a few miles of the school, and William's hopes began to be realized as Bernard's oldest brother, John, matriculated at the university and studied engineering. During John's time in college, he attended a Presbyterian church, where he became a Christian. While John's parents were declared Catholics, Christianity had never been regularly practiced in the Ramm household to that point, but John's conversion was dramatic and meaningful to him.¹⁸ He would often share with his siblings, including Bernard, about his experiences as a Christian. After graduating with an electrical engineering degree, he obtained a position with the city of Seattle.¹⁹ Because he had a steady job, John was ready to settle down and met a woman who was a faithful Christian. John's wife was also a strong influence on her husband, and the couple lived as faithful, practicing Christians throughout their lives.²⁰

By this time, in 1930, Bernard was ready to enter Roosevelt High School. In high school, he began to demonstrate the abilities that would make him an excellent student throughout his life. He was blessed with a keen, inquisitive mind and had a natural

¹⁷ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 5. This book is a final, unpublished manuscript dictated by Bernard Ramm, and typed with the assistance of his son, Stephen Ramm, and his daughter-in-law, Liana Ramm, near the end of his life. A copy of the manuscript has been given to me for exclusive use in the production of this dissertation. The 135-page text serves as his "spiritual autobiography" and, as the title suggests, explains his movement towards neo-evangelicalism. Because the manuscript is unedited, slight changes of punctuation and grammar have been made.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, March 24, 2017. There is no written account of John's conversion, nor an account of John's telling. Information about his conversion come from stories told to Ramm's daughter, Elizabeth, by her parents and by her cousins who were fathered by John Ramm.

¹⁹ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 8.

²⁰ Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, March 24, 2017.

affinity for science.²¹ Many of the students in the local high school were professors' children, and the intellectual air of the neighborhood became a powerful influence upon him, with young Bernard frequently visiting the homes of two friends.²² The father of one his friends, named Alex, was a Russian immigrant and an engineer, who influenced the two young friends through exciting and fascinating conversations regarding physics and chemistry as well as experiments in electricity and mechanics performed in the garage.²³ At Alex's house, the two young boys were left free to tinker and invent in the garage, sowing the seeds of interest in a career in the applied sciences. This relationship with Alex and his family was highly formative, as Ramm later recalled that it fostered a lifelong respect for the sciences and that, "Alex went to Cal Tech and straight on to a Ph.D. I learned from his mother that he was a specialist in jet propulsion and had a job in the East Coast, which brought him weekly to the Pentagon. It was due to my association with Alex that I decided to make a career in science."²⁴

As he approached graduation from high school, Ramm was full of expectations for his life as he prepared to enter the University of Washington and to major in chemistry or some kind of engineering. Doing so would lead him into a lifelong career in science and satisfy his father's dreams of having all of his children graduate from college and succeed in the world. As he later reflected back on this point in his life, Ramm described himself as "a typical high school graduate with a mind stocked with what

²¹ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, February 7, 2015.

²² Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 6. By this point, Bernard's father seems to have acquired enough money to live in a comfortable neighborhood.

²³ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 7–8.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

practically all high school graduates have when they leave high school—a profound respect for the sciences, a hope for a newer and better civilization, a toleration and mild respect for religion, a delight in sports and entertainment, and a desire ‘to make good’ in the world.”²⁵

What Bernard did not expect, however, was that an even more powerful influence would enter his life as his older brother, John, who had recently been converted, ushered his youngest brother toward a more personal experience of Christianity. During his teenage years, Ramm had been attending the local Presbyterian church, likely in the company of his brother, but it had not had much of an influence upon his life. Ramm recalled, “Up until that time I was a typical WASP product. I attended church simply because my mother sent me.”²⁶ Seeing his youngest brother’s spiritual state, John shared his faith with Bernard and urged Bernard to attend a nearby Baptist Bible camp for boys during the summer of 1934.²⁷ At that time, the camp, established in 1919 and located at Lake Sammamish, only about fifteen miles west of Seattle, was under the direction of Baptists.²⁸ Bernard decided to attend, and while at the camp, encountered a personal spiritual experience. Ramm recorded that he “became a Christian. This experience of new

²⁵ The Ramm family provided a copy of an undated, single, typewritten page recounting Ramm’s own conversion testimony. Ramm included a portion of this conversion account in Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences: A Textbook of the Evidences of the Truthfulness of the Christian Faith for Conservative Protestants* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954), 220. Because it is untitled, I will refer to this document as “Conversion Testimony” in future footnotes.

²⁶ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 5.

²⁷ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, June 4, 2015. Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 9.

²⁸ The camp is now known as SAMBICA. SAMBICA stands for Sammamish Bible Camp Association. From “Sambica: A Light on the Lake Since 1919 – About SAMBICA” at <http://www.sambica.com/about/> (accessed March 28, 2017). Confirmed through Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, March 24, 2017. The camp was originally founded by the Swedish Tabernacle Church, but is now non-denominational.

birth completely reshaped my life.”²⁹ In another recollection of this event, referring to himself in the third person, Ramm dramatically described his conversion at the camp saying, “Then the gospel came to him. In one three-minute period his entire life perspective and basic personality were changed. He experienced the inflowing grace and transforming power of the grace of God. In a few moments he received a new philosophy, a new theology, a new heart, and a new life.”³⁰ The experience was not only transformative, but also imprinting, since Bernard would join a local Baptist church and remain a member of Baptist churches and Baptist institutions throughout his life.³¹

Ramm had prepared to enter the University of Washington in 1934, but the idea of a career in science no longer stood in the forefront of his imagination. He contemplated a change in major to religion or philosophy so that he could explore his newfound faith within a college context. As he informed his parents about this possibility, his father did not take well to the change in plans. Ramm remembered, “My inclination was to attend a Bible Institute where I would really learn from the Word. In discussing it with my father, he said simply and dogmatically that there was no money for such a school, but there was for the university.”³² It was not a matter of resources, though, because his father had the funds to support his son’s education, especially since all of the children had, by this time, graduated from college. In other words, William

²⁹ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 9. In this personal account of his conversion experience, Ramm, for an unknown reason, chose to write of himself in the third person.

³⁰ Ramm, “Conversion Testimony” (no publisher, no date). Used by permission of the Ramm family. Also in Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences*, 220–221.

³¹ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, January 6, 2015. At this point, it is unclear where Ramm attended church while living in the Seattle area prior to entering college. Again, it is likely that these were Swedish Baptist or Northern Baptist Convention churches, since the Southern Baptist Convention had not yet vigorously expanded its reach to this area of the United States.

³² Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 9.

Ramm would pay for his son's higher education, but only if Bernard studied a non-religious major; if Bernard chose to pursue a career in religion, his father would not provide any funds.³³ Thus, if Bernard wanted to attend a university, he had no choice but to complete a degree at the University of Washington as he had previously planned.

Bernard Ramm's Educational Journey

Ramm began studies at the University of Washington – Seattle in the fall of 1934 with the intention of studying engineering, but during his time in the first year of college he engaged actively with other Christians and, during breaks in his work, began an informal study of philosophy and theology on his own.³⁴ As a first-year student, Ramm recalled two influences that had a profound effect upon his spiritual growth. First, he joined a “group of Christians on the campus... [that was] very exceptional in its biblical and theological perspective.... In the language of the times, it was a fundamentalist group.”³⁵ In his dissertation on Bernard Ramm, theologian David Miller interviewed Ramm, who described himself to Miller during these “first four years of his Christian life [as] strongly influenced by friends from Dallas Theological Seminary. He thought of himself as a fundamentalist-premillennial dispensationalist.”³⁶ Ramm recalled that this

³³ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, June 4, 2015. Ramm was also a gifted athlete whose name is still engraved on the Roosevelt High School trophy as one of the Most Outstanding Athletes in the graduating class. He could have possibly funded his own education through a college athletic scholarship, until it was discovered in his senior year of high school that he suffered from bleeding ulcers and could no longer safely engage in strenuous physical activity or sports.

³⁴ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 10. Obtaining information about the dates of Ramm's study and coursework taken at the University of Washington, Seattle was helped by assistance from the university Registrar's Office. My thanks to Dr. Helen Garrett, Ms. Christine Fish, and Ms. Rebekah Cho for their assistance in obtaining a copy of Bernard Ramm's official transcripts.

³⁵ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 9.

³⁶ David W. Miller, “The Theological System of Bernard Ramm,” (PhD dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982), 4.

group was fundamentalist in belief, but “not of the narrow fundamentalist mentality.... Our fellowship was far more a Christo-centric fellowship than a Bible-thumping group... centered in devotional matters [and] not in theological or dogmatic concerns... [with] a firm conviction in the group that if we were brought the good news of the gospel by others, in turn, it was for us to carry the good news to yet others.”³⁷ In other words, although not militantly committed to their beliefs, Ramm began to spend time with fundamentalist Christians who were also committed to active evangelism. These fellow Christians thus formed a strong fellowship with one another, which strongly influenced Ramm’s nascent faith. Second, in his dormitory and in various campus buildings, he found various books and began to cobble together an understanding of theology and philosophy. He discovered various religious texts on the bookshelves of Christian friends’ rooms and began to examine them. Reflecting back on that time, Ramm writes,

In the special English department library was a small room off to one side, which made an excellent room for concentrated studying. For some unknown reason it contained a large selection of books of Christian apologetics of the nineteenth century. When I wanted a break from my university studying I would browse through these books. Hence, I had an elementary introduction to apologetics before I went to a theological seminary.³⁸

Ramm began his theological work from a disjointed collection of fundamentalist resources. Hoping to grasp a deeper understanding of Christianity from these books, Ramm did the best that he could in his first year of college, but he quickly reached the limits of his abilities since he lacked the necessary basics to understand the ramifications of the various positions within them. Without a foundational grasp of the scriptures, of

³⁷ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 9.

³⁸ Ibid., 10.

history, or of theology, the ideas were simply beyond what he could manage.³⁹ Despite this, Bernard's hungry mind continued to absorb quickly what it could, and he attempted to use what he was learning within the context of his academic coursework.

The theology books that Ramm obtained were of varying quality, and he soon realized the inadequacy of his ability to sort through the intellectual arguments that he had absorbed from them.⁴⁰ Because some of the religious books that Bernard had found were written from a narrow, Fundamentalist perspective, they were highly critical of modern science and the implications of evolution for believers. He continued to imbibe the ideas within these texts, some of which made appealing arguments in defense of Christianity while others lacked genuine substance and continuity. Without realizing this, he continued to read and even attempted to employ what he had learned. His introductory psychology class instructor informed the students that evolution would serve as the basis upon which the class would be taught. After an assignment was given to the students, hoping to use information that he had garnered from his informal philosophical and theological readings, Ramm strongly vilified the evolutionary position using ideas gleaned from his readings.⁴¹ When he received his paper back, the professor had left markings everywhere, highlighting the numerous weaknesses in his arguments. Ramm recalled, "My paper eventually was returned with a note in red ink saying that my paper looked as if it had been garnered from anti-evolutionary pamphlets. In my ignorance I

³⁹ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 10. At this point, it is unclear whether or where Ramm was attending church.

⁴⁰ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 10-11.

⁴¹ This is the description given by Ramm in "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 10, but it is unclear how he attempted to do so. The issue emphasized here is that he attempted to use the books he found to refute the evolutionary aspects of his psychology class.

said to myself ‘How did he know?’ That was exactly what I had done. It occurred to me once and for all of [the weakness of] cheap scholarship in the defense of faith.”⁴²

Ramm described this intellectual encounter with his psychology professor as a moment of “significant impact” in his life.⁴³ This event would mark the beginning of a slow journey away from Fundamentalism towards neo-evangelicalism, during which he would understand that he had come to an intellectual position with major shortcomings and gaps. Being a young Christian still, Ramm had not adopted any hardened theological positions yet. At this point, to his credit, rather than taking a reactionary stand against the professor’s comments and digging in his heels, Ramm was genuinely reflective and honest about the criticism he had received, and he began to understand the need for a more learned understanding of the faith. As with many college students, this was a first, but significant, experience, and real change would come over time.

In his third year of college, he was able to take his first philosophy class, which he described as an experience of “pure joy.”⁴⁴ He still had not fully abandoned all of the Fundamentalist teachings he had learned to that point, but the previous experience with his psychology paper had left a major impression upon his intellectual self-awareness. While he continued to learn and embrace the aspects of the faith that he had learned from his fellow Christians in college, such as a commitment to piety and evangelism, he also realized that certain intellectual teachings he had absorbed, such as the teachings against evolution, were lacking and weak in certain aspects. A faith built on faulty foundations

⁴² Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 11.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 32. In “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” Ramm recalls this class as being in his second year of college, but his official transcript from the University of Washington shows that he took this course in the fall quarter of his third year.

would no longer suffice for him. He realized that he needed to prepare himself more fully and educate himself in a manner that was more intellectually sound. Towards this end, he made two important decisions. First, he changed his major to speech, because “I decided that if I were to spend my life proclaiming the good news of the gospel that I had better be sure that I was understood when I spoke. Hence, I profited immensely in communication skills from my major in speech.”⁴⁵ Second, he decided to pursue a more complete course of rigorous theological study that would deepen not only his own comprehension of Christianity but eventually help others in their Christian journeys as well.⁴⁶

As he approached graduation in 1938, Ramm had completely abandoned any plans for a career in engineering, and he applied for the Bachelor of Divinity program at Eastern Baptist Theological (now Palmer) Seminary in Philadelphia, a conservative school that was founded by the Northern Baptist Convention in 1925.⁴⁷ Since Ramm had decided that he wanted to live his life in service to the church, going to Eastern would give him the chance to explore how that might be best accomplished. Eastern became a natural choice for Ramm, since they offered a scholarship to come and study, and the

⁴⁵ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 62. Ramm attributes much of his later effectiveness in teaching as well as his ability to clearly communicate through writing to his major in speech. Eminent historian of science Ronald Numbers notes that part of the motivation to change his major to speech involved a stammer Ramm had as a youth. Numbers, *The Creationists*, 185.

⁴⁶ It should be noted that while Ramm changed his major to speech, he did not fully abandon his interests in science. His transcript shows that during his third year, he took a zoology (biology) class in eugenics, and, in his fourth year, another zoology class on evolution. This will be discussed more fully in the following chapters on Ramm’s interaction with science.

⁴⁷ The presence of a conservative position within the Northern Baptist Convention is made clear by the establishment of the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, where Ramm went for seminary. For a description of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, in comparison to other NBC (ABC-USA) seminaries, see Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 433. Torbet describes the conservative and fundamentalist reaction to what was perceived as a liberal trend in the denomination, and the deliberate creation of more conservative educational institutions in response to leaders and members who sought what they believed to be more orthodox teaching and education of NBC members.

fundamentalist nature of the seminary aligned with his own fundamentalist positions.⁴⁸ Since Ramm held an undergraduate degree in speech, he would have been an attractive candidate for Eastern, and for Baptist seminaries in general, because through 1943, almost thirty percent of active ministers in Northern Baptist churches had no college degree and almost fifty percent had no seminary training. Thus, the denomination was eager to have more ministers who were formally trained and began to establish ways to help seminary students defray the costs of their educations.⁴⁹ Although Ramm received a scholarship to Eastern, the amount of money did not cover all of his expenses. His father, William, however, was not supportive of Bernard's desire to pursue an education in religion. His father wanted Bernard to be like his older brother and to enter the working world, and he refused to support his son's attendance at Eastern. Fortunately, his brother, John, and his sister, Anne, both working by this point, helped fund their youngest brother's new aims and provide for the remaining costs associated with his continued studies.

Bernard moved to Pennsylvania to commence his seminary work in the fall of 1938, and he completed his degree at Eastern in 1941.⁵⁰ Receiving sage advice from a

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, May 29, 2016. The extent of the scholarship offered by Eastern is unknown. A 1943 study of the NBC seminaries by Hartshorne and Froyd distinguished between the "younger" seminaries, which "are concerned more with doctrinal preaching," and the "older" seminaries, which were "more interested in discovering and applying new meanings in the Christian tradition, in promoting active growth of religion in direct relation to contemporary thought, and in co-operating with social welfare agencies." At the time of the survey's publication, Eastern was the second youngest seminary in the NBC. Hugh Hartshorne and Milton C. Froyd, *Theological Education in the Northern Baptist Convention: A Survey* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1945), 35.

⁴⁹ Hartshorne and Froyd, *Theological Education in the Northern Baptist Convention: A Survey*, 134–135, 162–163.

⁵⁰ The Registrar's Office at the University of Southern California assisted me in determining the dates of Ramm's study at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. My thanks to Dr. James Feigert and Ms. Tess Banayo for their assistance in obtaining a copy of Bernard Ramm's official 2-page transcript at USC. The USC transcript also contains information about Ramm's education at Eastern (1938–1941) and other

former missionary he encountered, Ramm filled his coursework not only with theology, but also with study of the original languages and with church history, which “saved me from frittering away my elective hours.”⁵¹ Ramm was also committed to serving the church as a minister, holding an interim pastorate in New York City during his time in Philadelphia. While studying at Eastern, Ramm also engaged in two additional graduate philosophy courses on Plato and the history of American philosophy at the nearby University of Pennsylvania.⁵² It was during this period of his life that Ramm not only solidified his theological foundations at Eastern, which were still fundamentalist in nature, but he also began to affirm his affinity for theology and philosophy.⁵³ It would be several more years, though, before he would come to fully realize that his calling was to the arena of academic study, writing, and teaching.

Before beginning the final year of his studies at Eastern, Ramm married his college sweetheart, Alta. They had first met at the same summer camp where Ramm had been converted, and then encountered each other more regularly while they were at the University of Washington, attending the campus Bible club together.⁵⁴ Over the years, while he continued his studies in Pennsylvania, they maintained their relationship through

classes taken prior to matriculation at USC in March 1945. Repeated inquiries made to Eastern Baptist Theological (now Palmer) Seminary’s registrar were unsuccessful.

⁵¹ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 13. While at Eastern, the majority of his units were filled by classes on the Bible (32 of 96), theology (23), homiletics (14), church history (9), and biblical languages (8). Information obtained from Ramm’s transcript at USC.

⁵² The courses taken at the University of Pennsylvania were not towards a degree. Information about Ramm’s study at the University of Pennsylvania was obtained by assistance from the university Registrar’s Office. My thanks to Mr. Albert Sims for his assistance in obtaining a copy of Bernard Ramm’s official transcripts at University of Pennsylvania.

⁵³ As noted in the previous chapter, Eastern’s conservative position on Bible and theology could be construed as “fundamentalist,” but in the non-militant sense.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, May 17, 2017.

letters and occasional visits. Finally, on September 8, 1940, the two were married in Washington state before a congregation of 800 family members and friends. Bernard's new bride was a modest and exceptionally bright and self-sufficient woman, who sewed her own dress for the ceremony. It was her strength and resilience that would help to keep the family together through the many transitions and career moves that would take place throughout Bernard's career.⁵⁵

Performing the ceremony was their pastor, Dr. R.L. Powell of Temple Baptist Church of Tacoma, which was located about forty miles to the southwest of Seattle. Powell was the pastor of Alta Ramm's church, and as Ramm had been drawn closer to his wife's family, which was very warm and loving in nature, he formed a relationship with the family's pastor. Through his wife's family, Ramm found the affection and care that he had lacked as a child and never found in his own family, and through Powell's ministry he found an intelligent and caring mentor that he had lacked as a young man.⁵⁶ Powell was the leader of Temple Baptist Church in Tacoma, Washington, a church that espoused fundamentalist values. This was reflected through the church's association as the first church in the northwestern United States that had left the Northern Baptist Convention to join the nascent General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC). The GARB formed in May 1932, and some of the church members of First Baptist Church of Tacoma, led by Powell, began to debate their own position within the

⁵⁵ Ramm's daughter, Elizabeth Attig Ramm, provided the dates and places of her parents' life in a personally written document. This document will be cited as "EA Timeline" in future footnotes.

⁵⁶ Ramm's appreciation of Dr. Powell was demonstrated through the dedication to Powell of his 1953 book, *Protestant Christian Evidences: A Textbook of the Evidences of the Truthfulness of the Christian Faith for Conservative Protestants* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953).

Northern Baptist denomination.⁵⁷ In Powell's words: "We were going in different directions and had to part company."⁵⁸ On 18 January 1934, more than two hundred members of Powell's former church, First Baptist Church of Tacoma, gathered to worship at the Masonic Center in Tacoma. They eventually voted to join the GARB and formed Temple Baptist Church, a church that clearly leaned theologically in the fundamentalist direction.⁵⁹ In John Ruhlman's *A History of Northwest Regular Baptists: The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches in Washington, Oregon and Idaho 1939–1975*, because his church was the first GARB church in the region and because of his extensive work in the region, Powell is described as "the father of the Northwest Regular Baptists."⁶⁰ Because of his association with other pastors and vigorous activity, Powell became the chief "proselytizer" and leader of Baptists towards the Regular Baptist movement in the northwestern United States. Because of this work, Powell was named in early 1945 as one of the founding members of the board of the Columbia Basin Mission, Incorporated, a forerunner of the Northwest Regular Baptist Fellowship, or the GARB mission board in the northwestern United States.⁶¹ Powell had a direct hand in the

⁵⁷ First Baptist Church of Tacoma should not be confused with the present-day Tacoma First Baptist Church, a Korean church founded in 1986 that associates with the Southern Baptist Convention. From <http://www.sbc.net/church/5803-98444/tacoma-first-baptist-church> (accessed 2 April 2017). Interestingly, no record of First Baptist Church of Tacoma can be found on the Internet. The original church may have disappeared or renamed itself.

⁵⁸ Quoted in John J. Ruhlman, *A History of Northwest Regular Baptists: the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, 1939-1975* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1976), 305.

⁵⁹ Temple Baptist Church in Tacoma was officially incorporated on 7 February 1934. Ruhlman, *A History of Regular Baptists*, 88. Information about the church also came from "Regular Baptist Churches," <http://www.garbc.org/news/mabel-strong-101-former-pastors-wife/> (accessed 10 January 2017). A trove of information on Dr. Powell, the Temple Baptist Church, and Regular Baptists in the northwestern United States can be found in Ruhlman's text.

⁶⁰ Ruhlman, *A History of Regular Baptists*, 306.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 259.

introduction of at least a dozen Baptist churches in the Washington and Oregon areas to the GARBC, and either preached in, dedicated, pastored, or led these churches to the direction of or as part of the GARBC.⁶² Powell also helped to create multiple Baptist schools and summer camps in the Tacoma area and to conjoin them with other existing schools through a Baptist educational association.⁶³ Additionally, Powell was instrumental in the relocation of the Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary to the Tacoma area.⁶⁴ Founded in Los Angeles in 1927, the seminary moved to Tacoma in the winter of 1973 and was renamed Northwest Baptist Seminary. Powell had died in 1970, but his work led to the seminary's eventual move. Northwest Baptist seminary's initial home, before moving into its permanent facilities, was on the grounds of Powell's former church, Temple Baptist Church of Tacoma.⁶⁵ Thus, Powell's influence on Regular Baptists and spread of fundamentalist teaching in the northwestern United States cannot be overstated, and Ramm's years in the Temple Baptist Church and under Powell's guidance during the first few years of the 1940s likely served to further solidify his

⁶² Following the index of Ruhlman's book under Robert L. Powell's name leads to the mention his work in and association with more than a dozen churches.

⁶³ Ruhlman, *A History of Regular Baptists*, 235, 246, 248–249. At the Glendawn Baptist Bible Conference grounds, one of the main meetings structures, built in 1965, is called the "R. L. Powell Tabernacle."

⁶⁴ Ruhlman, *A History of Regular Baptists*, 229. Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary, founded in 1927, added a baccalaureate program in 1946 and the combined entity was renamed Los Angeles Baptist College. The seminary dissociated from the college and moved to Tacoma in 1973. The college renamed itself The Master's College in 1985 and opened a new seminary, called The Master's Seminary in 1986. Thus, while The Master's Seminary in Los Angeles has some historical roots in Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary, they are not the same entity. Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary should also not be confused with Los Angeles Bible Institute, which was the forerunner to BIOLA. Robert Williams and Marilyn Miller, *Chartered for His Glory: Biola University 1908-1983* (La Mirada, CA: Associated Students of Biola University, 1983), 10.

⁶⁵ Ruhlman, *A History of Regular Baptists*, 229.

confidence in the fundamentalist position that he had first discovered in college and was being trained in at Eastern Seminary.⁶⁶

Bernard Ramm's Move to the West: A Dead End and a Turn to the Left

After the wedding and going back to Philadelphia together to complete Ramm's final year of seminary, the newlyweds moved back to the West to return "home" to the Seattle area. Ramm began his first official pastorate at Clover Creek Baptist Church in Tacoma and preached his first sermon there on 28 September 1941.⁶⁷ Alta helped to make ends meet by teaching after-school classes for children. When American involvement in World War II officially began a few months later, Ramm was excused from military service due to a lingering and dangerous health condition. While in high school, although he was an outstanding athlete, doctors had diagnosed Ramm with a case of bleeding stomach ulcers at age seventeen, and these ulcers lasted into his adulthood and throughout his career on the West Coast. At one point, his condition would become almost fatal.⁶⁸ Because of this medical condition, he was classified as "4-F" and was

⁶⁶ Ibid. Ruhlman points to four streams of influence in the emergence of Regular Baptists in the northwestern United States: 1) interdenominational work among Fundamentalists, such as William Bell Riley, T.T. Shields, J. Frank Norris, and John Roach Straton; 2) "international" interaction with Canadian Fundamentalists; 3) a shared Baptist-Calvinism that created a strong tie between the emerging churches; 4) Southern evangelism, particularly embodied in the work of Powell and other Fundamentalist pastors; and 5) the formation of Regular Baptist schools.

⁶⁷ Ruhlman, *A History of Regular Baptists*, 79. Powell was involved with Clover Creek's official organization in early 1946. Clover Creek, after Ramm's departure, eventually joined the GARB in 1946. Powell later served as an interim pastor from 1963-1964. Notably, Ruhlman includes only a one-sentence description of Ramm in the entire book, referring to him as "a well-known speaker and author." Ruhlman does not mention Ramm as affiliated in any way with the GARB or conservative teaching. The location of Ramm's first pastorate is not fully clear. Ruhlman notes that Clover Creek Baptist Church was Ramm's first pastorate, but a 20 June 2005 journal entry of Alta Ramm notes Ramm's first pastorate as Dunlap Baptist Church in Washington, which lasted for one year before moving to Glendale, California. Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, April 4, 2017.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, January 26, 2017. In his early teaching career, Ramm required a transfusion, and Ramm's students eagerly donated the O-negative blood he needed to survive.

unable to serve in the military throughout the war. Ramm thus continued to stay in the West and served his church in Tacoma for a few more years. He and his wife eventually welcomed their first child, Elizabeth, who was born on 3 July 1943. Later that year, Ramm was invited to take over a larger church in the Los Angeles area, and the family relocated to Glendale, California, in the fall. During this period, the family welcomed a second child, Stephen, born on 17 March 1946. After arriving in Glendale and assuming pastoring duties at Lake St. Baptist Church, Ramm was also invited to teach biblical Greek and Hebrew classes at Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary, which helped supplement the family's income.⁶⁹

Through his teaching, he gained somewhat of a reputation as an educator in the area, and he was invited to be a "Professor of English Bible and Apologetics" at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) beginning in 1944.⁷⁰ BIOLA was founded and funded by the Stewart brothers, the same brothers that had funded the publication and distribution of *The Fundamentals*.⁷¹ BIOLA was founded in 1908 as an institution where fundamentalist values would not only be taught, but also actively promoted. The school

From that point on, Ramm controlled his ulcers and bleeding by limiting stress and through careful self-monitoring and use of antacids.

⁶⁹ Ramm's pastorate is noted as "Lake St. Baptist" in a family photo album. Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, January 12, 2017. The current name and location of the church, or whether it continues to exist, are unknown. Roger Olson places Ramm at Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary "In 1943." Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 299. John Yeo also places Ramm working at Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary, but in "1944-45." John J. Yeo, *Plundering the Egyptians: The Old Testament and Historical Criticism at Westminster Theological Seminary (1929-1998)* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 184n.223. The discrepancy with Yeo, here and in the next footnote, likely stems from a misinterpretation of school years (i.e. a 1944 school year).

⁷⁰ Olson has Ramm working at BIOLA beginning in the fall of 1944, whereas Yeo places Ramm at BIOLA beginning in fall 1945. Ramm's daughter places him at BIOLA beginning in fall of 1944. Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology*, 299; Yeo, *Plundering the Egyptians*, 184n.223; "Timeline" from EA. Again, this is likely a miscalculation of academic years by Yeo.

⁷¹ Williams and Miller, *Chartered for His Glory*, 13.

was clearly founded on fundamentalist dispensational principles.⁷² Over the decades, BIOLA proudly espoused its fundamentalism with the aim of defending orthodox Christianity, and faculty members served in the institution for this purpose. In 1943, BIOLA added the Bible Theological Seminary of Los Angeles “as an intense undergraduate course within the existing curriculum [and served] as a catalyst to the addition of Talbot Theological Seminary, a graduate school of Biola, in 1952.”⁷³ As a faculty member in the new institution, Ramm naturally fit in, since his education, his training, his theology, and his teaching were in line with fundamentalist positions. Ramm would remain as a professor at BIOLA until 1951. BIOLA was also committed to evangelism and active missions both in the United States and overseas, which would have also been appealing to the evangelistically inclined pastor and professor.⁷⁴

In terms of his own education, Ramm finally took his first formal steps towards a career in academia as he enrolled in the philosophy department at the University of Southern California (USC). He began by taking night classes towards a master’s degree beginning in March 1945.⁷⁵ After completing his master’s degree in June 1947, he decided to continue his work by pursuing a Ph.D. Although his philosophical abilities

⁷² Williams and Miller, *Chartered for His Glory*, 16.

⁷³ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 73. Throughout the Williams and Miller text, numerous instances of BIOLA activity in missions education, practical training, and work are highlighted.

⁷⁵ He also continued to supplement his education through other institutions as well while in southern California, enrolling in a history of philosophy class at the University of California Extension in 1946 and an ethics class through the University of Chicago Extension in 1947. Information from Ramm’s USC transcript, 2.

were clear, his time at USC did not begin without difficulties of its own.⁷⁶ After applying to the Ph.D. program, some of the faculty members in the department were wary of confessional Christians joining the doctoral candidates, not to mention an openly fundamentalist one, working part-time at nearby BIOLA. Because of Ramm's ties to BIOLA and fundamentalism, the oral questioning period of his qualifying exams before the philosophy faculty was intense; however, Ramm so distinguished himself throughout his presentation such that, at the conclusion of the examination, the USC philosophy faculty welcomed him to continue his studies.⁷⁷ Because of his reputation in the master's program and his outstanding performance on his oral exams, the faculty apparently concluded that Ramm, although a BIOLA professor and fundamentalist, was not of the militant ilk that rejected secular teaching or education. He moved through philosophy coursework at USC, and although he pursued a degree in philosophy, he continued to maintain his lifelong interest in science, as his M.A. (1947) and Ph.D. (1950) were both in the philosophy of science.⁷⁸ During these years working at BIOLA and studying at USC, Ramm committed himself to his academic studies and writing, and soon realized

⁷⁶ The Ramm family provided a copy of Bernard Ramm's GRE exam results. On the hand-drawn graph displaying his ability in "philosophy" the line moves upwards and literally "off the chart" beyond the upper limit of the defined scale of 800.

⁷⁷ Both Elizabeth and Stephen Ramm, in separate interviews, recount this story being told to them by their parents.

⁷⁸ Ramm's combination of religion, philosophy, and science are seen in his master's thesis, "The Idealism of Jeans and Eddington in Modern Physical Theory" (1947), and in his Ph.D. dissertation, "An Investigation of Some Recent Efforts to Justify Metaphysical Statements Derived from Science with Special Reference to Physics" (1950). He earned both degrees at the University of Southern California.

that he would best be able to serve others through his scholarly work and teaching, an endeavor that would become his life's work.⁷⁹

Ironically, however, it was his time teaching at fundamentalist BIOLA that became the turning point in his theological beliefs.⁸⁰ While pursuing his Ph.D. studies at USC, Ramm was also teaching an apologetics course at BIOLA. The course was based on the books of the Fundamentalist author Harry Rimmer, and Ramm recalled that the course focused on the “harmony between science and Scripture in that modern science was in the Genesis account. For example, the firmament in Genesis 1 is an anticipation of the importance of space in modern physics. The background of the Spirit's moving on the waters... anticipates the wave theory of matter.”⁸¹ The textbooks for the course were, unsurprisingly, written by Rimmer. The previous instructor for the course had abruptly departed for another school, and Ramm suddenly was asked to take up the class. Ramm had little preparation as the class was about to begin, but he dove into the texts with his students. What created difficulties, though, was that Ramm, in his own Ph.D. work, was simultaneously studying the philosophy of science at USC. Thus, the more that Ramm delved into the philosophy of science, “the more I recognized the inadequacies of

⁷⁹ While he also held interim pastorates later in Seattle, Washington, and in Glendale, California, again showing his commitment to the efforts of the local Baptist church and evangelism, eventually Ramm dedicated himself fully to his academic career.

⁸⁰ Theologian Kevin Vanhoozer refers to 1957 as the “turn in Ramm's theological development,” but this needs to be more finely stated. Vanhoozer refers to the change in Ramm's theological work, especially in relation to Ramm's time with Karl Barth in 1957–1958. I make the point that this turn in the mid- to late-1940s, however, is also equally if not more significant, because it was the turn away from Fundamentalist thought and the beginning of his journey towards neo-evangelicalism. Without this turn, there may have been no impetus for a meeting with Barth. If this event were to be specifically classified as an ideological or apologetic turn, then Vanhoozer could still be correct. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “Bernard Ramm” in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 291–292.

⁸¹ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 22.

Rimmer's work. I found that I had turned the class into critical dissections of Rimmer's work."⁸²

For Ramm, this dissection of Rimmer's ideas became an examination of his own beliefs. In a later summer session of teaching the class, Ramm recalled that the difficulties in Rimmer's logic juxtaposed against his own studies in the philosophy of science created an inner turmoil that could not be easily resolved. Ramm recalled that after one particular difficult class, in which he spent a great deal of time trying to reconcile the two:

I had dismissed the class but stayed in the chair. I became lost in an internal debate going on in which one part of me asked the questions and another part sought for answers. Could I catapult my faith into problem-free territory? An area in which no distressing questions were allowed? Was the divine revelation so fixed in Scripture that to raise a question was imperious? Is the bulk of Christian Apologetics rooted in obscurantism? Was the only defense of the faith pure fideism (by faith alone)? Were questions from psychology, history or science legitimate questions for which I must seek answers?

Picking up my lecture notes I started walking slowly as the debate continued within. The classroom was on basement level so I had to traverse some 30 or 40 feet to the steps that led up to the street level. As I slowly walked this distance and then started to climb the steps I had reached my conclusion which ended the debate.

I pledged myself to follow the truth in every situation and flee from fideism (a faith which denies the right of questions). I would not in principle take refuge in obscurantism...

This was not the decision of the sophomoric mind which is overimpressed with new knowledge. Nor was it a rationalistic decision. This did not mean an uncritical capitulation to modern science or modern learning. I did not overlook the doctrine of sin nor the fallibility of science nor the confusion in the house of philosophy. It was a policy decision. It was an existential decision in that it was not the decision of a passing moment but a life long decision...

This experience set my policy for handling all problems connected with the evangelical faith. It cut off at this time any refuge in an artificial

⁸² Ibid., 23.

land free from icy blasts: i.e., from anti-intellectualism and obscurantism.⁸³

In other words, Ramm had reached a point where he began to realize that he could not forcibly attempt to reconcile aspects of Fundamentalist thought that did not square with logic. The desire to construct a sound philosophical faith could not rest upon a foundation that would not support the weight of the arguments placed upon it.

Additionally, during this time in Southern California, Ramm encountered F. Alton Everest, first president of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA). The ASA, founded in September 1941, began as a collection of five working scientists who wanted to explore ways in which science and the Bible could possibly exist together in harmony. Religious historian Christopher Rios says that the emergence of the ASA marked “a reawakening of Christian engagement with science in the United States, an engagement that was at its nadir in 1940.”⁸⁴ Rios writes that in the first half of the century, conservative Christians resisted the teaching of evolutionary and higher criticism that undermined orthodox belief. Rios concludes:

The founders of the ASA shared many of the concerns held by fundamentalists of their generation, but the organization they created lacked the narrow commitments that defined other conservative groups. They agreed that modern attitudes had disrupted the harmony that had existed between science and the Bible. Yet they also recognized that the churches had played no small part in creating the discord. In their view, widespread scientific ignorance among seminary faculty, pastors, and Sunday school teachers led to preaching and teaching that offended the

⁸³ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 23–24. The struggle with Rimmer and science was only one of multiple difficulties that Ramm had with Fundamentalist teachings. The details of the specific difficulties, transformation of thought, and his resolution in regards to science will be the focus of chapter four, and the details of other difficulties Ramm struggled with theologically will be the focus of chapter five.

⁸⁴ Christopher M. Rios, “1941-2016: The American Scientific Affiliation at 75,” in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 68, no. 3 (September 2016): 148. *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* is the new name for the former *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*.

educated and weakened the faith of those pursuing a college education. Harmony was possible, Everest and the others were convinced, but it had to be established with the day's best science. The founding of the ASA was thus a reawakening of an attitude that had lain dormant for nearly a generation.⁸⁵

With this realization at the root of its foundations, the goal of the ASA was to “buttress the faith of Christian students and help ministers address the growing scientific questions they faced,” and they gradually added to their number other scientists who were fascinated with the question of how to live faithfully both as scientists and as Christians.⁸⁶

Soon, other Christians, who were not scientists but who were interested in the interaction between science and religion, joined their company, and among them was Ramm, who was in the midst of his graduate philosophical studies at USC. Everest was working in Los Angeles at the Moody Institute of Science, while Ramm lived in nearby Santa Monica, and the two men met in the mid-1940s.⁸⁷ Ramm presented a condensed version of his master's thesis to the second national ASA convention in 1947, and this began a relationship, both professional and personal, with both Everest and the ASA that would continue through the end of Ramm's career.⁸⁸ Among this group of other highly educated Christians, Ramm found a group of peers who were truly committed to seeking

⁸⁵ Christopher M. Rios, “1941-2016: The American Scientific Affiliation at 75,” in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 68, no. 3 (September 2016): 149.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 148–149.

⁸⁷ Walter Hearn, “An Interview with Bernard Ramm and Alta Ramm,” *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 31 (September 1979), 179–186. The article was accessed online through the ASA website, and no page numbers are denoted in the online version. From <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1979/JASA12-79Hearn.html> (accessed 15 April 2017).

⁸⁸ Joseph L. Spradley, “Changing Views of Science and Scripture: Bernard Ramm and the ASA,” in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 44 (March 1992), 2–9. The article was accessed online through the ASA website, and no page numbers are denoted in the online version. From <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1992/PSCF3-92Spradley.html> (accessed 15 April 2017).

truth through logic and research, and who were not bound by preexisting, and imprisoning, conservative commitments that would lead to logical or theological dead ends.⁸⁹

Thus, as Ramm concluded this portion of his life and academic career, he not only set out on an expedition away from Seattle and southward down the West Coast for a career and a future for himself and his family, but he also embarked upon a journey that would continue to lead him away from Fundamentalism and eventually take him towards neo-evangelicalism. Ramm had seen the intellectual dead ends through his teaching at BIOLA; he had seen the benefits of philosophical study at USC; and he had discovered in the ASA the existence of a company of fellow Christians who were similarly motivated to expand their intellectual understanding as a means of enriching their faith. These three experiences in Ramm's life permanently turned him away from Fundamentalist beliefs and towards a new direction of work and research. Much as his own father had moved to and fro in search of material gain, Ramm set out on a path away from the West Coast not only to advance his career but also to find that which would satisfy his intellectual and theological needs and desires.

*Ramm's Encounter with Baylor University and Karl Barth, and the
Definitive Break with Fundamentalism*

After completing his Ph.D. at USC in 1950, Ramm completed a final year of work at BIOLA and then began a long journey of work and scholarship at many different institutions across the country. Prior to the fall semester of 1951, Bernard and Alta decided to move to Bethel College and Seminary (now Bethel University) in St. Paul,

⁸⁹ A fuller account of Ramm's interaction with the ASA will be discussed in the next chapter.

Minnesota. Ramm's wife, Alta, had a brother, Clifford Emmanuel Larson, who was Dean of the College and Professor of Religious Education at Bethel, and who was able to help Ramm obtain a position on the faculty as a professor, teaching philosophy and Bible.⁹⁰ Bethel was a conservative school, founded as a seminary in 1871 in Chicago. Originally named Baptist Union Theological Seminary, the institution was affiliated with conservative Swedish Baptist immigrants who fled persecution in Europe. The seminary gained support from the Baptist General Conference (now Converge Worldwide) and moved to St. Paul in 1914. After World War II, an undergraduate program was added to the seminary, and the school was renamed Bethel College and Seminary.⁹¹ This post-war expansion is likely what led to the hiring of new faculty, including Bernard Ramm. As a fellow conservative Baptist, with a Swedish wife of Swedish Baptist background as well as a personal contact on the inside, one of the school's deans, Ramm was quickly able to obtain a position after his graduation. In addition to being a steady faculty position and source of income, the chance to be near other members of his wife's family made the job an irresistibly attractive option, and he worked at Bethel from 1951 to 1954.⁹²

⁹⁰ *Spire 1953* (St. Paul, MN: Bethel College and Seminary, 1953), 65. From <http://cdm16120.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search/collection/p16120coll2/searchterm/1950/field/decade/mod/e/all/conn/and/order/title> (accessed April 4, 2017). This is the yearbook of Bethel College and Seminary. Although Ramm does not appear in the yearbook for 1951-1952, he does appear in the 1952-1953 and 1953-1954 editions, and not in the 1954-1955 edition. This does not negate the information given by Elizabeth Attig about the move to Minnesota in 1951. As a former yearbook editor of the pre-electronic publishing era, I know that yearbooks were submitted and printed with rolling due dates in sub-sections, and it is likely that Ramm's faculty picture was not taken in time to make the 1951-1952 yearbook, but was able to be removed immediately after the 1953-1954 school year, when he had secured employment at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

⁹¹ Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, March 17, 2017. The college was renamed Bethel University in 2004. From "History" of the Bethel University website, <https://www.bethel.edu/about/history> (accessed April 4, 2017).

⁹² Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, May 29, 2016.

In 1954, he was offered a position at Baylor University, which was looking to establish a new graduate program in religion. Ramm's reputation was growing due to the quantity and quality of his writing and publishing, which was somewhat unusual for a professor, let alone a Baptist scholar, at that point in time.⁹³ His academic reputation as a successful teacher and his growing list of publications made Ramm an extremely appealing candidate as the new Director of Graduate Studies in the Baylor University Religion Department. Ramm and his family arrived in Waco, and, walking onto campus for the first time and looking at the engravings of biblical scenes mounted on the outer walls of the newly built Tidwell Bible Building, he saw the story of Abraham, Isaac, and God's provisional "ram," and took it as a favorable sign.⁹⁴ In his four years at Baylor, he organized the smattering of graduate-level biblical and theological courses into a systematic program consisting of three main areas – Bible (subdivided further into Old and New Testaments), theology, and church history – and doubled the number of available graduate courses, teaching many of them himself.⁹⁵ His penchant for organization and planning set a solid foundation for Baylor's Religion Department and the graduate program, which would be officially launched in 1965.⁹⁶

⁹³ William L. Pitts, "Fifty Years of Baylor's Graduate Program in Religion," *Baptist History & Heritage* LI, No. 2 (Summer 2016): 52–53. The idea of "publish or perish" had not quite yet taken hold in American academic circles yet, and Baylor in particular was committed to having faculty that were able to teach well rather than publish in quantity. Ramm's output is also noted in John P. Lewis, "Bernard Ramm," in *Karl Barth in North America: The Influence of Karl Barth in the Making of a New North American Evangelicalism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 70. The bibliography at the end of the dissertation contains all of his works, and a brief glance can confirm Ramm's output.

⁹⁴ Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, May 29, 2016. Relief engravings of numerous biblical episodes are posted on the exterior of the Tidwell Bible Building, which houses the Department of Religion.

⁹⁵ Pitts, "Fifty Years of Baylor's Graduate Program in Religion," 53.

⁹⁶ Prior to 1965, students could take graduate classes in religion, but the official degree-granting program did not begin until 1965.

What Baylor may not have known at the time of his hiring was that in 1953 Ramm had submitted a manuscript for publication titled, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. Ramm suggested as its title, *The Evangelical Faith and Modern Science*, but the publisher, Wm. B. Eerdmans Press, wished for the title to correlate with James Orr's 1893 book, *The Christian View of God and the World*. Ramm especially disliked the publisher's choice, because it began with the definite article, and he did not want to imply that his views were the final, agreed-upon views for all Christians.⁹⁷ The roots of this book came from Ramm's experience teaching the apologetics class while at BIOLA. Ramm had kept his lecture notes from the class, along with his analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Rimmer's "textbook." Drawing from his studies at USC, Ramm began to unpack the philosophical weaknesses, specifically of Rimmer's work and more broadly that of "hyperorthodox" Christians who rejected "the tradition of the great and learned evangelical Christians who have been patient, genuine, and kind and who have taken great care to learn the facts of science and Scripture."⁹⁸ In *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, which was dedicated to Alton Everest, Ramm began to unpack the outlines of "The Imperative Necessity of a Harmony" between Christianity and the church, and science.⁹⁹ He began to explain the corrosive effects, for both Christians and scientists (two groups which were not necessarily exclusive of one another), to remain divided and separated from one another. Although Ramm delineated the philosophical violations by

⁹⁷ Hearn, "An Interview with Bernard Ramm and Alta Ramm."

⁹⁸ Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, 9. Ramm, in the 1979 interview by Hearn, admits he originally used the term "fundamentalist" throughout the first draft of the book to describe those resistant to scientific evidence, and used the word "hyperorthodox" instead to avoid trouble with his publishers, thus allowing the reader to determine for themselves who the "hyperorthodox" were. Hearn, "An Interview with Bernard Ramm and Alta Ramm."

⁹⁹ "The Imperative Necessity of a Harmony" is the title of the first chapter of the book.

scientists, Ramm's main focus was on the poor exegetical and theological work of the church in trying to exert dominance over science, which led to estrangement rather than dominance. Ramm sought to provide a helpful critique to both camps in an effort to bring reconciliation and a reminder of the largely favorable attitude the church had towards science during the pre-Fundamentalist years.

According to Rios, the reaction to Ramm's book was largely favorable. "The book caused a stir within American evangelicalism. It earned more than a few protest letters from those defending the literal approach Ramm denounced, even some from ASA members. Yet the positive responses were the majority. Described as pivotal, epochal, and a breath of fresh air, Ramm's work was seen as marking a new direction in evangelical theology."¹⁰⁰ Ramm aimed his book towards restoring a balanced and reasonable approach to science and Christianity that would leave enough openness for both sides to begin dialogue again. Reviews of Ramm's book pointed out that while Ramm did not present much that was novel, he successfully undermined the prevailing belief that science and religion were in opposition and denounced the unhelpfulness of "hyperorthodoxy" (i.e. Fundamentalism) in helping members of the church make progress in understanding science and its relationship to faith.¹⁰¹ By the early 1960s, Ramm's book was seen by many ASA members as a "theological justification for scientists... to accept evolution.... It was only after the publication of *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* [and its theological support] that groups of [neo-]evangelicals

¹⁰⁰ Christopher M. Rios, *After the Monkey Trial: Evangelical Scientists and a New Creationism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 55.

¹⁰¹ Rios, *After the Monkey Trial*, 55.

would be willing to follow... evolutionary science.”¹⁰² Ramm continued to dialogue and meet with ASA scientists and attend ASA meetings throughout his career, and the mutually beneficial effects of the ASA upon Ramm and Ramm upon the ASA were profound.¹⁰³

During the 1956–1957 academic year, Ramm had the good fortune to meet with John Howard Pew, founder of the Pew Charitable Trusts. Ramm, per his usual habit of staying abreast of theological trends, had been reading about neo-orthodoxy and the theology of Karl Barth. Unable to find a satisfactory explanation of what neo-orthodoxy encompassed, either in print or from colleagues in the United States, Ramm began to contemplate taking a study year to travel to Europe and study with the aging Barth before he died. The religion program at Baylor was growing, and most of the key components were in place, which would allow Ramm to return after a year of study and resume his duties. After explaining his desire to study neo-orthodox theology more in depth, Pew provided Ramm with a grant that covered all of his expenses to go to Switzerland with his family in order to study for a year with Karl Barth.¹⁰⁴

After sailing to England, the family purchased a Volkswagen Fastback and drove across multiple European countries and arrived in Basel to attend the weekly lectures for English-speaking students held at Barth’s house every Saturday afternoon from 2:00–

¹⁰² Rios, *After the Monkey Trial*, 61. Ramm discusses the controversy as well as the positive effects of his book on many Christians, both scientists and non-scientists, whom he met throughout his career. Hearn, “An Interview with Bernard Ramm and Alta Ramm.”

¹⁰³ Rios, *After the Monkey Trial*, 54. Rios describes the impact of Ramm upon the ASA in this section, but the impact of the ASA in terms of providing conversation partners and colleagues was tremendous. Hearn, “An Interview with Bernard Ramm and Alta Ramm.”

¹⁰⁴ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, January 6, 2015; Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, May 29, 2016.

3:00.¹⁰⁵ Barth would slowly sip from a glass of wine while speaking for about an hour and then take questions from the attendees. When the glass of wine was drained, the session ended, and Ramm returned to his rented home to continue to read and study.¹⁰⁶ At times, Ramm would run into Barth around the campus and be able to have additional conversations with the Swiss theologian. Ramm described his time with Barth as transformational, saying:

On those occasions I came with a list of questions and took notes on Barth's replies. These literary and personal encounters with Karl Barth did materially change some of the ways I thought about theology, lectured on theology, and wrote theological books.

The first material change stemmed from a passing remark Barth made to one of his questioners, that if we truly believed that we had the truth of God in Holy Scripture we should be fearless in opening any door or window in the pursuit of our theological craft. The truth of God can never be intimidated. If perfect love drives out fear, then the belief that we have the truth of God in Holy Scripture should drive out of our minds all intellectual fears about our theology.

I had become a Christian in the last years of the fierce fundamentalist-modernist confrontations. This controversy had the tendency to make an evangelical Christian very defensive, suspicious, and protective about his or her theology. I did fear open doors and open windows. It was a great temptation to live one's theological life within the confines of a small fort with very high walls.

There are occasions when the human mind works with the speed of a computer. In such a flashing moment a whole new strategy for my theological work came to birth. I saw in rapid succession on the parade ground in my mind the futility and intellectual bankruptcy of my former strategy and the wonderful freeing strategy of Barth's theological method. I could be just as free a person in theology as I would be if I were an experimental scientist. With the full persuasion of the truth of God in Holy Scripture I could fearlessly read, study, and listen to all options and opinions in theology.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Bernard Ramm, "Helps from Karl Barth," in *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 121.

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, January 6, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Ramm, "Helps from Karl Barth," 121.

Although Ramm went to Europe with the intention of gaining a deeper understanding of neo-orthodoxy, he returned to Texas with greater confidence and a new theological direction and method that would drive his work in the coming years.

After returning from Europe to Baylor, Ramm was ready to reassume his duties as the Director of Graduate Studies, but he was quickly informed that the department was “going to move in a different direction,” and was released from his position as the head of the graduate program.¹⁰⁸ During the mid-1950s, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was experiencing a surge among Fundamentalists in the churches who complained that the denomination’s schools and seminaries were producing liberal leaders and pastors. Baylor University, although not founded or owned by the Southern Baptist Convention, strongly identified with Southern Baptist ideals and principles.¹⁰⁹ What may have caused the problem for Ramm is that children from SBC churches made up a large contingent, or vast majority, of the student body. Thus Baylor, particularly its religion department, could not simply choose to ignore the surge of Fundamentalist action going on in the denomination and at other SBC schools.

For example, at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the flagship seminary of the denomination, controversy began to brew around the new president, Duke McCall

¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, May 29, 2016. Ramm’s daughter, Elizabeth, recounts how the family returned to Texas and remained in Waco for a year until they had to move again. When the teenager asked her parents why, no full explanation was given, other than that “the university had chosen to move in a different direction,” meaning that Ramm had been relieved of his position and duties at Baylor.

¹⁰⁹ Historian Robert Torbet notes that Baylor University was founded by the Texas Baptist Education Society, but later lists Baylor University as a Southern Baptist Convention school in Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 324, 547. This identification of Baylor with Southern Baptists largely continued until the 1970s, when divisions occurred within the Southern Baptist Convention.

(1951–1982), regarding the acceptance and teaching of higher criticism and evolution.¹¹⁰ Tension began to build between Southern’s professors, who included these topics in their curricula, and churches, who demanded that the topics be excluded in order to protect the students they sent to Southern and, in turn, the churches that would be led by these returning students who espoused “liberal” teachings.¹¹¹ The controversy over who would determine curriculum became a major point of contention between the faculty and McCall, as well as conflict over McCall’s autocratic leadership style, and eleven professors eventually left Southern because of McCall’s decision to disregard the faculty’s calls for academic freedom and progress, and to support instead the cries of conservative and Fundamentalist churches as well as wealthy Fundamentalist donors who funded the seminary.¹¹² Conservative Southern Baptist historian Gregory Wills says, “Criticism began to spread throughout the South, as stories about the heretical teachings of liberal professors and pastors spread through Baptist newspapers and other media, including the Texas Baptist convention’s periodical, *Baptist Standard*.”¹¹³ Thus, while the official reason for Ramm’s release from Baylor is unknown, his newfound respect for

¹¹⁰ Gregory A. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859-2009* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). The topic of chapters 8–10 is the transformation of Southern’s curriculum under the influence of younger faculty, the rise of a conservative resistance, and the tumult under the leadership of McCall. While Wills focuses on theology in the conflict, this period is usually cited as a failure of McCall’s leadership style, and while the controversy over higher criticism and evolution were not central, they worked as one trigger to bring about the controversy. For an account that focuses on McCall’s leadership issues rather than theology, see Andrew Pratt, “McCall, Duke Kimbrough” in *Encyclopedia of Religious Controversies in the United States*, eds. George H. Shriver and Bill J. Leonard (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 279–281.

¹¹¹ Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859-2009*, 359–360.

¹¹² Ibid., 380. Wills writes, “McCall recognized that since grassroots Baptists paid the piper, they had the right to call the tune.” What makes Wills’s analysis of McCall fascinating is that this is the same exact argument that William Jennings Bryan used to justify the ban on evolutionary teaching in Tennessee during the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925. Wills also notes that many Southern Baptists saw the departure of these faculty members as a much-needed and long-overdue purge of liberalism from the seminaries and the denomination (403).

¹¹³ Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859-2009*, 373–374.

the neo-orthodox Barth, which made some conservatives uncomfortable, and the controversy surrounding *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* and its support of evolutionary teaching were likely the reasons for his dismissal as the Director of Graduate Studies of Baylor's Religion Department.¹¹⁴

Ramm was on the move again, but this departure from Baylor in 1959 would mark a permanent turn away from Fundamentalism towards neo-evangelicalism.¹¹⁵ After leaving Waco, Ramm never affiliated with or worked for a Southern Baptist organization or institution again. His future teaching positions would always be with American Baptist Convention (ABC) organizations from this point on, and his affiliation with neo-evangelical figures and organizations would continue to grow. Because the ABC would never officially align with the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) or neo-evangelical figures, however, Ramm was left to establish a new identity that would (unofficially) blend the two together, and it is to the creation of this new identity that we now turn.

¹¹⁴ Considering the number of Ramm's publications and his work in organizing and developing the graduate program, determining what might have been another valid reason for his dismissal is difficult. In an conversation between Dr. William Bellinger, chair of the Religion Department, and Dr. Rufus Spain, Emeritus Professor of History (1957–1988), with Dr. Bellinger asking questions of the aging Dr. Spain on my behalf, Dr. Spain remarked that “the rumors were that Dr. Ramm was ‘too liberal’ for Baylor.” While Dr. Spain could not remember many specifics, this was his overall impression of Baylor University at the time, in regards to how Ramm was viewed and accepted. William Bellinger, email to author, March 26, 2017.

¹¹⁵ Although he was dismissed from his position as Director of Graduate Studies, Ramm continued to teach Baylor undergraduates (as all religion professors did at that time, since the graduate program had not fully taken shape and would not launch officially until 1965) for one more year, until leaving in 1959. William L. Pitts, e-mail message to author, May 18, 2017. For a list of teaching faculty in 1958–1959 school year, including Ramm, see *The Baylor Bulletin*, Volume 61 (1958-1959) (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 1958). On a practical level that illustrated the turn towards neo-evangelicalism, the Ramms sent their daughter to Wheaton College, where she, interestingly, characterized herself as the “conservative” at the school relative to her peers.

Ramm's Permanent Move Towards Neo-Evangelicalism and Establishment of a Neo-evangelical Presence within the American Baptist Convention

After making some inquiries, Ramm obtained a position as a professor of theology at California Baptist Theological Seminary (CBTS) in Covina, California. CBTS was founded in 1944 at Temple Baptist Church in Los Angeles and then moved to Covina, California. Ramm worked there until the school merged with Berkeley Baptist Divinity School in 1974 to form American Baptist Seminary of the West (ABSW). Although Ramm's writings had been unpalatable for the "hyperorthodox" in the Southern Baptist Convention, to the point that he was released by Baylor University, his attitudes towards and embrace of neo-evangelicalism was now acceptable in the American Baptist Convention, such that he was able to obtain a position as a professor of theology at CBTS. Ramm was able to demonstrate that he was orthodox enough and theologically sound enough, and the seminary hired him and retained him for the next fifteen years. The seminary was located in Covina, a suburb of Los Angeles about twenty-five miles west of his former residence in Glendale, familiar ground for Ramm, and this allowed him to rekindle his contacts with people in Southern California such as Alton Everest, president of the ASA, and his longtime friend and fellow theologian, Edward J. Carnell, who had just stepped down from serving for five years as president of Fuller Seminary.¹¹⁶ Although Ramm associated with these key neo-evangelical figures, the denomination, as represented by the seminary, did not find Ramm's actions or writings to be cause for alarm.

¹¹⁶ "Our History," Fuller Seminary, <http://fuller.edu/about/history-and-facts/our-history/> (accessed 22 April 2017). Elizabeth Attig recounts how the Ramm and Carnell families spent much time together while living in the Los Angeles area.

The Ramm that returned to California was clearly not the same person that had left eight years earlier. Prior to the mid-1950s, his publications were generally conservative in nature or published in conservative journals. He published *Types of Apologetic Systems: An Introductory Study to the Christian Philosophy of Religion* and *Protestant Christian Evidences: A Textbook of the Evidences of the Truthfulness of the Christian Faith for Conservative Protestants*.¹¹⁷ Articles such as “Baptist Theology” and “The Word and the Spirit” were published in the (intentionally titled) Baptist newspaper, *The Watchman Examiner*. From 1959 onwards, Ramm’s writings developed towards a neo-evangelical position and were published in neo-evangelical publications. Ramm wrote *The Christian College in the Twentieth Century* and *Varieties of Christian Apologetics*, and published dozens of articles in *Christianity Today*, *Eternity* magazine, and the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*.¹¹⁸ Ramm also continued to publish articles on biblical studies and hermeneutics during his time at CBTS that were found to be acceptable. A fuller analysis of Ramm’s writings and their development from a conservative position towards a neo-evangelical position will be the subject of chapter 4.

This last series of positions held by Ramm signifies that, after the mid-1950s, the denomination that intentionally chose not to associate or affiliate with the NAE now had made room in its ranks for one of its own seminary professors, significant theologians,

¹¹⁷ Bernard L. Ramm, *Types of Apologetic Systems: An Introductory Study to the Christian Philosophy of Religion* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953); Bernard L. Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences: A Textbook of the Evidences of the Truthfulness of the Christian Faith for Conservative Protestants* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954); Bernard L. Ramm, “The Word and the Spirit,” *The Watchman Examiner* 41 (9 July 1953): 678–79; and Bernard L. Ramm, “Baptist Theology,” *The Watchman Examiner* 43 (November 1955): 1070–1073. A summary and analysis of the content of these books and articles as well as other Ramm writings will be brought out in chapter five of this dissertation.

¹¹⁸ Bernard L. Ramm, *The Christian College in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); Bernard L. Ramm, *Varieties of Christian Apologetics*. Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961). A summary and analysis of the content of these books and articles as well as other Ramm writings will be brought out in chapter five of this dissertation.

and major writers who openly displayed a neo-evangelical character within the Convention. Ramm's work had pushed back the limitations that had once existed in the ABC, which sought to constrain such work, and now there was a place for him, and others, to begin openly adopting a neo-evangelical identity within the ABC. Neo-evangelicals like Ramm had shown that they could hold onto conservative theological positions within the denomination without being seen as a threat or source of possible schism within the denomination, as had happened with those who had left to form the Conservative Baptists of America and General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. On the contrary, Ramm was an irenic conservative who worked well with others in the denomination as well as the seminaries.¹¹⁹

Further proof exists to demonstrate the acceptance of Ramm's work and identity as a neo-evangelical within the denomination. In the early 1970s, CBTS made the decision to merge with Berkeley Baptist Divinity School in Berkeley, California, as part of a larger consolidation movement that resulted in the formation of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, California.¹²⁰ With the move of the Covina faculty to Northern California in 1974, Ramm had to make a decision about whether to accompany the other CBTS faculty members northward to GTU. At that time, Ramm received an invitation to return to Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (ETBS), his "alma mater," in Philadelphia and take up the professorship in theology. Eastern, since

¹¹⁹ Among neo-evangelicals, Ramm was very close with Edward Carnell, second president of Fuller Theological Seminary, and had a collegial working relationship with theologian Carl F.H. Henry and evangelist Billy Graham, among others. Among American Baptists, Ramm worked with historian Norman Maring and General Secretary Robert C. Campbell. Examination of the lives and writings of these other figures are beyond the purview of this dissertation.

¹²⁰ From "Our History," ABSW website. <http://www.absw.edu/about-absw/> (accessed April 22, 2017).

Ramm had graduated in 1941, had retained its conservative theology but very slowly opened itself to neo-evangelical personalities. In the fall of 1961, ETBS elected a new president, Thomas McDormand, who “brought to the institution a more open stance theologically. Because Dr. McDormand was not... a ‘traditional evangelical,’ faculty felt freer to express ideas that pressed against the boundaries of rigid conservatism.”¹²¹ McDormand made this theological stance very clear from very early in his presidency, as he personally invited Billy Graham as a special guest speaker in the chapel on 13 September 1961.¹²² After McDormand retired in 1968, Eastern hired Lester Harnish as its new president. Harnish was elected to bring clear “conservative beliefs and emphases” to the seminary, but “conservative” included an openness to neo-evangelicalism.¹²³ Harnish, just prior to his presidency, had worked with Graham in the Youth for Christ movement and on the May 1968 Crusade in Portland, Oregon, and had “represented” ETBS at the May 1969 New York Crusade. Additionally, “In 1970... the commencement speaker was Harold Ockenga, widely regarded as an architect of the contemporary evangelical [or neo-evangelical] movement that began in the 1940s. The baccalaureate speaker that same year was Harold Lindsell, ... longtime editor of *Christianity Today* magazine, which had been started in the 1940s as a conservative response to *The Christian Century*.”¹²⁴ Furthermore, the theology post to which Ramm was called had just been vacated by Carl F.H. Henry, an early leader in the neo-evangelical movement.¹²⁵ Ramm’s publishing

¹²¹ Frame, *Praise and Promise: A Pictorial History of The Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 96.

¹²² Ibid., 93, 94.

¹²³ Ibid., 108.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 110.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 187.

record, his work with the ASA, and his interaction with neo-evangelicals like Graham were well known facts by this point. The fact that Ramm was now welcomed, again, as a professor of theology at one of the denomination's "conservative" schools demonstrates that Ramm's neo-evangelical identity within the ABC, which he had had a significant role in creating, had now become acceptable. Ramm taught at Eastern for four years, until 1978, when he was called to work one last time in the West Coast.

In 1978, Ramm returned to American Baptist Seminary of the West (ABSW) in Berkeley, California, which had merged with CBTS and become part of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU). At ABSW, Ramm taught church history for the last nine years of his career until his retirement in 1987.¹²⁶ At the request of the ABSW dean, who had been a former student of his, Ramm also helped to (once again) establish a graduate program at the school.¹²⁷ This third invitation and hire of Ramm at an ABC seminary in this capacity shows that Ramm was not only welcomed, but also trusted with shaping the curriculum and theological future of ABC ministers and churches.

Ramm also served the denomination in other capacities beyond his work at the seminaries and in ABC churches. In 1963, Ramm served as a delegate to the American

¹²⁶ Elizabeth Attig recounts how her mother had difficulties with her health in cold weather climates. The effects were not severe, but life in more mild temperatures was more comfortable for her. Because of this Ramm kept his position in California, and the couple retired in southern California. Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, January 15, 2015.

CBTS and ABSW merged together and took the ABSW name in 1974. Joining the two schools and becoming part of the Berkeley GTU allowed the students and faculty of both seminaries to take advantage of the resources associated with the nearby University of California at Berkeley. From the ABSW website, <http://www.absw.edu/about-absw/> (accessed 12 January 2017).

In "The Making of an Evangelical Mind" Ramm notes that he taught church history for the final seven years of his career.

¹²⁷ "EA Timeline."

Baptist Faith and Order Conference in Montreal.¹²⁸ In 1978, general secretary Robert C. Campbell called for an examination of the charismatic renewal among American Baptists. He had a “Charismatic Renewal Task Force” created to study the issue, composed of three pastors, three regional administrators, and Ramm as the sole theologian and academic. The task force produced a report titled, “Understanding the Charismatic Renewal Movement Within the American Baptist Churches in the USA” and submitted it to the General Board in 1981. In it, they expressed initial suspicions surrounding the charismatic movement but over time experienced trust and reconciliation with those they met.¹²⁹

Being firmly established within the ABC and accepted at ABC institutions of employment during this last phase of his career, Ramm was able to journey abroad more frequently to satisfy his appetite for travel, exploration, and learning. During his career in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, Ramm used his summers and sabbatical years to study and to teach as a guest faculty member at other institutions as well. He and his wife often traveled to England and to Europe, where he attended conferences and interacted with other significant, non-Baptist figures such as C.S. Lewis in the 1960s.¹³⁰ In 1966–1967, he taught at Haigazian Evangelical College in Beirut, Lebanon. The college was staffed by a mixture of religious personnel from different denominations, who were committed

¹²⁸ Vanhoozer, “Bernard Ramm,” 292. This may have been part of the preparations associated with the 1964 Baptist Jubilee, celebrating the 150th Anniversary of Baptists coming together at Philadelphia in 1814 as an organized entity in the United States.

¹²⁹ Ramm’s book *Rapping about the Spirit* (Waco, TX: Word, 1974) (now titled *Questions about the Spirit*), was likely the reason behind his inclusion on the task force. Ramm expressed how different theologies and doctrines about the Holy Spirit can be viewed biblically and theologically and specifically addressed the Pentecostal and charismatic movements and how the church could embrace them while adhering to scripture and historically orthodox beliefs.

¹³⁰ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, January 6, 2015.

to education and evangelism training of the students in a cooperative manner. Upon arriving there, Ramm found that some of his books had been translated into Arabic, and were in use at the school. Their time in Beirut was brought to an abrupt close, though, when Ramm and his wife had to make a harrowing, last minute escape when hostilities erupted between Israel and Lebanon.¹³¹ In the 1960s and 70s, Bernard and Alta traveled through the Near East in countries such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia, at the invitation of the president of Aramco (now Saudi Aramco), where he was able to teach members of several American Protestant groups in the region.¹³² In the 1970s and 80s, the Ramms traveled to Asia, seeing countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam. In 1984, Ramm taught a summer term, and later a six-month term, in Singapore. As Ramm approached the end of his career, traveling became limited within the confines of the United States due to his declining physical condition, as he experienced hypertension, trouble with his eyesight, and the emergence of symptoms related to Parkinson's disease.¹³³ In 1985 Ramm took one of his last scholarly visitations to once again teach at Bethel Seminary in Minnesota, where he taught a summer term while visiting members of his wife's family.¹³⁴

Ramm's work with students around the world helped to open theological frontiers for numerous students and allowed many who were trapped within the confines of

¹³¹ Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, January 15, 2015.

¹³² Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, January 6, 2015; Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, January 15, 2015. Aramco (now Saudi Aramco) is the "state-owned oil company of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," and one of the leading petroleum companies in the world. Taken from the Saudi Aramco website, <http://www.saudiaramco.com/en/home/about/who-we-are.html> (accessed January 14, 2017). An invitation such as the one extended to the Ramms was unusual, but not unique, prior to the escalation of tensions between the West and Near East in later 1970s. The sponsorship by the president of Aramco allowed the Ramms to tour freely and to visit the various Christian groups in the area.

¹³³ Elizabeth Attig, e-mail message to author, June 3, 2016.

¹³⁴ "EA Timeline."

Fundamentalism to emerge into a wide-open field for study and growth. Ramm's work and travels over the last thirty years of his life demonstrated an openness to other cultures and ideas that allowed him to expand his own and others' theological horizons and to engage with other Christians in an effort to promote interaction and evangelism, both domestically and internationally, all characteristics that distinguished Ramm and other neo-evangelicals from Fundamentalists.

Throughout his career Ramm was a prodigious writer, publishing twenty-seven books and writing hundreds of articles both for academic journals and for magazines such as *Christianity Today*, *Eternity*, *Decision*, and the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* (now *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*). His scholarly work is mainly theological, but he also took time to write about how developments in Christianity could or should also be viewed from a scriptural and historical perspective.¹³⁵ Many of his books were translated into foreign languages and used throughout Asian countries.¹³⁶ He was very generous with his work and allowed people to translate his books and use them in foreign seminaries free of charge. While waiting for a connecting flight at an airport in Burma (now Myanmar), Ramm was sitting at a table when a student passed by. One of Ramm's books was on the table, and the student, noticing the book but not knowing that its author was present, talked about how he had been able to read this book in seminary and how it had helped him so much. When Ramm told the student that he

¹³⁵ Examples would be *Rapping about the Spirit*, as well as Bernard L. Ramm, *A Handbook of Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), and Bernard L. Ramm, *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), as well as other articles. These will be discussed in chapter five.

¹³⁶ While working on this dissertation, on two different occasions, two South Korean doctoral students – one an Old Testament student and one a theology student – saw that I had a book by Bernard Ramm. Both mentioned how they had used a Korean translation of Ramm's textbooks as part of their theological training in seminaries in Korea and how helpful they had found Ramm's books to be.

was the author, the young man was awestruck and proceeded to tell Ramm about the impact that his scholarship had had upon many of his fellow students and other Christians in Burma.¹³⁷ This was not an isolated incident; during his travels Ramm often encountered people who told him how much his scholarship had helped them and how his work had aided them in reconciling their faith with the circumstances of present-day society. After retiring, Ramm continued to show his generosity by allowing two colleges to make photocopies of his books for students to use for a very small fee and by donating many of his books to various libraries for use in theology classes, both in the U.S. and overseas.¹³⁸

Many of Bernard Ramm's colleagues lauded him for the quality of his work, his kindness, his keen sense of humor and wit, and his collegiality. Ramm was a long-time friend of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), a presenter at numerous annual meetings, and a contributing editor for the *Journal of the ASA*.¹³⁹ To show their appreciation, members of the ASA assembled a festschrift in his honor in 1979 to express how Ramm's scholarship had helped them in their research as well as their faith through his theology and through his work on religion and science, all while maintaining a humble and irenic spirit.¹⁴⁰ Articles by neo-evangelicals such as Alton Everest, Walter

¹³⁷ Stephen Ramm, phone interview by author, January 6, 2015.

¹³⁸ Ramm's children both recounted how their father gave a large donation of his own library, containing his own books and many other theological texts, to Christian schools in Africa. While at a conference at Sioux Falls Seminary in South Dakota, I presented a paper on Bernard Ramm, and in the audience was the librarian of Bethel University in St. Paul. She told me how after his retirement, Ramm had generously donated many of his books to the library collection of Bethel Seminary in San Diego.

¹³⁹ Spradley, "Changing Views of Science and Scripture: Bernard Ramm and the ASA," 2.

¹⁴⁰ The December 1979 issue of the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* was dedicated as a festschrift in Bernard Ramm's honor.

Hearn, and Clark Pinnock were featured in the festschrift issue.¹⁴¹ The ASA continued to publish additional articles about him even after his death, demonstrating the impact of his books and how Ramm's writing helped to open new avenues of thought in regards to the issues surrounding religion and science. At his retirement from ABSW in 1986, many of his fellow faculty members noted his generosity towards them as well as his willingness to serve the school and students without fanfare. In 1990, fellow theologians presented Ramm with a second festschrift to honor his theological work in various aspects of biblical and theological interpretation. In this second festschrift, theologians, Bible scholars, and historians of Christianity noted how his work had helped to expand frontiers of study.¹⁴²

Upon his retirement, Bernard and Alta Ramm made their last two moves in Southern California. They moved first to Laguna Hills for a year and then finally settled for the remainder of their lives in a retirement community in Irvine.¹⁴³ Although Ramm had retired, his mind was still active, and he would occasionally walk down to the University of California at Irvine to talk with faculty members over lunch about developments in physics and philosophy.¹⁴⁴ In the last two years of his life, Ramm reflected back on his life and career and began to compose a "spiritual autobiography" to

¹⁴¹ Three of the six articles dedicated to Ramm are Hearn, "An Interview with Bernard Ramm and Alta Ramm," 179; F. Alton Everest, Dewey K. Carpenter, David L. Willis, John D. Haynes, and Edwin Yamauchi, "Five Personal Reminiscences [sic] on the Influence of *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*," 187–189; and Clark H. Pinnock, and Christopher B. Kaiser, "Two Reflections on the Book *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*," 191, in *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 31, no. 4 (December 1979).

¹⁴² *Perspectives on Theology in the Contemporary World: Essays in Honor of Bernard Ramm*. Specific portions from the festschrift will be highlighted in chapter five, which will shed light on Ramm's non-scientific writings and his interaction with other neo-evangelicals.

¹⁴³ "EA Timeline."

¹⁴⁴ Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, May 29, 2016.

help trace his intellectual and spiritual journey towards an evangelical faith.¹⁴⁵

Unfortunately, before he could complete this last manuscript, titled “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” Ramm died of a heart attack on the morning of 11 August 1992.

Conclusion

Bernard Ramm’s life reflected a lengthy pilgrimage, during which he not only physically moved around the country on multiple occasions, but also theologically and philosophically from fundamentalism to neo-evangelicalism. From his introduction to fundamentalism as a young convert just before entering college, Ramm soon found that his fundamentalist beliefs were lacking and unable to answer the questions he faced in science and theology. As a result, Ramm came to a crisis during which he made the choice to move away from the confining limitations of fundamentalist thought and towards the openness of neo-evangelicalism beliefs, within which he not only found intellectual freedom, but also colleagues with whom he could grow.

Two distinct turns marked Ramm’s life: his conversion to Christ in high school and his turn from fundamentalism to neo-evangelicalism. Although Ramm made these turns, he remained a committed American Baptist Church member, and later pastor, theologian, and professor. During the twentieth century, the Northern Baptist Convention underwent many different changes, two name changes notwithstanding, and Ramm changed with his own denomination, developing the combination of his own Baptist and neo-evangelical identities into an acceptable, influential space within broader American Baptist life. As the neo-evangelical movement emerged, Ramm retained his American Baptist identity while bringing aspects of the neo-evangelical movement into his work,

¹⁴⁵ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 1–2.

particularly in the interaction between science and religion, and it is to this overlap between science and religion that we will now turn.

CHAPTER FOUR

Bernard Ramm and Science

Introduction

As shown in the previous chapters, Bernard Ramm carved out a unique place in twentieth century theological history, American Baptist history, and neo-evangelical history as well. What made Ramm stand out as a theologian was not only the quality of his work, but also his willingness to push himself into realms of thought beyond where he was comfortable. Ramm did not imprison himself within systems of his own making. Rather, when he saw the shortcomings of his thinking, he was willing to risk his standing, his security, and even his reputation in order to pursue deeper theological truth. When he saw the limitations of Fundamentalist thinking, Ramm knew that he needed to dig deeper and search for a better theological system.

Specifically, Ramm encountered the shortcomings and limitations of Fundamentalist thought in the realm of science.¹ He had always been fascinated by science as a young boy and held scientists like Albert Einstein and Arthur Eddington in great regard. Ramm was also familiar with the advances that science had provided to society in the early twentieth century, and unlike his Fundamentalist peers, he did not see science as a threat to orthodox Christianity. Rather, he saw science as a tool and a companion to theology and learning. Thus, when some Christians perceived scientific theory to be a challenge to orthodox beliefs, Ramm responded by pushing himself and

¹ Grenz and Olson, 304.

other Christians to see how theology might embrace science, rather than reject it. To do this, he was willing to open his mind to new avenues of thinking and to reach out to new colleagues who might help stretch the limits of his work. As he did so, he left behind theological ideas that no longer conformed to scripture, to scientific data, or to logic. Working much like a scientist in the realm of theology, Ramm was willing to test new ideas, gather new evidence and new data, and come up with new theories to fit them.²

The purpose of this chapter will be to outline Ramm's relationship with science prior to his theological turn away from Fundamentalism and afterwards following his turn towards neo-evangelicalism. The chapter will begin by providing a brief historical sketch of the relationship between science and religion from the late 1800s into the early 1900s and Ramm's place within that context. Then, I will discuss Ramm's master's thesis and doctoral dissertation in philosophy of science, how his encounter at BIOLA with the ideas of Fundamentalist thinker Harry Rimmer caused him to react against Fundamentalist thinking, and how the combination of the two led him to write and publish *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (1954). Finally, this chapter will further discuss the historical impact of *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* upon the relationship between science and religion in the context of American Baptists and neo-evangelicals.

² To understand Bernard Ramm's scientific approach in theology beyond just an engagement with science, see Andrew J. Kim, "Bernard Ramm's Scientific Approach to Theology," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 68, no. 3 (September 2016): 155–164.

*The Historical Context of the Relationship between Science and Religion
and the Thought of Bernard Ramm*

Religion, specifically Protestant Christianity, and science have shared a long relationship with one another, but the relationship between religion and science is often poorly misunderstood and inaccurately portrayed as being in perpetual conflict with one another, frequently with the image of the explanatory powers of “modern” science gradually overtaking “traditional” or antiquated religion.³ Histories such as these are either terribly shortsighted or poorly written. Numerous historians of science, such as John Hedley Brooke, have shown that while issues have arisen that have caused debate, and even “conflict” at times, the relationship between science and religion is complex, requires clear definitions of terminology, and encompasses a spectrum of views and responses.⁴ Eminent historian of science, Ronald L. Numbers, in his essay, “Aggressors, Victims, and Peacemakers: Historical Actors in the Drama of Science and Religion,” provides a foundational understanding of “science” and “religion” and the emergence of a new view of their relationship to one another beginning in the 1800s.⁵ Prior to the 1800s, many individuals that would presently be classified as “scientists” were also “religious” actors as well, and vice-versa. Significant historical figures like Jonathan Edwards

³ Depicting the relationship between science and religion in a monolithic manner or with sweeping generalizations would be highly foolish and detrimental because Christians and members of other religions have reacted to scientific discovery in varied manners for different reasons. Within Christianity alone, various individuals and denominations have interacted with science in a spectrum of behaviors, requiring a more nuanced historical view of this relationship.

⁴ For an introduction to the historical relationship between science and religion, one must read John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Brooke provides a nuanced description of religion and science, their definitions, and historical context of their interaction between the seventeenth through twentieth centuries. It is important to note that Brooke writes from a Western/trans-Atlantic historical perspective and does not discuss the relationship between science and religion in the Global East or South.

⁵ Ronald L. Numbers, “Aggressors, Victims, and Peacemakers: Historical Actors in the Drama of Science and Religion,” in *The Religion and Science Debate: Why Does It Continue?* ed. Harold W. Attridge (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 15–20.

(1703–1758) and John Wesley (1703–1791) were deeply immersed in religion, but they both also had scientific interests and believed that science and religion could help the one understand the other and that both existed for the benefit of humanity.⁶ Edwards’s (in-) famous sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” uses imagery involving spiders and was likely rooted in his own studies at Yale College on the anatomy and behavior of “flying” spiders.⁷ Wesley, as an extension of his ministerial concerns, set up a free medical dispensary, published a simple book of folk remedies titled *Primitive Physick*, and was interested in the benefits of blood transfusions and the use of electricity to treat depression and improve moods among his members.⁸ Indeed, prior to the mid-1800s many scientists of a Christian bent believed that the uniformity of nature was due to the presence of a uniform God, who was responsible for nature’s existence, and that observation of nature helped believers to appreciate the qualities of God.⁹ Thus, while disputes have arisen in the relationship between science and religion, it has not by any means been a continual conflict.

As explained in chapter two of this dissertation, towards the end of the 1800s, the rise of evolution and higher criticism began to cause turmoil for many conservative

⁶ John Hedley Brooke, “The History of Science and Religion,” in *Evangelicals and Science in Historical Perspective*, eds. David N. Livingstone, D.G. Hart, and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17–19.

⁷ Patricia J. Tracy, “Jonathan Edwards,” *American National Biography Online*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), <http://www.anb.org.ezproxy.baylor.edu/articles/01/01-00257.html?a=1&n=jonathan%20edwards&d=10&ss=0&q=2> (accessed May 4, 2017).

⁸ Henry D. Rack, “John Wesley,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/29069?docPos=1> (accessed May 5, 2017); J.W. Haas, Jr., “John Wesley’s Vision of Science in the Service of Christ,” in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, Volume 47 (December 1995): 234, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1995/PSCF12-95Haas.html> (accessed May 5, 2017).

⁹ Numbers, “Aggressors, Victims, and Peacemakers,” 18.

believers, particularly those who read the Bible from a literalist perspective. Because the Bible was supposedly “under assault,” many conservatives began to close ranks in an attempt to defend scripture and orthodoxy. Because of this conflict between conservatives and modernists, the idea of “warfare” began to infiltrate the popular mindset. Additionally, some historical texts describing the relationship between science and religion depicted a “warfare” model, which was tied to the rise of the modernist movement, the increase in scientific discoveries, and the spread of evolutionary theory, as well as the conservative backlash against them. As understanding, along with caricatures, of higher criticism and Darwin’s theories began to spread throughout Europe and then into the United States, many American Protestant conservatives reacted against them, fearing the damage they would do to an orthodox understanding of the Bible.¹⁰ These conservatives formed the backbone of the fundamentalist movement in the United States, and undergirded the rise of more militant Fundamentalist leaders and the spread of Fundamentalist groups.¹¹ The warfare model was most notably demonstrated in “historical” texts with conspicuous titles such as John William Draper’s 1874 *The History of the Conflict Between Science and Religion* and Andrew Dickson White’s 1896 *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. Draper’s text negatively portrayed “faith [which was] in its nature unchangeable, stationary [in contrast with] Science [which was] in its nature progressive; and eventually a divergence between them,

¹⁰ Peter J. Bowler, *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons: Evolution and Christianity from Darwin to Intelligent Design* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 4.

¹¹ See chapter two of this dissertation for a fuller historical explanation of this movement during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

impossible to conceal, must take place.”¹² By reading histories portraying the relationship between science and Christianity using this kind of language, many readers of Draper and White began to polarize in their views of science or religion. Conservatives were left with an understanding of science as the encroacher upon orthodox belief and Fundamentalist leaders as heroic defenders of the faith.¹³ Those favoring science over religion saw religious conservatives as antiquated obstructionists who impeded the progress of science and society.¹⁴

Historiographically, the conflict view has been thoroughly debunked over time, but its existence as an influence and barometer for its time needs to be understood. In debunking the “conflict” view, historians David C. Lindberg and Ronald Numbers in “Beyond War and Peace: A Reappraisal of the Encounter between Christianity and Science,” mince no words as they state:

No work—not even John William Draper's best-selling *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (1874)—has done more than White's to instill in the public mind a sense of the adversarial relationship between science and religion. His *Warfare* remains in print to the present day, having appeared also in German, French, Italian, Swedish, and Japanese translations. His military rhetoric has captured the imagination of generations of readers, and his copious references, still impressive, have given his work the appearance of sound scholarship, bedazzling even twentieth-century historians who should know better. In recent decades, for example, the intellectual historian Bruce Mazlish certified White's thesis to have been established “beyond reasonable doubt,” and the late George Sarton, a distinguished historian of science at Harvard, found

¹² John William Draper, *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874), vii; Andrew Dickson White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1876). White (1832–1918) was the first president of Cornell University (1866–1885) and the first president of the American Historical Association (1884–1885). White's text was formally published in two volumes in 1896, but was rooted in a series of lectures given in 1876, which were circulating in print until their formal publication. The word “historical” is placed in scare quotes here and following due to the historiographical analysis that has demonstrated the limited worth of these texts.

¹³ Bowler, *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons*, 4–6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6–7.

White's argument so compelling that he urged its extension to non-Christian cultures.

Such judgments, however appealing they may be to foes of “scientific creationism” and other contemporary threats to established science, fly in the face of mounting evidence that White read the past through battle-scarred glasses, and that he and his imitators have distorted history to serve ideological ends of their own. Although it is not difficult to find instances of conflict and controversy in the annals of Christianity and science, recent scholarship has shown the warfare metaphor to be neither useful nor tenable in describing the relationship between science and religion.¹⁵

Thus, although the histories of Draper and White have been shown to be faulty, their effects continue to linger in the historical imagination more than a century later. In *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*, historian Edward Larson also points out the fallacy of the “warfare” model proposed in these two texts, and he specifically acknowledges Dickson's popular book as a key source of the flawed perception. Larson, though, provides an additional, and helpful, insight, for while he concurs with Lindberg and Numbers on the lack of accuracy of the Draper and White texts, he states, “By 1925, the warfare model of science and religion had become ingrained into the received wisdom of many secular Americans,” including significant figures such as Clarence Darrow, counsel for the defense at the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925.¹⁶ In other words, while the “histories” of Draper and White and others like them have now been rejected repeatedly on a scholarly level, the myths they espoused affected many in the early twentieth century, and they continued to

¹⁵ David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, “Beyond War and Peace: A Reappraisal of the Encounter Between Christianity and Science,” *Church History* 55, No. 3 (Sep., 1986): 340. Bowler also offers a brief historiography that concurs with Lindberg and Numbers. Bowler, *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons*, 4–5.

¹⁶ Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion*, 21–22, 77. While Larson certainly acknowledges the “debate” between science and religion at the Scopes Trial, he is careful to place the trial within the context of the longer history between science and religion. The importance of the Scopes Trial to the larger history of Fundamentalism, neo-evangelicalism, and the early twentieth century is covered in chapter two of this dissertation.

persist and die a slow death, even into the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.¹⁷ Thus, while these historical “warfare” texts and the views within them have been refuted continually over the past century, they shaped and reflected the pervasive and prevailing perception of the relationship between science and religion for many in the early twentieth century, and it was within this context that Bernard Ramm lived and operated during the early part of his life.¹⁸

Ramm, for his part, however, did not buy into historical “warfare” texts such as these. Writing in *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* in 1954, he stated, “Even though White’s *The Warfare of Theology with Science* [sic] needs correctives, yet one cannot read it and put it down without a realization as to how profoundly the progress of science has purified theological thought. Reams of superstition and scientific nonsense have been purged out of the church and out of Christian thought by the impact of scientific thought upon it.”¹⁹ Ramm, by that point in his career, had become aware of the “warfare” model through White’s book, but, instead of reacting against it, Ramm believed that “conflicts” between science and religion could serve salutary purposes and need not end in division. Thus, Ramm, who was in the process of moving away from

¹⁷ The warfare myth and many others are covered in the outstanding volume edited by Ronald C. Numbers, *Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths About Science and Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 6.

¹⁸ Providing a complete history of the relationship between science and religion is not the point of this section. To attempt to do so would require much length, and many esteemed historians of science, having already noted several of them, have already covered this topic at length. What this section attempts to do is to demonstrate the low historiographical quality of the Draper and White texts while contrasting their historical quality with the actual mood of the times, as the backdrop for Bernard Ramm and his perception of and contribution to the history of this relationship. Although discredited by experts, it is still a popular model and carries weight with some professionals.

¹⁹ Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. This book of Ramm’s will be cited as CVSS in future footnotes.

fundamentalism, was able to see beyond the conflicts and pushed his readers to see the greater good that came from religion and science in cooperation, rather than conflict.

Some historians have flatly characterized Ramm in his academic career as a “fundamentalist” but need to provide further explanation as to what that meant about Ramm. For example, John Lewis, in his 2009 chapter referring to Bernard Ramm as a fundamentalist, leaned on the 1981 dissertation by David Miller, which said that “Ramm thought of himself as a fundamentalist-premillennial dispensationalist” and based this on his association with “friends from Dallas Theological Seminary.”²⁰ Lewis also based this characterization on Ramm’s early teaching experiences at Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary and, later, BIOLA, quoting Philip R. Thorne’s description of these institutions as “dispensational schools within the orbit of Northern Fundamentalist Evangelicalism.”²¹ Although this characterization of Ramm as a fundamentalist was true in his early years, it is important to note that, as shown in chapter three of this dissertation, Ramm, like many other thinkers, was on an intellectually transformative journey, which for him began in college in the mid-1930s and continued into the heart of his career in the 1950s. For Ramm, this meant a modification of his theology away from fundamentalism and towards neo-evangelicalism. Ramm, even in his early years, was committed to evangelism and intellectual engagement in theology and philosophy, which was one important distinguishing characteristic of the neo-evangelical movement. As he entered college, he began to study, both formally in his college classes and also for his faith. As Ramm’s faith expanded, he did not concretize or compartmentalize his beliefs

²⁰ Lewis, “Bernard Ramm,” 70. Miller, “The Theological System of Bernard Ramm,” 17.

²¹ Lewis, “Bernard Ramm,” 70. Thorne, *Evangelicalism and Karl Barth: His Reception and Influence in North American Evangelical Theology*, 123.

apart from his intellectual development. He sought to match his faith with his learning as part of a complete whole, and this growth allowed Ramm to avoid the intellectual isolationism and stagnation of Fundamentalist teaching. For this reason, historians should not categorize Ramm with other more militant Fundamentalists, such as Riley and Straton, who alienated many due to their actions. Ramm shunned this kind of militancy and inflexibility because of its unhelpful approach to ministry, evangelism, or intellectual growth.

For the same reasons, Ramm also should not be categorized simply as an “evangelical theologian.”²² Ramm was converted just prior to entering college and initially embraced a fundamentalist position. As he contemplated college, he thought that he might go to a Bible institute for study, until his father forced him to attend the University of Washington instead.²³ Later in his life, he described himself at that early stage in his life as a “fundamentalist,” although not of the “Bible-thumping” type.²⁴ At one point, he even purchased a Scofield Reference Bible in college to better understand the concept of dispensationalism, even though he and his peers rarely discussed it and focused more on evangelism and on avoiding divisiveness over doctrine.²⁵ He did not give up his fascination with premillennial dispensationalism so quickly, though, until he began studies at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary.²⁶ Similar to his experience in his

²² Ramm is often cited as one of, or included in lists of, “(neo-) evangelical theologians.” An example is Vanhoozer, “Bernard Ramm,” 290–306.

²³ Bernard L. Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 9.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 10.

²⁶ Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary will be referred to as “Eastern” or EBTS. EBTS planted a separate college called Eastern Baptist College in 1952. The college was renamed Eastern College in 1972, and then became Eastern University in 2001. When EBTS and Eastern University reunited as one entity in

undergraduate psychology class, in which he attempted to refute evolutionary beliefs, he entered his first Old Testament class with an aim to “prove” dispensational views. Being at Eastern, however, gave Ramm a time and place to reconsider his position. By being in at an institution that viewed itself as “conservative but progressive,” Ramm had the opportunity to sort through his own beliefs and move forward theologically.²⁷ Reading through several commentaries “raised the suspicion that the dispensationalist view might not be correct after all.... [which led me] eventually to abandon dispensationalism.”²⁸ Change came gradually for Ramm, and movement from a fundamentalist position towards the neo-evangelical would take almost two decades to complete.²⁹ Thus, while Ramm is correctly characterized as a fundamentalist by some and an evangelical by others, clearly defining and delineating what that meant in his life and at what stage in his life becomes critically important.

In terms of the relationship between science and religion, Ramm, as a youth, certainly was not aware of the fallacies of the Draper and White texts, and, as detailed in

2004, EBTS became the seminary of Eastern University and changed its name to Palmer Theological Seminary, in honor of its third president, Gordon Palmer (1936-1950). “Theology and History,” Palmer Theological Seminary website, <http://www.palmerseminary.edu/about/doctrinal-statement> (accessed May 9, 2017).

²⁷ In histories of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, faculty members and students of Eastern use the phrase “conservative but progressive” to describe themselves. See Norman H. Maring, “Conservative But Progressive,” in *What God Hath Wrought: Eastern’s First Thirty-five Years*, ed. Gilbert L. Guffin (Philadelphia, PA: The Judson Press, 1960), 15–49. As an example of its “conservative but progressive” stance, see the school’s “Doctrinal Basis” in Appendix A of this dissertation. Randall L. Frame, *Praise and Promise: A Pictorial History of The Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company, 2000), 14. For example, the doctrinal basis, written in the school’s first years of existence, conserves the school’s theological beliefs, but has been “slightly revised” progressively over the years to create space intentionally to include women as well as believers who do not hold to Baptist views of baptism.

²⁸ Bernard L. Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 17.

²⁹ Ramm’s transformation of thought regarding science will be detailed in this chapter of the dissertation. Ramm’s transformation of thought regarding other theological matters will be covered in the following chapter.

chapter three of this dissertation, as a young Christian at the University of Washington, he initially imbibed Fundamentalist teachings, which rejected evolutionary theories and their scientific value. Ramm took it upon himself to even “defend” Christianity in one of his undergraduate classes to demonstrate that the evolutionary view was incorrect. When challenged, though, as he was by his psychology professor, Ramm took time to consider other points of view; he did not dogmatically hold onto what he had been taught or what he read. He was thoughtful about his faith, especially as it related to science. From his youth, Ramm had taken an interest in and had a high respect for the sciences, and he knew that truth had to align with logic as well as natural evidence.³⁰ Thus, despite the tensions between science and religion for many during that time, they were not in conflict for Ramm, and the interplay of the two together would play a key role in helping Ramm carefully consider his theological position.

It was not until after his time at Eastern and his move to Southern California that Ramm began his turn from fundamentalism and began to explore the philosophy of science. Through his teaching work at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) and his studies at the University of Southern California (USC) Ramm found the impetus to begin to reconsider the foundations of his understanding of science.³¹ He began to turn away from the intellectual limitations of Fundamentalism and explore new ideas and the discoveries being made by science.³² Ramm saw the definitive differences between those

³⁰ It should be noted that Ramm changed his major to speech, but he did not fully abandon his interests in science. His transcript shows that during his third year, he took a zoology (biology) class in eugenics, and, in his fourth year, another zoology class on evolution.

³¹ The topic of Ramm’s studies in the philosophy of science will be discussed in the next section.

³² An example of a problematic topics would be the differences between “Young Earth” views of creation, which posits an earth only a few thousand years old, versus radiometric dating and geological

in the Fundamentalist camp and those who were open to science, and in *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, published in 1954, Ramm included language that historian of science James Moore includes among other examples of “conflict” language in the relationship between science and religion.³³ Moore correctly points out the overly tidy “sides” that Ramm creates of “scientists” and “theologians” in his 1954 text and Ramm’s critique of those on each side who failed to correctly understand the other. What Moore fails to do, however, is to give Ramm a fuller treatment and describe how Ramm was in the process of adjusting and expanding his views on science, seeking a mediating position where science and religion would be able to dialogue with one another.³⁴ Thus, for Moore to include Ramm in a discussion of those who fell into the historiographical fallacy of portraying a conflict between science and religion is only partially correct. The very criticism that Moore levels at Ramm, for being unclear with his terms and lacking clear “philosophical categories” is the very work that Ramm began to do after arriving in Southern California in the early 1940s.³⁵ Ramm, as already stated, was on the move intellectually, and rather than seeking to define battle lines, Ramm was seeking to bring about conciliation on both “sides” in order to demonstrate that the discussions by theologians about science need not be viewed as a conflict. To understand this move, it is

study, which holds to an earth that is billions of years old. These differences will be discussed in detail below.

³³ James R. Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggle to Come to Terms with Darwin in Great Britain and America, 1870–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 81.

³⁴ In this historiographical section on the history of the relationship between science and religion, Ramm only receives a short mention. While a longer treatment of Ramm is not demanded of Moore, this section attempts to give a fuller explanation of Ramm’s place within that historiography.

³⁵ Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies*, 80.

necessary to turn to Ramm's work at USC and the shift in his understanding of the philosophy of science.

Bernard Ramm's Philosophy of Science

For Bernard Ramm, who was born in 1916, the understanding of conflict between science and religion was certainly in the air. As a young boy, he was captivated by science and its potential for improving the world and advancing society, as well as the fascinating scientific figures, especially Albert Einstein, who filled the cultural stage of the day. Ramm held scientists in high regard, even once considering a degree and formal career in engineering for himself before entering the University of Washington.

Towards the end of his time at the University of Washington, though, Ramm made the decision to enter the ministry and a lifelong pursuit of theology. After graduating, he entered Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1938 and began studies towards his B.D. At that time, Eastern, and the Northern Baptist Convention (NBC) as a whole, were not heavily engaged in the study of science or evolution, if at all. A study of theological education by Hugh Hartshorne and Milton C. Froyd, presented to the Board of Education of the NBC, about the background, training, and education of ministers revealed that many seminarians were less acquainted with general science as compared to other categories such as social issues, history, or literature when entering seminary.³⁶ The

³⁶ "Table 49: General Culture Test Scores (Medians)," in Hartshorne and Froyd, *Theological Education in the Northern Baptist Convention: A Survey*, 146. In this table, in comparison to "General Science," future ministers scored 52% better in the category of "Current Social Problems," 35% better in the category of "History and Social Studies," and 12% better in the category of "Literature." The percentage differences between the five "older" NBC seminaries and the five "newer" NBC seminaries is even more pronounced, with the "newer" seminaries tending to show a greater percentage difference between other types of knowledge and general science knowledge. Based on founding dates of the seminaries, Eastern would be one of the "newer" seminaries. Scales are not provided in the table, and median scores are assumed to be based on a 100-point scale.

Hartshorne-Froyd study also queried seminary students on their reading habits, and fewer than seven percent of graduating seminarians read “technical” (i.e. scientific) matter. Of those that did read technical journals, the study concluded that reading of technical matter was often connected with courses, although this number did increase slightly among one hundred surveyed active ministers, who had graduated from seminary.³⁷ Additionally, the study included a survey of faculty members at the various NBC seminaries about the importance of various aims of their teaching. One of the aims was “To help students gain a working knowledge of religious trends and the current types of religious thought and practice,” to which between sixty-seven to eighty-four percent, depending on the seminary, felt that it was “Of Great Importance.” Nowhere in the study, though, is there any mention of a study of science and its relationship to religion.³⁸ Finally, in a survey of a seminarian’s typical class selection at each of the NBC seminaries, of the 135 class hours usually taken at Eastern, only four and a half of those hours, or about three percent, was dedicated to philosophy, which was listed separately from theology.³⁹ Thus, although Ramm had a personal interest in science and took two philosophy classes at the nearby University of Pennsylvania while at Eastern, it was unlikely that Ramm was exposed to a formal study of a philosophy of science until his time in Southern California.

³⁷ “Table 55: Types of Periodicals Read by Seniors in Four Seminaries,” *Ibid.*, 153–154; “Table 20: Types of Periodicals Read by 100 Ministers,” *Ibid.*, 93. The percentage increased to 15%, but the increase may be attributable to a host of factors, and is difficult to explain without more information about the ministers, such as background, seminary attended, or reasons for reading, which was not included in the text.

³⁸ “Table 56: Faculty Views of Seminary Aims,” *Ibid.*, 172–173. While it is difficult to draw conclusions based on an absence of information, namely seminaries’ views on the relationship between science and religion, it is worth noting that the only mention of “science” in the entire 242-page study comes from its singular mention in the survey of seminarians’ background.

³⁹ “Table 61: Class Hours Typically Taken by Ministerial Students in Eight Seminaries,” *Ibid.*, 181.

After Ramm moved to the Los Angeles area, he began taking classes towards a master's degree in philosophy at USC in 1945. His master's thesis, "The Idealism of Jeans and Eddington in Modern Physical Theory" (1947), focused on the effects of "new physics," or Einsteinian physics, and how it helped affirm various philosophical systems. Ramm drew upon the ideas of James Jeans and Arthur Eddington that philosophy and science were interrelated and supportive of one another. Ramm wrote, "Jeans is certain that the new science is not only science, but philosophy.... Eddington is also quite outspoken in his views that the new physics has profound philosophical implications."⁴⁰ Ramm takes time to examine the epistemological views of both Jeans and Eddington based on the physics of Einstein and Heisenberg, and how materialism and determinism give way to idealism. From this, Ramm believes that for Jeans and Eddington, "modern physical theory suggests an idealistic philosophy as its metaphysical background."⁴¹ Ramm said that for Jeans, because the universe is better described through a mathematical idealism, rather than a Newtonian physical materialism, the universe is a reflection of a greater "idea" produced by a "Pure Mathematician" (i.e. God), and that humans are attempting to understand the "lesser equations" of the "Great Equation."⁴² For Eddington, according to Ramm, the existence of order in the universe is not used to prove the existence of God, but to reflect a spiritual order as seen in the existence and agency of human personhood and personality and the ability of the mind to observe and comprehend that order and its being.⁴³ With the rise of the Einsteinian mathematical

⁴⁰ Ramm, "The Idealism of Jeans and Eddington in Modern Physical Theory," 6.

⁴¹ Ibid., 43.

⁴² Ibid., 44.

⁴³ Ibid., 53, 55, 59.

modeling of the universe, the ability to comprehend the behavior of matter comes because of the foundational existence of mind.⁴⁴

These main points of Ramm's master's thesis are not brought out to agree or disagree over the issue of epistemology or ontology, but rather to provide a background for three aspects of Ramm's future work. First, Ramm believed that science and philosophy could and should be in conversation with one another. Second, his thesis demonstrated also that science had not only a philosophical nature to it, but also a contribution to make metaphysically, which would lend itself to further explorations of the relationship between science and religion. Third, this approach also demonstrated an aspect of Ramm's character that matched well with the emerging neo-evangelical movement in the United States: his desire to actively engage with intellectual developments and issues of the day, including science.

This experience at USC with his master's work led him to study further and immediately enter doctoral studies. Ramm's Ph.D. dissertation, titled "An Investigation of Some Recent Efforts to Justify Metaphysical Statements from Science with Special Reference to Physics," built on the work that he had begun in his master's thesis. In the study, Ramm attempted "(1) To investigate the contemporary relationship between metaphysics and science, especially those efforts to derive metaphysical cues, inferences, or justifications from science, with special reference to physics... [revealing] efforts made to harmonize science and metaphysics. (2) To present those arguments that have been set forth by philosophers to limit the scientific method, especially in reference to metaphysics; and, conversely, to set forth what science can suggest positively to any

⁴⁴ Ibid., 62.

system of metaphysics. (3) To defend the solution of the rapprochement of science and metaphysics... to discover what services science may be to metaphysics, and metaphysics to science at this time of crisis in the west.”⁴⁵ Ramm also, after some exploration into the finer details of teleology, relativity theory, atomic physics, and entropy and their application to philosophy and metaphysics, drew several conclusions. He pointed to the inherent limitations of science to measurable data and science’s inability to answer metaphysical questions either affirmatively or negatively. He also critiqued scientific claims to objectivity and highlighted the limits of science in addressing metaphysical and philosophical questions in the areas of morality, ethics, and human purpose. Ramm also emphasized the place of the philosopher in taking the systems developed by scientists and ascribing comprehensive meaning to those systems, especially in regards to their effects upon humanity. Also, because science emerged as a mathematical and symbolic model of the universe, the place of humanity in applying rational thought and creating meaning was indispensable and gave metaphysical and philosophical study meaning, purpose, and authority.⁴⁶ Ramm did not try to restore philosophy’s or religion’s place over science; rather he believed that the two needed to be in intimate and respectful conversation with one another. Specifically in terms of the relationship between science and philosophy, Ramm concluded:

1) Every metaphysics must pay due attention to those borderlands between its statements and scientific theories. Certain problems are extenuations of certain theories of science, and wherever this occurs the metaphysician must know the corresponding scientific theory.... (2) As philosophy is the endeavor to give a

⁴⁵ Ramm, “An Investigation of Some Recent Efforts to Justify Metaphysical Statements from Science with Special Reference to Physics, 8. Underlining of words in the original, likely meant to be italics in his typed manuscript.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 141–149.

synoptic view of reality, and as the data of science bulks large in human knowledge, every philosophy must pay attention to the entire scope of science.⁴⁷

Summing up the matter, he wrote, “Any Nature-philosophy that restricts metaphysics to science is not adequate to the complete range of experience and therefore can only mutilate when it tries to fit all of experience to its Procrustean bed. On the other hand, any Geist-philosophy that thoroughly conventionalizes science will soon find itself tragically divorced from the society of critical scientists—a very key group in western culture. Such a proposed metaphysics must contain a methodology that will be in harmony with the rigor of the scientific method, and must present a system that will arrange for the natural relatedness of the valid elements of Geist- and Nature-philosophy.”⁴⁸ For Ramm, science and philosophy had to work together in order for both to grow and function properly.

From this examination of Ramm’s master’s thesis and doctoral dissertation, the initial foundations of his landmark 1954 book, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, begin to emerge. Before turning to a deeper examination of this text, though, one other significant development prior to its composition must be noted, that of Ramm’s work at BIOLA and his experience with the work of Fundamentalist Harry Rimmer.

Bernard Ramm, Harry Rimmer, and BIOLA

As explained in chapter three of this dissertation, Ramm’s turn from fundamentalism was strongly influenced by his time at BIOLA. Ramm’s experience with teaching an apologetics class and utilizing the Harry Rimmer text served to solidify the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 151–152. Underline original.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 158–159. By “Geist-philosophy,” Ramm implied a philosophy that was rich in metaphysical and ethical formulations; by “Nature-philosophy,” Ramm implied an association between science and philosophy with a corresponding agnosticism and normative ethic (154–155).

conclusions he had drawn in his work at USC. Indeed, it is critically important to see that the two occurred in chronological parallel with one another. The development of his philosophy of science along with his increasing disappointment with the scientific apologetic of Rimmer led Ramm to conclude that he could no longer hold to a Fundamentalist point of view. The specific Rimmer text used by Ramm is unknown, since Rimmer had published numerous books by that point, with several of them relating to science and creation. What makes the text used by Ramm somewhat remarkable, though, is the “scientific” background of its author.

Harry Rimmer (1890–1952) was born and reared in the West Coast, with his mother becoming a widow when he was five and remarrying a widower who created a broken and violent home environment. Due to the limited amount of care his mother could provide for him, his father’s mercurial personality, and a partial and inadequate education, Rimmer was forced to leave school as a boy and worked until he entered the army at age eighteen. After completing his military service, he attempted to continue his education at Hahnemann Medical College in San Francisco, a homeopathic school requiring no college education. While walking on the street one night, he came upon one of his fellow Hahnemann classmates, who was preaching to people passing on the sidewalk. Hearing him teach from II Corinthians 5:17, Rimmer was converted to Christ. Lack of money forced him to drop out of Hahnemann, and after some time, he attempted to resume his education at Whittier College, a Quaker school in Los Angeles, and then at BIOLA. Due to various circumstances, Rimmer was unable to complete his education at any of these schools, but he became heavily involved with YMCA ministries and boys’ evangelism. Between 1920 and 1925, he traveled throughout the western states and

developed an extensive ministry among high school and college students.⁴⁹ Rimmer's interest in science and religion developed around this point in his life, caused in part by the alarm he felt when learning of higher criticism and evolution and its potentially harmful effects on young men's faith. Just as with other Fundamentalists of the 1920s, such as William Bell Riley and William Jennings Bryan, the fear was "The Menace of Darwinism" as the source of German militarism and the effects of higher criticism and its corrosiveness upon the authority of the Bible.⁵⁰ To counter their effects, Rimmer created the "Research Science Bureau," an organization consisting of one "researcher": himself.⁵¹ Conducting only a few rudimentary "experiments" in a shed next to his garage, Rimmer's research was far from scientific.⁵² Behind a "veneer of legitimate scientific expertise," Rimmer published under the name of the Research Science Bureau dozens of twenty- to thirty-page pamphlets, many of which focused on the "scientific harmony" of the Bible with science, sporting titles such as, "Modern Science and the Youth of Today" (1925), "The Harmony of Science and Scripture" (1927), "The Facts of Biology and the Theories

⁴⁹ Much of the information on Rimmer is taken from the outstanding essay by Edward B. Davis, "Introduction" in Harry Rimmer, *The Antievolution Pamphlets of Harry Rimmer*, ed. Edward B. Davis (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), ix–xxviii. Davis attributes much of his information to documents written by the Rimmer children and a dissertation on Rimmer by Roger Daniel Schultz, "All Things Made New: The Evolving Fundamentalism of Harry Rimmer, 1890-1952," (PhD dissertation, University of Arkansas, 1989).

⁵⁰ Refer back to chapter two for a more extensive discussion of this topic. "The Menace of Darwinism" was the title of a frequently delivered speech by William Jennings Bryan on his speaking tours. The title also echoes a text by William Bell Riley, *The Menace of Modernism* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1917). The implication was that a "survival of the fittest" mentality undermined Christian charity and promoted the use of military force and warfare to eliminate the "weaker" members of society.

⁵¹ Davis, "Introduction," xiii.

⁵² Rimmer "kept a centrifuge and test tubes and undertook some embryological dissection. But mostly he stored specimens and took photographs for his lectures (which were colorized) and publications such as those illustrating the differences between human and gorilla skulls that appeared in his 1926 pamphlet, *Monkeyshines: Fakes, Fables, Facts Concerning Evolution*." Davis, "Introduction," xiii.

of Evolution” (1929), “Embryology and the Recapitulation Theory” (1929), and “A Scientist Defends the Record of Creation” (1937).⁵³ Writing about Rimmer, Ramm stated, “there was a man in the center of the fundamentalist movement who took another stance. He [Rimmer] saw harmony between science and Scripture in that modern science was in the Genesis account. For example, the firmament in Genesis 1 is an anticipation of the importance of space in modern physics. The background of the Spirit’s moving on the waters is that of a bird fluttering its wings. [For Rimmer] This anticipates the wave theory of matter. Hence the evangelical Christian need not repudiate science but welcome it for the harmony of science and Scripture.”⁵⁴ Using straw man arguments, popular tropes in the pamphlets – such as scientific theories being speculative hypotheses with no data to support them; as well as mythical stories presented as facts, such as the story of a man who supposedly survived in the belly of a whale for forty-eight hours, to likely provide “data” for biblical story of Jonah – Rimmer offered a vigorous defense of the biblical accounts of creation and argued against evolution.⁵⁵

Rimmer not only published pamphlets but he also toured around the western United States, giving talks against the dangers and myths of evolution at churches,

⁵³ These and many other pamphlets are contained in the Davis-edited volume, *The Antievolution Pamphlets of Harry Rimmer*.

⁵⁴ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 22. Based on the last line of this quote, it becomes likely that the text used in the class was *The Harmony of Science and Scripture*. Ramm cites Harry Rimmer, *The Harmony of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1936), 87, where Rimmer declares “*It is possible for the careful student of science and Scripture to discover literally scores of such anticipations!*” [of scientific phenomena in scripture] (italics original).

⁵⁵ Davis, “Introduction,” xii. An example of the “man in the fish” account occurs in Rimmer, *The Harmony of Science and Scripture*, 188–189. Rimmer says that this is a corroborated account through “our representatives in London” and that he personally “last year had the privilege of meeting this man in person.” Rimmer provides no outside reference nor does he provide the name of the man. Rimmer also provides an account of a dog lost at sea for six days, found in the mouth of a whale with no damage to the animal. Rimmer says there is an accounting of this in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, but gives no citation for the article (183).

schools, and Bible institutes, including BIOLA in 1923.⁵⁶ While William Jennings Bryan and Darrow campaigned and litigated in the East, Harry Rimmer toured the West, working to spread the Fundamentalist message as widely as possible. As Rimmer's popularity grew, so did the scopes of his speaking tours, which took him throughout the South and upper Midwest and gave him opportunity to sell or give away perhaps tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of his pamphlets.⁵⁷

By 1935, Rimmer had abandoned the use of pamphlets and reorganized many of their contents into books. Over the next three years, Rimmer published, along with other books, *The Theory of Evolution and the Facts of Science* (1935), *The Harmony of Science and Scripture* (1936), and *Modern Science and the Genesis Record* (1937).⁵⁸ The grateful parents of John Laurence Frost, a Stanford senior, who had died of polio just before his graduation, and to whom Rimmer had ministered and helped rekindle his faith before he perished, underwrote the publication of these three books as a set and offered them free of charge to students of any Bible college who wrote to the family, and over the next thirty years, Eerdmans published 140,000 copies of the three books.⁵⁹ Because of this, Rimmer's books against evolution circulated widely, and many undoubtedly found their way into the hands of numerous BIOLA students.

⁵⁶ Davis, "Introduction," xiv.

⁵⁷ Ibid., xvii.

⁵⁸ Harry Rimmer, *The Theory of Evolution and the Facts of Science* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1935); Harry Rimmer, *Modern Science and the Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1937). Publishing information drawn from the Library of Congress online catalog.

⁵⁹ Davis, "Introduction," xix.

At some point, Rimmer's teachings became the foundation of an actual course at BIOLA, and he may have lectured at BIOLA for a very brief time between 1932–1933.⁶⁰ After this series of Rimmer's lectures, a class called "Bible and Science" was established in the BIOLA curriculum, and by 1941–1942 the course was required for all BIOLA students as the last of a four-course series in apologetics.⁶¹ With the class established and with the influx of free books for students during the 1930s, it becomes easy to see how a class based on the "scientific" work and teaching of Rimmer became part of the curriculum that Ramm encountered upon his arrival at BIOLA in the 1940s.

Another crucial event at BIOLA made the teaching and establishment of Rimmer's class possible as well. With the retirement of R.A. Torrey as dean of BIOLA in the summer of 1924, a replacement was sought among the faculty. The nomination fell to John Murdoch MacInnis, "a brilliant scholar with particular expertise in the study of philosophy."⁶² After being installed as dean in April 1925, controversy befell his tenure as dean almost immediately with the so-called "MacInnis Controversy."⁶³

MacInnis had only recently come to BIOLA at the invitation of Torrey, who was in need of teachers for the rapidly expanding school. Although invited by Torrey, MacInnis was not of the same posture as Torrey when it came to views of the Bible. Torrey had been known as "The Apostle of Certainty," drawing authority for his teaching

⁶⁰ Ibid., xxvii, fn. 44. Davis notes that the class was likely either an intersession class or a series of isolated lectures, rather than a full semester class.

⁶¹ Davis, "Introduction," xxvii, fn. 44.

⁶² Williams and Miller, *Chartered for His Glory: Biola University 1908-1983*, 48.

⁶³ The MacInnis Controversy is covered in detail in Daniel W. Draney, *When Streams Diverge: John Murdoch MacInnis and the Origins of Protestant Fundamentalism in Los Angeles* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster Press, 2008).

from the Bible, of which he was absolutely certain of its meaning and clarity.⁶⁴ MacInnis, on the other hand, was much more measured and circumspect in his approach to the Bible. MacInnis believed that students should be able to bring their own interpretations and ideas into the classroom. Historian Daniel Draney writes, “[MacInnis’s] lectures reveal that there was room for some divergence of opinion. Rather than just giving the ‘correct’ answer, MacInnis followed a dialogical and comparative approach to his subject.”⁶⁵ Because of his openness, MacInnis’s classes became popular on campus, and many students spoke well of him as a teacher. Thus, when Torrey retired and a new dean needed to be selected, other more controversial candidates, such as the venerable and elderly A.C. Dixon (1854–1925), were bypassed, and the professor with a short history and seemingly little controversy surrounding him appeared to be the politically safe choice as the new dean.⁶⁶

When MacInnis assumed office, BIOLA was in the process of expanding its curriculum, and MacInnis became involved in the expansion of courses. As a professor of philosophy, MacInnis understandably decided to install a philosophy course in the curriculum. While many did not immediately protest, this addition raised some eyebrows among longtime school leaders and donors who were Fundamentalists and who were wary of the transformation of BIOLA into a four-year, liberal arts college rather than a

⁶⁴ Draney, *When Streams Diverge*, 99.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 104–105. Draney notes that MacInnis was chosen for four reasons: his longstanding support of Bible schools, his reputation as a teacher, his academic reputation, and his relatively recent tenure, which was free of the factions at the school. Other people, whose names are not listed, were considered, but rejected for the pointedness of their positions. The strong-willed and firm Fundamentalist, Dixon, for example, was considered, but he stipulated conditions for his hire. He demanded that the school grant authority over all the departments under “one head,” presumably himself. The board rejected his proposal. The school may have made a wise choice in regards to longevity, though: Dixon died a few months later in June 1925.

Bible college.⁶⁷ The real stir emerged when MacInnis invited an old friend from Gordon College, Florence Chaffee, to come to BIOLA and direct a course in Christian education. Because she selected texts that “were based on educational theories, rather than Bible methods,” those who had once raised eyebrows now raised open complaints, which MacInnis had to calm. Many believed that the use of such educational texts began to remove the “B.I.” from BIOLA.⁶⁸ The final straw came when MacInnis attempted to raise the academic standards of the school, by requiring that entering students have a high school diploma. Many in conservative churches in the surrounding area complained that this would constrain students from being able to enter BIOLA in response to calling and put applicants at the mercy of the high schools, whose curricula was suspect to many of these conservatives. This confirmed for many that MacInnis was taking BIOLA in a secular direction and undermining the original purpose of the college.⁶⁹ Soon, “MacInnis was ‘blacklisted’ in many fundamentalist circles,” and “These ‘hyper-’ or ‘ultra-fundamentalists’ were strongly opposed” to MacInnis serving as dean.⁷⁰ After several years of increasingly intense, and eventually withering, criticism from Fundamentalist donors and leaders, such as W.B. Riley, MacInnis resigned in the middle of the 1928–1929 school year to save the school from further political turmoil, and several board members, including the chairman, Joseph M. Irvine, resigned with him in shared

⁶⁷ Draney, *When Streams Diverge*, 107.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 109, 113. The fear was the reliance on non-biblical sources would undermine the school’s commitment to the Bible, as embodied in the school’s name.

⁶⁹ Draney notes that a similar controversy unfolded at W.B. Riley’s Northwestern Bible and Missionary Training School, when Billy Graham took over as president. Ibid., 117.

⁷⁰ Robert Williams and Marilyn Miller, *Chartered for His Glory*, 48–49. Draney notes that MacInnis had never demonstrated himself as an “established” Fundamentalist, noting that he had never joined W.B. Riley’s World Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA). Draney, *When Streams Diverge*, 104–105.

protest.⁷¹ From these actions, the Fundamentalist character of the school solidified and remained in place for the next several decades. Thus, when Ramm arrived to teach the apologetics class at BIOLA in 1944, Rimmer's course and texts were well entrenched among the students and within the Fundamentalist ethos of the school.

Ramm soon began to wrestle with Fundamentalist teaching at BIOLA, and he came to a crisis regarding his scientific, philosophical, and religious presuppositions. Ramm took over the very apologetics course that Rimmer had established almost fifteen years prior, and the text he was given to teach was Rimmer's. Within a short period, he began to struggle with the textbook's weak reasoning and logical inconsistencies.⁷² The Rimmer text was also filled with scientific and philosophical failings that Ramm could not overlook or explain to his class. For example, Rimmer dotted his texts with supposed conversations he had with people he encountered, and the portrayal of the dialogue between Rimmer and the unnamed conversant often ended with Rimmer demonstrating his "scientific" capabilities and reasoned position over the poorly-reasoned, frustrated, and "unscientific" stranger.

After one particular lecture, we were approached by a young student who desired to enter into a discussion concerning origins. This young inquirer began by saying, "I would like to talk to you in the language of science. In this interview I hope we can confine ourselves to scientific facts and language....

The lad opened the conversation by saying, "Where did the world come from?" To this the writer replied, "Now let us be scientific. What do you mean by 'world'? Do you mean this planet, this solar system, the sidereal system, the universe, the cosmos, or what?"

⁷¹ Robert Williams and Marilyn Miller, *Chartered for His Glory*, 51.

⁷² A detailed description of Rimmer's career as a Fundamentalist who worked to dismiss the claims of evolution can also be found in Numbers, *The Creationists*, 60–71. Because it is unclear which book Ramm used, Numbers lists several anti-evolutionary texts written by Rimmer (368n.22) that might have been used. Davis is also unclear as to which text was used, and Ramm does not note which Rimmer text he used in the class in his final, unpublished manuscript, Bernard Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 22–23.

In some surprise, the boy hesitated, then with an embarrassed smile replied with an expressive wave of his hands, “I mean the whole blame shooting match.”

We laughed and said, “That’s not scientific, but it is very clear.” ...

“Now let me [Rimmer] ask you some questions, to which we also wish a scientific answer. Where do *you* think the cosmos came from?”

“It was evolved.”

“Out of a nebulous mass of gaseous matter.”

Fortunately we had read this same [science] textbook, and so we were prepared to ask, “Where did this nebulous mass of gaseous matter come from?”

The young man frowned in puzzlement for a moment and said, “Oh, I guess you would say that was created.”

“But I am done talking now. Where do you say that it came from?”

“Well, I will concede that the original mass of vapor was created.”

“By Whom, or by what, was it created?”

“By Nature.”

“Very well, then, what or who is Nature?”

He hesitated for a moment and said, “Er, you know, Nature is the – er, by Nature we mean what we mean when we say Nature!”

We said, “I am afraid that is not very scientific nor clear. We do not know Nature. Just who is it?” ...

The lad flung open his hands in despair at our stupidity and said, “Nobody made Nature at any time; Nature always was!”

We laughed and said, “I am sorry. I cannot accept that; it is not scientific!” There we parted company, both of us having been talking about the same identical Person or Force under two different names.

The man who thinks his way through the mechanics of creation will find, behind all created matter, a Personified Being of intelligence and power. This being he calls God.

The man who is content to be superficial and only dimly grasp at the appearance of reason behind matter is content to say, “Nature,” and pass on.⁷³

Over time, rather than simply instructing students through use of the text, he found himself working harder to defend positions in Rimmer’s book that were no longer intellectually tenable.⁷⁴ Ramm wrote, “My predicament was that on any given day I could

⁷³ Rimmer, *The Harmony of Science and Scripture*, 14-17.

⁷⁴ With fuller examination of Rimmer’s texts, such as Rimmer, *The Harmony of Science and Scripture*, one can see that they offer several interesting arguments for the existence of a creator, such as arguments from design and questions about origins of matter. Other arguments within the text, however, such as the authority of the Bible and the alignment of biblical texts with modern scientific phenomena, are much more specious or rely on straw man arguments that lack substance. It is likely that sections of Rimmer’s writing such as these are what began to trouble Ramm, as he attempted to explicate the text for students in his class.

teach the harmony of science and Scripture at Biola and attend a lecture on the philosophy of science at [USC]. The deeper I got into the philosophy of science, the more I recognized the inadequacies of Rimmer's work."⁷⁵ After realizing that he was spending more time criticizing the text than teaching from it, Ramm decided to write a letter to Rimmer, informing him that he would no longer be using his text for the course and that he would be reshaping the course.⁷⁶ Ramm then began to formulate a series of lectures to come up with a more consistent apology and understanding of the "harmony" between science and scripture. After his attempts to communicate directly with Rimmer received no reply, he concluded, "I found out that I had turned the class into critical dissections of Rimmer's work. So I stopped conducting the class in this manner and went on to developing my own ideas. This was the origin of my book, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*."⁷⁷

Ramm's lectures and subsequent book became the sign of a turn away from Fundamentalism towards a thoughtful engagement with science, both personally and for those who read his work. Becoming convinced that thinking like Rimmer's could only lead to further misunderstanding between Christians and naturalistic scientists, he argued for a rapprochement and dialogue that would allow for real "harmony" between the two, as each field took note of its abilities and characteristics as well as its own limitations.

⁷⁵ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 23.

⁷⁶ Davis, "Introduction," xxi.

⁷⁷ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 23.

The Christian View of Science and Scripture *and Its Impact on Neo-Evangelicalism and the Relationship between Science and Religion*

When Bernard Ramm published *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (CVSS) in 1954, he had no idea of the impact it would have upon the neo-evangelical community. Through CVSS, Ramm addressed people who believed that Christianity and science were in irreconcilable conflict with one another, and he believed that he could present a way for the two to resume dialogue with one another. In the Introduction of CVSS, Ramm stated:

In research for this book I discovered that there are two traditions in Bible and science both stemming from the developments of the nineteenth century. There is the ignoble tradition which has taken a most unwholesome attitude toward science, and has used arguments and procedures not in the better traditions of established scholarship. There has been and is a noble tradition in Bible and science, and this is the tradition of the great and learned evangelical Christians who have been patient, genuine, and kind and who have taken great care to learn the facts of science and Scripture.... Unfortunately the noble tradition which was in ascendancy in the closing years of the nineteenth century has not been the major tradition in evangelicalism in the twentieth century. Both a narrow and evangelical Biblicism, and its narrow theology, buried the noble tradition. The sad result has been that in spite of stout affirmations that true science and Bible agree and do not conflict, science has repudiated the ignoble tradition. It is our wish to call evangelicalism back to the noble tradition of the closing years of the nineteenth century.⁷⁸

In other words, Ramm issued a call to Christians, and not scientists, to take the first step.⁷⁹ His call was to reject poor scholarship and to come back to a position of taking “great care to learn” about science so as to see the agreement between science and

⁷⁸ Ramm, CVSS, 9–10.

⁷⁹ Ramm’s call in CVSS parallels the voices of other neo-evangelical leaders, who also were calling for Christians to re-engage with the culture. Historian Barry Hankins in Barry Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservatives and American Culture* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2002), 23–24, notes that Carl F.H. Henry did so as well in his 1947 book, Carl F.H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1947).

religion, rather than conflict. This raised three main questions answered by the first three chapters of the book: (1) how might Christians once again approach science in a way that creates harmony, rather than disharmony? (2) what caused the existing disharmony and conflict for Christians? and (3) what fundamental issues lay at the source of the conflict that need to be resolved?

To the first question of how Christians should approach science, Ramm began by describing attitudes regarding Christians towards science and how to ameliorate the situation. Ramm believed that continuous divisions in the church historically – Eastern Orthodoxy from Roman Catholicism, Protestantism from Catholicism, divisions between and within Protestant denominations – led to a tendency for Christians to divide and separate, whereas scientists within the last several centuries were fostering greater unity around discovery and data. Most damaging to Christian unity, Ramm believed, was the work of the “hyperorthodox” (i.e. fundamentalists) who insisted on knowledge of the truth apart from any knowledge of science.⁸⁰ As scientific discovery and learning advanced ever more rapidly, especially in the area of origins of life, Christian leaders were caught off guard with little to no scientific education or training and no grasp of an adequate philosophy of science.⁸¹ Ramm posited, “As a result, evangelicals posed the problems of modern science as resolving down to: (i) fiat instantaneous creationism; or (ii) atheistic developmentalism. This is certainly a gross over-simplification, not a

⁸⁰ Ramm makes clear in a 1979 interview with Walter Hearn that he used the term “fundamentalist” in the original manuscript, but replaced the word with “hyperorthodox” at the suggestion of theologian Wilbur Smith, to give the book a positive tone and to allow readers to focus on the issues discussed in the book rather than the negative connotation surrounding fundamentalists at the time. Hearn, “An Interview with Bernard Ramm and Alta Ramm,” 179–186, accessed from ASA website and no page numbers are denoted in the online version <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1979/JASA12-79Hearn.html> (accessed May 15, 2017).

⁸¹ Ramm, CVSS, 21–22.

genuine probing, of the entire concept of creation. By putting the question this way, every bit of *developmentalism* in science made the evangelical position that much more difficult of defense.... *Evangelicals of today who fail to see these problems in their larger dimensions are but perpetuating the losing strategy of their brethren who lost the battle in the previous century.*”⁸² This poor strategy combined with poor scientific understanding led “thousands of ministers [to forsake] an evangelical theology under the pressure of radical criticism and scientific allegations against the Bible,” and resulted in “numerous intelligent and gifted young men who could have served the church with distinction but who live and work outside the church in the belief that Holy Scripture is scientifically untrustworthy. Thousands of splendid, trained, capable men now lost to secularism could have provided the church with an imposing array of scholars in every department of learning and provided for a stronger ministry and a more intelligent laity.”⁸³ Instead of adhering to a strategy that fostered further division, Ramm believed that Christians had an obligation to engage with science in a constructive manner. He wrote, “In view of the present antagonism of science to evangelical Christianity, the situation will continue and perhaps grow worse if no reconciliation takes place.... for any positive and successful reconciliation of science and evangelicalism the obligation is upon the evangelical. It is up to him to set forth the terms of *rapprochement*. Evangelicalism has been exceedingly slow in learning certain fundamental lessons in this controversy. In this regard the Roman Catholic scholars have far outstripped us....

⁸² Ibid., 23. Italics original. This last sentence is an example of the “warfare” language cited by James R. Moore.

⁸³ Ramm, CVSS, 24. Ramm speaks of only men here, likely due to the formal grammatical convention of the day of using male terms only. Ramm’s daughter confirms that her father supported the NBC and its position of affirming women in ministry and deeply appreciated and respected the female ministers who had cared for him throughout his life. Elizabeth Attig, email to author, May 17, 2017 and May 21, 2017.

pedantic hyperorthodoxy must not be allowed to speak for all evangelical Christians as such a position as it holds is impossible of credible defense.”⁸⁴

Ramm’s efforts towards rapprochement were not just to defuse tensions, but were born of necessity. For Ramm, science and Christianity needed one another – Christians needed to acknowledge the truth in science in order to understand the universe and its creator, and science needed religion to establish meaning and morality. To avoid the previous divisions and move forward, Ramm stated, “Having taught Bible and science over a period of years the author is aware of a very difficult psychological problem in discussing the matters of this book with his Conservative brethren. The psychological problem is that so many Christians *fail to differentiate interpretation from inspiration....* First, one must realize that *revelation is not interpretation*, and conversely, *interpretation is not revelation*. Revelation is the communication of divine truth; interpretation is the effort to understand it.... Second, we must recognize latitude of interpretation in these matters and not confuse differences of interpretation with belief in inspiration.... These are extremely serious matters and there is no legitimate place for small minds, petty souls, and studied ignorance.”⁸⁵ Thus, Ramm proposed an alternative model for neo-evangelicals. Instead of “conflict,” he sought a way forward based on rapprochement. In this way, he challenged the traditionally understood approach to the problem of science and religion and provided a methodological path for engagement rather than conflict.

To the second question of the causes of continued conflict, Ramm believed that clear definitions of theology and science were needed and that each needed to understand

⁸⁴ Ramm, CVSS, 26, 28. Italics original.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 40–41. Italics original.

how to properly go about its tasks. Although definitions were difficult, much less agreed upon, for science Ramm said:

Any definition of science will be part arbitrary and conventional. We, therefore, in speaking of science mean to emphasize that body of knowledge dealing with the *structure* and *causal* or *functional relationships* of the *physical* and *space-time* aspects of the universe. Hence, our emphasis is on that which is *external* in contrast to the internal; on that which is *causal* or *determined* in contrast to that which is free or novel or spontaneous; on that which is *formal* in contrast to that which is *personal*; on that which is capable of *description by law* in contrast to that which is unique; and on that which is based on the *continuous* or *uniform* or *regular* in contrast to that which is novel, vertical, and occasional.⁸⁶

For theology, Ramm wrote:

The definition of theology is almost as difficult as that of science, for there are those who wish either to annul religious knowledge or those who wish to make religious experience more fundamental than theology.... We define theology as the task of setting forth the claims of our knowledge of God, the verification of these claims, and the systematic and organic connections of our theological knowledge.... Although in theology we believe we have objective and real knowledge, we believe that in large part it appears credible only to those who have had an inward experience of the grace of the Holy Spirit. The requirements for a scientist are such things as honesty, integrity, intelligence, patience, and fairness. There is no crucial experience which makes one a scientist.... (The hyperorthodox frequently make the mistake of thinking that because they have the spiritual requirements they can treat with great disregard the scientific aspects of theological scholarship).⁸⁷

In other words, Ramm created two well-defined worlds that interfaced at the boundaries of their capabilities. Scientists were bounded by what they observed or determined to be in a causal or functional relationship on a regular basis, but were unable to penetrate the personal and internal world, while theologians made claims about and systematized knowledge of God and the universe, which were grounded in personal experience of the

⁸⁶ Ibid., 46. Italics original.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 46–47.

Holy Spirit. Scientists and theologians thus interfaced at the point where knowledge acquired meaning for humans, and at this point, Ramm believed that scientists and theologians had to understand one another and work together. Ramm rejected the idea that science could function without theology or metaphysics, which provided meaning and ethics to their work – much of Ramm’s graduate philosophical work becomes evident here. Ramm similarly reasoned that theologians could not simply ignore scientists. In his comments on Andrew Dickson White’s book, Ramm stated, “the progress of science has purified theological thought. Reams of superstition and scientific nonsense have been purged out of the church and out of Christian thought by the impact of scientific thought upon it. Evangelical Christianity of today owes to science a great debt in setting us free from the superstitious, the magical, the animistic, and the grotesque and has helped in the purification of our theology, our exegesis, and our spiritual life. *Whoever doubts this previous sentence has not made himself acquainted with the history of these matters.*”⁸⁸

Thus, Ramm had an optimistic view of the relationship between scientists and theologians and believed strongly that they could help one another. He concluded “... *if the theologian and the scientist had been careful to stick to their respective duties, and to carefully learn the other side when they spoke of it there would have been no disharmony between them save that of the non-Christian heart in rebellion against God.* There would have been no stupid exegetical mistakes of theologians, nor misunderstanding of the Bible by scientists.”⁸⁹ Ramm sought to show his readers that scientists were not the enemy. In fact, theologians who approached science with attitudes of superiority were as

⁸⁸ Ibid., 60–61. Italics original.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 58. Italics original.

much to blame for any conflict that existed between science and religion. In other words, theologians and scientists both needed to learn about each other more fully in order to speak to one another clearly so that they could help one another in their respective fields. Ramm fully believed in the possibilities of a full rapprochement and respectful dialogue between science and Christian theology and urged his Christian readers to take a thoughtful approach towards science. By setting clear definitions together and taking time to fully understand one another's positions, scientists and theologians would be able to help one another in their respective tasks.

To the final question of what fundamental issues needed to be resolved, Ramm stated, "At times Fundamentalists have been accused of being too literalistic, but the trouble is deeper than that. The approach seems to rest on the unwritten assumption that if a record is inspired its meaning is *always* obvious, and if we seek any subtlety in the meaning or in the literary form of the narrative we are accused of trifling with the inspiration of the Bible. But after poring over the literature on the subject of Bible and science, the author is assured that no real grappling with the issues is possible till one has worked out his own theory as to the nature of Biblical statements about natural matters."⁹⁰ In other words, those who read the Bible literally without any foundational critical methodology were in danger of misinterpreting the Bible and subsequently misunderstanding or mischaracterizing any kind of scientific statements that appeared to conflict with that literal reading.⁹¹ Ramm then walked through various aspects of language in order to help readers recognize the potential pitfalls and points of

⁹⁰ Ramm, CVSS, 66. Italics original.

⁹¹ Ibid., 66–80.

misinterpretation. Using multiple examples, he cautioned people to read the Bible in the context of culture and symbolism. He also warned readers not to insert ideas or meanings into the text, especially those such as Rimmer who believed that concepts of modern science existed in the pages of scripture.⁹²

He then provided his foundational principle for reading the Bible in regards to science and creation. Ramm proposed the idea “that the fundamental pattern of creation is progressive creation.”⁹³ In contrast to fiat creationism, a literal reading of Genesis, held by conservative Christians; naturalistic evolution, an account of creation separate from God or the Bible; and theistic evolution, a system that Ramm believed was overly reliant on uniformitarianism and removed the presence of God in creation, Ramm believed that progressive creation described a system that included God’s presence through the Holy Spirit in the progress or development of nature while also according with the best available scientific data of the day.⁹⁴ With God providing the “plan” or blueprint at creation and then manifesting those plans through the agency of the Holy Spirit, creation unfolded as God intended it through the implementation of mechanisms observed by science. In CVSS, Ramm’s description of progressive creation was brief and “imperfectly sketched,” and he certainly did not insist on its correctness as he said, “Progressive creation according to law *seems* to make the most sense out of the numerous facts of Nature.”⁹⁵

⁹² This is the topic of Ramm’s fourth chapter in CVSS.

⁹³ Ramm, CVSS, 113.

⁹⁴ Ramm, CVSS, 113–117. Ramm says that he discredits theistic evolution, but aside from a few statements against its position, he does not criticize theistic evolution much more than this. Ramm spends much more time addressing fiat creationism and naturalistic evolution.

⁹⁵ Ramm, CVSS, 117. Italics and bold added.

Progressive creation, in Ramm's mind, was an idea that rejected the ideas of Young Earth Creationism, especially in light of geological and biological data that demonstrated the existence of geological formations and structures as well as biological fossils that had been in place for millions of years.⁹⁶ Ramm provided a robust discussion of geology and radiological data in Chapter VI and explained why a Young Earth model, flood geology, gap theory, and literal reading of Genesis 1 had to be abandoned.⁹⁷ Having done so, Ramm concluded that geological data either supported progressive creation or theistic evolution.⁹⁸ In chapter VII of his text, Ramm entered a biological discussion of creation and attempted to bring biology into accord with scripture. Ramm saw two main weaknesses in naturalistic evolution. The first weakness was that life emerged from non-living material and that there was no sufficient explanation as to how or why that occurred. For people to believe in the material theory of evolution, even for the time being, Ramm believed that there should at least be fossil data to support the belief that all life radiated from a single-celled, common ancestor. Along similar lines, Ramm believed that a second weakness was that while fossils demonstrated the existence of "horizontally radiative" events, which showed a massive diversification of species at certain points (and correlated well with a "pictorial" interpretation of Genesis), there was not enough data to support "vertically radiative" events, or the rise of completely new types of

⁹⁶ In CVSS, Ramm discusses geological data in chapter VI, and he discusses biological data in chapter VII.

⁹⁷ C.I. Scofield (of the famed *Scofield Reference Bible*) and Harry Rimmer were two of the strongest proponents of the gap theory. See Rimmer, *Modern Science and the Genesis Record*.

⁹⁸ As stated above, theistic evolution is criticized for potentially "leav[ing] the entire domain of the earth's history and its interpretation completely in a non-Christian or non-theistic setting" and seeking "creation from within... [with] a continuous line from the original cells on the prehistoric waters to man." Ramm, CVSS, 192, 215.

species from previous life forms.⁹⁹ For Ramm, who believed in a creator who was intimately involved with nature, progressive creation agreed with physical laws and provided a rationale for the vertical gaps in the fossil record that evolution could not.¹⁰⁰ If progressive creation, and even theistic evolution, did not violate scientific data or scientific laws and accorded with biblical truth, Ramm saw no reason why these theories could not be held as possible worldviews as well.¹⁰¹ For Ramm, progressive creation was the strongest theoretical model that accepted the best scientific data of the time and reconciled with scripture.¹⁰²

What Ramm offered through the first few chapters, and the rest of the book, was a potential theology for Christians to engage with science in a constructive manner without being forced to discard orthodox beliefs. In the last several chapters of CVSS, Ramm took great pains to deal with the areas of astronomy, geology, biology, and anthropology; knotty issues within each of these fields and how Christians could think about them; and consideration of how progressive creation might speak to each of them. His model, for example, allowed for the gradual increase of complexity among species, and correlated

⁹⁹ While Ramm's first objection may still hold at the current time, the second has made marked progress in the years since the writing of CVSS. For a scholarly work on the progress made since Ramm's CVSS, and which embraces many of the approaches Ramm undertook in CVSS (biblical translation and interpretation, definition of scientific terms, and rapprochement), see Denis R. Alexander, *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?* 2nd ed., revised and updated (Grand Rapids: Monarch Books, 2014). Ramm's book also does not cover the topic of modern genetics, which was in its infancy at the time of CVSS's publication. For a discussion of genetics and evolution, see Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006). In Collins's introduction, he, like Ramm, discusses the possibility of harmony between scientific and religious worldviews and how science and religion offer support to one another.

¹⁰⁰ Ramm, CVSS, 273–276.

¹⁰¹ Though Ramm criticized theistic evolution at the beginning of CVSS, he was willing to allow its possibility as another potential model as long as it did not insist on the impossibility of Christian metaphysics. There is a discussion of theistic evolution in Ramm, CVSS, 280–293.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 293.

gaps in the fossil record before vertically radiative events with the creator's intervention, reaching its high point with the creation of humanity. In Chapter VIII on anthropology, he stressed God's involvement in the creation of humans, but did not cling to the idea of a literal Adam and Eve beyond the idea of the creation of humans.¹⁰³ Thus, CVSS became one of Ramm's most important books, because through it he "argued against those conservative Christian responses to modern science that simply ignore mountains of evidence and plain facts in favor of traditional readings of Genesis. In the book Ramm urged his evangelical readers to come to terms with modern science without capitulating to naturalistic philosophies disguised as science, and he chided fundamentalists for their attitude of 'maximum conservatism.'"¹⁰⁴ Just as Fundamentalists took issue with a science that claimed to be comprehensive and authoritative, so Ramm took issue with a Fundamentalism that baldly claimed absolute authority and rejected science. Ramm pointed out that Fundamentalists were guilty of doing exactly what naturalistic scientists were doing: rejecting and ignoring the other's claims and seeking greater authority and primacy of place. Ramm's point was that science and religion needed each other and had to engage in a rapprochement that brought the two sides together in dialogue.

Reception of CVSS varied widely among the members of the Christian, as well as scientific community. Theologian Roger Olson writes, "Despite Ramm's laudable intent, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* triggered a commotion. While at points he simply harmonized science with Scripture, he nevertheless boldly declared that the Bible

¹⁰³ An example of Ramm's flexibility is his non-insistence on the literal existence of Adam and Eve. Ramm says that, despite persuasive arguments by various figures, there is not enough data to make a definitive statement about two individual humans known literally as Adam and Eve. To believe in "Adam" and "Eve" as representative of the beginning of the human race was sufficient. Ramm, CVSS, 328.

¹⁰⁴ Roger E. Olson, *Pocket History of Evangelical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 113.

contained culturally conditioned statements.... He even went so far as to allow for ‘theistic evolution’ (God employed evolution in bringing the various life forms, including humankind, into existence), although he himself preferred the expression ‘progressive creation.’ To fundamentalists, of course, all this smacked of pure accommodation. Liberals, however, were equally unconvinced, accusing him of inconsistency in failing to follow his theses to their logical conclusions.”¹⁰⁵ Writing in 1987, historian George Marsden wrote about the dispute over CVSS saying, “Ramm’s book has indeed caused the largest stir in fundamentalism since the RSV controversy.”¹⁰⁶ Although its goal was rapprochement and reengagement, Ramm’s book caused uproar among staunch conservatives. For Fundamentalists, Ramm had betrayed orthodoxy by undermining the “plain” meaning of the biblical text and allegorizing the scriptures in a way that would open the door for science and higher criticism to gain greater footing. For liberals, Ramm’s “progressive creation” was a feeble, conservative attempt, which remained bound to a Fundamentalist reading of Genesis and attempted to keep God literally involved in creation. For non-Christian scientists, this was seen as another “pseudo-scientific” hypothesis trying to assault the scientific establishment with no data to support it. To all three of these groups, which he saw as taking extreme positions that were unfounded, Ramm believed that his book offered a model that recognized the veracity of scientific data (as the Fundamentalists did not), held fast to biblical truth (as extreme liberal Christians did not), and recognized the existence of God’s involvement in the world (as non-Christian scientists did not). His book was by no means a dogmatic

¹⁰⁵ Olson, *20th Century Theology*, 305.

¹⁰⁶ Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism*, 158–159.

statement, but the presentation of a possible theological model that could appeal to thoughtful Christians who held to the Bible and were open to new scientific ideas and discovery.¹⁰⁷

Thus, the reception of Ramm's book among moderate Christians was more positive, although not quite what Ramm hoped for.¹⁰⁸ Numbers writes,

Ramm ambitiously hoped that his theory would 'form the basis of a new biological synthesis' that would be to biology what Einstein's relativity theory was to physics. This never happened. In fact, his peculiar version of progressive creationism failed to win the support of even a majority of evangelical scientists. Nevertheless, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* sold tens of thousands of copies and profoundly influenced the way in which many orthodox Christians answered the questions posed by creation and evolution. Restless evangelical scientists, long constricted by narrow interpretations of Rimmer and [George McCready] Price, thanked Ramm for giving them the theological 'breathing space' their research seemed to demand.¹⁰⁹

Among the growing neo-evangelical movement, many appreciated Ramm for offering a third path that allowed Christian scientists and students to adhere to their faith without falling back towards fundamentalist teaching. Historian Christopher Rios writes that for

¹⁰⁷ As stated in the previous chapter, this is one reason why Ramm disliked the title given to CVSS by the publisher. Ramm did not want the definite article "The" placed at the front as if it were the only possible model, the only model held by Christians, or the model held by all Christians everywhere. Hearn, "An Interview with Bernard Ramm and Alta Ramm."

¹⁰⁸ The phrase "moderate Christians" is used here to connote that the book was accepted by a broad spectrum of Christians and not just neo-evangelicals. This phrase also contrasts with militant conservatives (i.e. Fundamentalists) and staunch liberals (i.e. those who "mythologized" the Genesis accounts), who tended to reject the book. Ramm's chosen model in 1954, progressive creation, eventually fell by the wayside in favor of theistic evolution with the expansion of greater data. Ramm became more open to the idea of theistic evolution as well, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁹ Numbers, *The Creationists*, 187. George McCready Price was, like Rimmer, an adherent to the gap and flood theories of geology. Theologian Bob E. Patterson, in Ramm's 1990 festschrift, assessed the idea of progressive creation by saying, "Although Ramm's 1954 book was very influential among evangelicals, it made too many concessions to science. By combining elements of sudden fiat creation and gradualism evolution, his form of 'progressive creationism' turned Gen 1 into a treatise in science to be evaluated, judged, and tested by science. But his 'special creation,' called in to provide the missing links left by natural evolution, is merely a form of the 'God of the gaps' hypothesis." Bob E. Patterson, "Modern Science and Biblical Interpretation Ramm's Contribution," in *Perspectives on Theology in the Contemporary World: Essays in Honor of Bernard Ramm*, ed. Stanley J. Grenz (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990), 66–67.

members of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), formed in 1941, the book “caused a stir within American evangelicalism. It earned more than a few protest letters from those defending the literal approach Ramm denounced, even from some ASA members. Yet the positive responses were the majority. Described as pivotal, epochal, and a breath of fresh air, Ramm’s work was seen as marking a new direction in evangelical theology.”¹¹⁰ Rios helpfully adds, “although it was likely refreshing, it contained little that was new. As one reviewer correctly noted, Ramm’s work was largely a restatement of theological ideas developed by evangelical leaders around the turn of the century. But as Ramm insisted, most of these had been forgotten. He thus succeeded in recalling the ideas of prefundamentalist evangelicalism, and in doing so provided a perspective with which American evangelicals could reconcile conservative theology and evolutionary science.”¹¹¹ In other words, Ramm’s theology did not blaze a new path forward; rather he helped neo-evangelicalism and Christians as a whole to recognize and reverse from the dead-end of Fundamentalism, taken in the early twentieth century, and progress forward, with science, once again.

The Christian View of Science and Scripture helped not only to bring rapprochement between science and religion, but prevented many neo-evangelicals from taking a path that would have certainly created an unbridgeable chasm between the two. Olson writes, “Fundamentalists reacted angrily to Ramm’s ‘compromise’ with ‘godless

¹¹⁰ Rios, *After the Monkey Trial: Evangelical Scientists and a New Creationism*, 55. Rios is a historian of Christianity, but much of his work focuses on the history of the Christian response to science.

¹¹¹ Rios, *After the Monkey Trial: Evangelical Scientists and a New Creationism*, 55. See also Robert D. Culver, “An Evaluation of *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* by Bernard Ramm from the Standpoint of Christian Theology,” *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 7 (December 1956): 7–10.

evolution,' while many younger evangelicals gladly embraced his integrative vision.... The harsh criticisms of their conservative evangelical colleagues remind them of the hardening of the categories among the fundamentalists who condemned the neoevangelicals for opening their minds and methods to the larger world of ideas and of education.”¹¹² Theologian Clark Pinnock stated, “Ramm [endured] the tension involved in any attempt to forge a middle channel between liberal and fundamentalist thought.”¹¹³ In the accompanying footnote, Pinnock writes, “On many topics, Ramm is the father of the sort of changes in evangelical thinking which James D. Hunter calls attention to.”¹¹⁴ David Gill wrote in a letter to Ramm, “your interest in the integration of theology with the totality of our life and work in the world has been an inspiration and example to many. Beginning at least with your 1954 volume on *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* you have called Christians to overcome the compartmentalism and schizophrenia of the past century and work toward a wholistic, integrated Christian thought and life.”¹¹⁵ For neo-evangelical revivalist Billy Graham, who was working to establish *Christianity Today* in 1956, CVSS served as a model for the type of scholarship and view of inspiration Graham envisioned for the journal. Historian William Martin speaks of Ramm and quotes Graham saying, “It [*Christianity Today*] would, of course, promulgate a high view of biblical authority, but ‘its view of Inspiration would be

¹¹² Olson, *Pocket History of Evangelical Theology*, 114, 119.

¹¹³ Clark H. Pinnock, “Bernard Ramm: Postfundamentalist Coming to Terms with Modernity,” *Perspectives on Religious Studies* 17 (Winter 1990): 15.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., fn. 2. Pinnock is referring to the book by James D. Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987).

¹¹⁵ David Gill, “A Letter Presented to Bernard Ramm at a Farewell Dinner,” in *Perspectives on Theology in the Contemporary World: Essays in Honor of Bernard Ramm*, ed. Stanley J. Grenz (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990), 14.

somewhat along the line of [*The Christian View of Science and Scripture*] by Bernard Ramm, which in my opinion does not take away from Inspiration but rather gives strong support to our faith in the Inspiration of the Scriptures.’ ... Graham’s positive assessment of Ramm’s controversial book was significant in that despite his unshakeable confidence in the trustworthiness of scripture, he was wary of making stronger claims for the Bible than the Bible makes for itself and was opting for an approach sure to draw fire from many Fundamentalists. Graham felt it was crucially important to ‘present a positive and constructive program’ rather than to use ‘the stick of denunciation and criticism.’”¹¹⁶ For Graham and his neo-evangelical followers, as well as readers of *Christianity Today*, CVSS provided the foundational model of scholarship and orthodox faith that undergirded the journal from its founding. Thus for many in the neo-evangelical movement of the 1950s and many Christians in subsequent decades, Ramm’s work in *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* did more than just open up avenues of discussion and dialogue between scientists and theologians. It also helped neo-evangelicals to begin branching out further into a wider world of ideas and learning, which helped to expand theology and Christianity in multiple realms.

Ramm’s Interaction with Science and the American Baptist Convention

Ramm’s “new” approach reflected an openness similar in many ways to the scientific endeavor, which was rooted in his own scientific background. Reflecting on his journey towards neo-evangelicalism, Ramm stated, “Growth in a tradition is exactly this

¹¹⁶ Letter from Billy Graham to Harold Lindsell, cited in William Martin, *A Prophet With Honor: The Billy Graham Story* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991), 212. Numbers also relates a similar account of this story in Numbers, *The Creationists*, 184–185; also in Yeo, *Plundering the Egyptians: The Old Testament and Historical Criticism at Westminster Theological Seminary (1929-1998)*, 184n.223.

process. To the question, ‘How could you maintain your evangelical identity through the years?’ my answer would be ‘because I didn’t bury myself in it’ but grew in it, carefully keeping trace of the pedigree of what was old and what was new.”¹¹⁷ By looking to traditional beliefs as a foundation upon which to build, his theological construction was methodical. He concluded that the fundamentalist position alone was not enough, and this forced him into new intellectual frontiers. The new data that Ramm gradually gathered through his own learning as well as his interaction with other neo-evangelical thinkers allowed Ramm to stake out a new position in neo-evangelical theology.¹¹⁸

Ramm thus realized the need to abandon his former stance in favor of openness to new ideas that would allow him and other Christians to grow in theology and in faith. He left behind a theology that was self-limiting and embraced a method that would allow him to experiment with new ideas. He would therefore need to find an arena that would allow him to do so. How would Ramm achieve this, though, in a denomination that had consciously rejected affiliation with or membership in the National Association of Evangelicals? Before Ramm, many conservatives in the NBC had departed the denomination to form their own groups, such as the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC) in 1933 and the Conservative Baptist Association of America (CBA) in 1947. The NBC, in response to this departure, had intentionally made

¹¹⁷ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 2.

¹¹⁸ Multiple authors detail Ramm’s interactions with other Christians and neo-evangelicals in a scientific capacity and how Christians interacted with Ramm’s work. See Rios, *After the Monkey Trial*; Numbers, *The Creationists*; Ronald L. Numbers, *Darwinism Comes to America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Keith E. Yandell, “Protestant Theology and Natural Science in the Twentieth Century,” in *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science*, eds. David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 448–471.

changes to the denomination's by-laws that would make it more difficult for other divisive conservatives to break away in a similar fashion.¹¹⁹

Ramm, however, had no intention of breaking away from his fellow Baptists. He worked at Baptist schools for the majority of his career, and he made full utility of his freedom as a Baptist to engage with the evangelicals he knew without leaving his own denomination.¹²⁰ Because the Northern Baptists promoted autonomy of the local churches, unlike the growing centralized power of their Southern brethren, Ramm was able to function more freely within the denomination. He held onto his Baptist principles, but continued to explore new ideas that others, such as those in the neo-orthodox and neo-evangelical movements, promoted, and this only served to further enrich his theological work.

For Ramm, holding both a neo-evangelical identity alongside a Baptist identity caused no intellectual distress. He was able to take the novel ideas of neo-evangelicalism and marry them to the best of Baptist traditions. By doing so, Ramm was able to carve out a neo-evangelical identity within the NBC that not only strengthened his own faith but also helped create space for others like him to explore and experiment with new ideas that led to fresh theological growth. Theologian Kevin Vanhoozer states that "From 1959 to 1986 Ramm continued to teach evangelical and ecumenical theology at a succession of

¹¹⁹ Members of the NBC were not allowed to hold dual membership in the GARBC and the NBC. The NBC also reiterated its commitment to membership in the NCC and WCC, which many conservatives rejected for its liberalism and ecumenism at the cost of Baptist principles and orthodox belief.

¹²⁰ Numbers repeatedly makes reference to Ramm as a member of the American Baptist denomination. Ronald L. Numbers, *Science and Christianity in Pulpit and Pew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 66–67, 126. Elizabeth Attig recounts how her mother suggested that her husband find a job at a state school or public institution. Bernard Ramm rejected the suggestion because he stated his commitment to working with Christians and working at confessional schools. Elizabeth Attig, phone interview by author, May 29, 2016.

Baptist institutions.”¹²¹ Ramm, from his youth, had learned scientific methodology, and he brought those lessons with him into his theological craft. He did not ignore data, but rather used the data to create a stronger and fuller understanding. He brought the ideas and commitments to orthodoxy of neo-evangelicalism into his Baptist faith, which gave him, and many other Baptists, new horizons of exploration of faith that would not have been previously available. The importance of Ramm doing this became critical within the American Baptist Convention during a time when other conservative groups and denominations isolated themselves and turned inward. Ramm’s synthesis pushed Baptists outward and created innovative regions for creativity, opportunity, and development.

Conclusion

The significance of Bernard Ramm’s place in the history of science and religion, of neo-evangelicals, and of American Baptists during the twentieth century is unquestionable. Ramm’s willingness to risk his own security in pursuit of truth not only allowed him to grow theologically, but also reconnected him to the best practices and traditions of the evangelical faith prior to the twentieth century. By rediscovering those roots, he not only found direction for himself, but for others as well who were embroiled in the struggle to reconcile scientific discovery with faith. While pursuing his graduate studies at USC and when he encountered the Rimmer class and texts at BIOLA, he did not turn a blind eye to the difficult questions before him or rely on faulty logic. Rather, based on his graduate studies, he developed a philosophy of science that engaged both science and religion and eventually reformulated his theology around this philosophy to engage the data available to him as fully as possible. While his theory of “progressive

¹²¹ Vanhoozer, “Bernard Ramm,” 292.

creation” was not as widely accepted as he hoped it would be, the theology and philosophy of science he developed helped other Christians to withdraw from the confrontational character of the day between the “hyperorthodox” and “naturalistic evolutionists” and re-engage with science in a constructive manner.

Unlike his Fundamentalist contemporaries, he did not see science as a threat to orthodox evangelical Christianity; rather, he saw science as a tool and a companion to theology and put the two back into conversation with one another. To do this, he was willing to open his mind to new avenues of thinking and to reach out to new colleagues who might help stretch the limits of his work. Vanhoozer writes, “Ramm’s function and significance resemble the biblical figure who is the namesake of his denomination. Like John the Baptist, Bernard Ramm pointed to Christ and prepared a way for evangelical theology to go forward.”¹²² He helped to make the crooked paths straighter for those who followed behind him and opened his work and his life to others so that they might surpass him. Especially in the realm of science and religion, both conservative Baptists and neo-evangelicals alike are indebted to him.

Ramm’s *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* became one significant part of Ramm’s even greater legacy because of how his work helped both neo-evangelical Christians and Baptists, as well as the broader Christian community, to move forward theologically. In 1954, Ramm was only thirty-eight years old, and he still had many years of writing and traveling ahead. As Ramm continued on his theological journey, he helped others to come along with him through other important books and articles. These writings and their reception, along with the interpersonal interactions that he had with other neo-

¹²² Ibid., 306.

evangelicals, will further illustrate the American Baptist and neo-evangelical character he embodied, and will serve as the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

An Understanding of Ramm's Continued Growth and Changing Perspectives through Analysis of His Work, Writings, and Interpersonal Interactions

Introduction

To grasp a fuller and deeper understanding of Bernard Ramm, an examination of the trajectory and developing characteristics of his writings is necessary. The individual pieces of his work provide windows or snapshots of his career at various stages, but a longer view of his work helps to understand his theological progress. As a scholar, Bernard Ramm was highly productive in regards to his writing and publishing activity. In the forty years of his work as an academic (1943–1982), he published over one hundred and fifty articles and twenty-four books.¹ Working mostly in an era prior to the “publish or perish” mentality, especially absent among most religious schools and colleges, Ramm’s volume of writing was more than just prolific compared to many of his contemporaries.² Ramm’s desirability as a professor often stemmed from the quality and

¹ Years of his career are based on his employment as a teacher at the university level, beginning at Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary in 1943 and ending in 1987 with his retirement from American Baptist Seminary of the West. The bibliography includes his final, unpublished manuscript, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind.” See Appendix B for Ramm’s works on science, organized by publication date, and Appendix C for Ramm’s complete list of works, organized by publication date. Arrangement of Ramm’s work in chronological order highlights the development of Ramm’s theology over time.

² There were a few other prodigious evangelical religious scholars who lived in the same timeframe as Ramm, such as Carl F.H. Henry, who published numerous articles and dozens of books. Much of Ramm’s writing was destroyed, however, both before and after his death in 1992. Ramm’s wife, Alta, was “fastidious” and, because of their multiple moves, was forced to dispose of multiple chests of his papers and sermons. From a local library, Ramm had acquired an old card catalog with numerous drawers, and within them, he filed notes for every sermon that he had preached over the years. After his retirement, thinking that no one would be interested in his sermons, Ramm threw the card catalog out as well. Additional papers were disposed of after his death as well. Thus, while his existing writings are already quite voluminous, they represent only part of his total thought and writing activity. Stephen Ramm, interview by author, January 6, 2015.

quantity of his publications.³ Because of the quantity of writing Ramm left behind over the span of several decades, a greater perspective can be gained by studying the development and changes in his writings over the years. For example, writing of the change that occurred after meeting with Karl Barth between 1957–1958, Ramm reflected upon “the futility and intellectual bankruptcy of my former [theological] strategy” prior to that period in his life. Thus, comparing the perspectives contained within Ramm’s writings before and after the 1950s becomes necessary.⁴

Additionally, when looking at his writings, both the topics of his writing and the locations of his work must also be kept in mind. After Ramm’s turn towards neo-evangelicalism in the late 1940s to mid-1950s, much of his writing addressed topics that were not denominationally driven, that is to say, they were more often neo-evangelical in character and written to a cross-denominational audience. They reflected Baptist views as well as conservative values, scholarly engagement with theological issues as well as contemporary issues faced by the general public, and all while promoting Christian growth and active evangelism.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the chronology of Ramm’s writings, the characteristics of his writing at various points in his career, the presence of both neo-evangelicalism and Baptist identities in his work, and the impact of his work upon neo-evangelicals and Baptists. This will begin with a discussion of the changes that Ramm experienced in regards to science and then use that discussion to segue into an overall

³ See chapter three of this dissertation for details on his career, especially in regards to his hire at, and release from, Baylor University as the Director of Graduate Studies. See Pitts, “Fifty Years of Baylor’s Graduate Program in Religion,” 52–53.

⁴ Bernard L. Ramm, “Helps from Karl Barth,” in *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 121.

discussion of Ramm's writing throughout his career as evidenced by the types of publications he produced as well as the various forums in which they appeared. The chapter will also discuss Ramm's interactions with fellow Christians, both within the institutions where he worked and beyond, as well as people in his life beyond academia. Finally, the chapter will look at his life as an American Baptist and as a neo-evangelical and how he maintained a dual identity throughout his career, as evidenced in his work.

The Characteristics and Impact of Bernard Ramm's Writing

Ramm's Continued Interaction with Science

The publication of *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (CVSS) can be seen as the culmination of Ramm's scientific work in Southern California during the second half of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s, but it was by no means the last interaction Ramm would have with the topic of science.⁵ Ramm continued to publish articles on science throughout his career.

In his 1954 article "The Catholic Approach to Bible and Science," Ramm discussed Pope Leo XIII's 1893 encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, in which "Leo taught that God does not teach us in the Bible about physical and natural science as these matters do not concern salvation. Inspiration does not correct ancient cosmological views nor impart to the writers of the Bible the final facts of science."⁶ In other words, biblical writers were not attempting to write science, as twentieth-century humans would

⁵ Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. This will be abbreviated as "CVSS" in future footnotes.

⁶ Bernard L. Ramm, "The Catholic Approach to Bible and Science," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 111, No. 43 (July 1954): 206.

understand science, but was instead a record of what people of biblical times observed. Thus, Pius XIII's encyclical left much room for Catholic scientists to explore, within "proper limits," the mechanisms and meaning of evolution.⁷ Using terms similar to those he used in CVSS, Ramm said that while the "hyperorthodox" within the Catholic Church would not be interested in ideas of evolution, others across the theological spectrum of belief and interpretation could understand Genesis "pictorially" or in an "ideal concordism," which understood the days of Genesis as metaphorical images rather than literal descriptions.⁸ Ramm continued to lay out the variety of positions within the Catholic Church regarding evolution and showed how even naturalistic evolution could find a place within its theologically interpretive boundaries, a step forward from his position in CVSS.⁹ If naturalistic evolution had data to support its position, applied only to the physical bodies of humans, and still allowed for the presence of a soul, Ramm observed that the Catholic Church believed evolutionary science could find a place within orthodoxy.¹⁰ In many ways, this article helped to elaborate on Ramm's thoughts in CVSS when he said that scholars in the Catholic Church "have far outstripped us. They have worked out a set of principles setting the boundaries of science, the boundaries of

⁷ Ibid., 207. Ramm notes the boundaries set by the 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis*, and says that "Evidently Catholic scholars had been taking too much freedom and were told that (1) evolutionary thought must be kept within bounds; (2) that the symbolical or spiritual interpretation of the Old Testament must not exceed its proper limits; (3) that the evolutionary origin of the human body may be accepted, but only if evidence compelled it; (4) that polygeneticism be rejected; and (5) that although Genesis 1-11 was not in Latin or Greek historiography this section must nevertheless be given historical status."

⁸ Bernard L. Ramm, "The Catholic Approach to Bible and Science," 208. The term "hyperorthodox" is used in Ramm, CVSS, 28.

⁹ In CVSS, Ramm did not believe that Christians could consider naturalistic evolution as a theological option, since it removed the presence of God from nature.

¹⁰ Ramm, "The Catholic Approach to Bible and Science," 211.

theology, and the canons of interpretation.”¹¹ Because of this clearly defined set of principles, Ramm believed that neo-evangelicals, including himself, had much they could learn from Catholics in regards to interpretation and a theological approach to science and evolution, while still remaining within the boundaries of orthodox belief. Ramm’s pursuit of truth went beyond boundaries that would have normally inhibited many conservative Baptists. Ramm was by no means sympathetic to Catholic dogma or church governance, but he could not ignore the scientific truth and theological insight offered by Catholic scientists and theologians, even in the years before Vatican II.¹² Ramm’s article attempted to demonstrate that, within orthodoxy (albeit Catholic orthodoxy in this case), rather than one dogmatic position for all Christians, it was possible for there to exist a spectrum of positions within which both science and faith were able to interact and explore. Thus, for Ramm, the Catholic Church illustrated that the implications for research and development in both science and theology, while maintaining dialogue with one another, was within the realm of distinct possibility.

Ramm continued to write about science into the 1960s as he published, “Science vs. Theology: The Battle Isn’t Over Yet” in *Eternity* magazine.¹³ Writing for a popular audience in the neo-evangelical journal, he addressed the “conflict” understanding of science in multiple “rounds” of conflict. He pointed out the instances of Copernicus and

¹¹ Ramm, CVSS, 26.

¹² This article was published in July 1954, several years before Pope John XXIII’s election in October 1958 and the announcement of Vatican II in January 1959. At the end of his writing career, Ramm noted Catholic magisterial authority imposed restrictive limits upon its members, but also allowed for scientific development and study. Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind, 59, 89, 131, 135.

¹³ During the 1960s, Ramm was working at California Baptist Theological Seminary (CBTS), an American Baptist institution located in Covina, California. Ramm worked here from 1959 to 1974, when CBTS closed its doors and merged with American Baptist Seminary of the West, located in Berkeley, California.

Galileo in astronomy, Newtonian physics, naturalistic understanding of disease, and Lyell's geological uniformitarianism versus the gap theory and flood geology.¹⁴ Going over these previous conflicts, Ramm deftly and elegantly dismissed the incorrect "theological" explanations that had been offered and showed that, while they were once seen as a threat to belief, they were now seen by many as compatible with Christian faith.¹⁵ Similarly, Ramm said that the present battle over evolution had triggered a similar response from "orthodox theologians" but that there were reasons that this battle could be defused for Christians as the other disputes had been in the past.¹⁶ Ramm said that the supposed "battle" emerged because evolution, which "is not in its essence either materialistic or atheistic," had been described in this way.¹⁷ The conflict arose because different people expanded the meaning and application of evolution to history, religion, politics, and sociology, and began to remove the presence of God from human existence, explaining human nature as a product of naturalistic evolutionary processes only.¹⁸ Ramm bemoaned the use of evolution particularly by those supporting "Russian Communism" in order to validate unbelief. With Ramm's article being written in 1965, shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis and during the heart of the Cold War, it demonstrated once again how Ramm brought contemporary issues for Christians into constructive contact with theology. Ramm posited that, with this emphasis on humanity

¹⁴ Bernard L. Ramm, "Science vs. Theology: The Battle Isn't Over Yet," *Eternity* 16 (October 1965), 17–18.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 17–18.

¹⁶ It is worth noting that Ramm does not use the term "hyperorthodox" here, as he did in CVSS, likely in an effort to show that "orthodox" readers need not be embarrassed by previous actions of the church and that there is a thoughtful way for them to approach the current issue of evolution.

¹⁷ Bernard L. Ramm, "Science vs. Theology," 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

and nature, conflict over acceptance of evolution arose.¹⁹ To resolve this conflict, Ramm argued that the account of creation was not meant to be seen as an empirical or definitive statement, but rather as a theological and relational statement. The Genesis account was part of the revelation of God to humanity and how people related to God as Lord over that creation. Just as those who read Genesis as a statement against science or those who understood science as a statement against the existence of God, both of whom in Ramm's eyes had stepped too far, Christians should not have stepped beyond what was an appropriate boundary. He concluded:

The evangelical Christian has every right to speak up in these situations, but he must speak up the right way and upon the right premises. He must point out that in each case there is an improper extension of science. The science itself may be good or bad—we will let the scientists purify themselves in this regard. But we speak against these accusations, not on the grounds that we know more science than our opponents, nor that the entire basis of their science is in error, but that they put their understanding of science to the wrong service.

The Christian doctrine of creation is not embarrassed by the empirical contributions of science. It is an intensely relational and theological concept. Therefore it views the theory of evolution with indifference, indifference in the sense that nothing is more at stake in evolution than in geology or astrophysics. That man is in the image of God is settled by the *Word of God* and not by human physiology, or comparative anatomy.

If evolution be used to re-enforce atheism, materialism, or Communism, then as a Christian I have every right to speak up. We register a protest, not because we know science better but because they know theology less. We speak up, not because we are experts in biology, but because we stand in the light of revelation.²⁰

By framing the argument in this manner, Ramm not only provided a sustainable theoretical foundation, but also a reasonable and rational means of entering into dialogue without sensing threat or exercising superiority. Science and faith could be, and should be, brought into healthy dialogue with one another once again.

¹⁹ Ibid., 18.

²⁰ Ibid., 43. Italics original.

Ramm also wrote and published a hermeneutical piece on “The Relationship of Science, Factual Statements, and the Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy” in the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* (JASA).²¹ The issue of inerrancy in biblical interpretation began to grow during the latter half of the 1960s. For example, W.A. Criswell, two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1968–1970 and pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, published his book, *Why I Preach That the Bible is Literally True*, in 1969.²² Criswell forcefully expounded on the why the church needed to be on guard against liberal teaching and the dangers of evolution. In response to the growing issue of inerrancy, Ramm published his article in JASA in December 1969.²³ Obviously JASA was not a theological journal, but Ramm broached the theological topic of scriptural interpretation and the doctrine of inerrancy with neo-evangelical scientists who were faced with the question of inerrancy and its interplay with science. Ramm spoke to scientists who might be tempted to or who might have felt forced to dismiss scripture based on detection of contradictions between science and scripture. He cautioned, “We only wish to say that those scholars who set out to find error in Holy Scripture ought to have some idea of the complex range of logical terms one may use in dealing with documents or manuscripts or books, and further, which terms out of the possible list mentioned above cannot be divorced from the intent or prejudices of the scholar. There is

²¹ Bernard L. Ramm, “The Relationship of Science, Factual Statements, and the Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy,” *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 21, No. 4 (December 1969), 98–104.

²² W.A. Criswell, *Why I Preach That the Bible is Literally True* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1969), 104. Harold Lindsell would follow up with a similar book several years later. Harold Lindsell, *Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976).

²³ Ramm refers to conservatives who emphasize inerrancy as a general group, and does not cite any of them, such as Criswell, by name.

an ineluctable subjective element here whether we admit it or not.”²⁴ By discussing “errors” and “contradictions” found in scripture along with textual and linguistic explanations for them, along with a philosophical discussion of mathematics and non-contradiction, Ramm brought a nuanced interpretive method and theology to the scientists of the neo-evangelical community, again in an effort to create channels of dialogue between the two fields of theological and scientific research and study. Ramm provided readers of JASA with a hermeneutical and textual understanding of the Bible that helped them to see that claims of scriptural inerrancy over and against science could not and should not be dealt with simplistically, nor give the impression that adherence to scripture meant a rejection of science or vice versa.

Ramm also aimed to foster dialogue within the church regarding ethical topics related to science. Between the mid-1950s through the late 1970s, a flurry of biomedical and technological advances occurred in the United States: vaccines for numerous common, but debilitating or fatal, diseases such as polio (1955), measles (1964), and mumps (1967) were developed; the first test-tube baby was born in England in 1978; the doorway to genetic experimentation was opened with the discovery of DNA’s structure in 1953; and the first transistor-based computers were developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. With these scientific advances, Ramm began to publish articles, such as his 1966 article “1984 Is Now,” that discussed the moral issues Christians faced with the rise of biomedical advances, technology, and computers.²⁵ Playing on themes raised by George

²⁴ Ramm, “The Relationship of Science, Factual Statements, and the Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy,” 100.

²⁵ Ramm was not the only one to publish works on the impending onset of ethical problems caused by science, but he was early in bringing many specific ethical issues into the public’s attention and conversation. Later, in the 1970s, a number of books on ethical issues surrounding medical and technological advances were published. Examples are James M. Gustafson, *The Contributions of Theology*

Orwell's *1984*, Ramm envisioned a time when the "Big Brother" of technology could potentially become intrusive and dominate daily life.²⁶ By 1984, Ramm felt that "the problems raised by evolution and geology [would] look simple compared to the ethical quandaries advanced technology raises."²⁷ Ramm urged Christians not only to deal with the issues facing them but to think proactively about the theological and ethical issues to come. Ramm continued to write articles in the 1970s covering potential or existing ethical and moral dilemmas at the beginning of life such as surrogate pregnancy, amniocentesis, abortion, and eugenics; issues for working-aged adults such as the expansion of technology, the resulting dehumanization and apathy of employees in an automated workplace, computerized information and privacy issues, and family unity amidst the spread of technological gadgetry; as well as issues emerging for people at the end of life such as retirement, caring for the elderly, prolonging life through artificial means, death, and euthanasia.²⁸ Many of these pieces did not offer ethical solutions but were often highly prescient in predicting modern dilemmas, and Ramm's purpose was to stir the church into active conversation about these questions that would soon become common realities. For Ramm, an apathetic church meant a church that was out of touch with humanity and at the mercy of science and technology and its effects on society.

In historical accounts of Ramm's theology, understanding of his continued interaction with science is often "frozen in time" and is usually confined to his work

to *Medical Ethics*, *Pere Marquette Theology Lectures* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1977); and Henlee H. Barnett, *Exploring Medical Ethics* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1982).

²⁶ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four, a Novel* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, 1949).

²⁷ Bernard L. Ramm, "1984 Is Now," in *Eternity* 17 (September 1966): 20–21.

²⁸ Rather than list these works in a lengthy footnote, they will be compiled at the end of the dissertation in Appendix B, which will list Ramm's works on science and the issues involved with science in chronological order to demonstrate the pattern of development in his thinking over time.

during the 1950s, particularly his views espoused in CVSS.²⁹ Aside from brief discussions of Ramm's master's thesis and doctoral dissertation, his book, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, and his interaction with the American Scientific Affiliation, theologians and historians often fail to account for this ethical aspect of Ramm's theology in response to scientific issues. From these subsequent writings, it becomes clear that his writing was not only *about* science and faith but *how* science and faith interacted and the implications that that interaction would have for believers. Ramm wrote in service of neo-evangelicals from all denominations to bring awareness of the issues that science brought, and would bring, into contact with their faith. Through this approach to science in his writings, he further reinforced his identity as a neo-evangelical through "a winsome, intellectually respectable witness to the larger culture," fulfilling the aim of neo-evangelicals at the outset of their emergence as an entity.³⁰

Ramm's Changing Perspective: From Apologist to Invitational Theologian

Ramm's scholarship and writing trajectory was not just confined to his musings about science, as his theological foundations experienced transformation as well. Prior to the 1950s, Ramm's theological work, particularly his work in apologetics, was grounded in an approach termed by some as "evidentialism," or the idea that "actual evidences for the truth of the Christian faith [could be] drawn from data (Ramm called them 'facts')

²⁹ Many biographies of Ramm are often limited to short encyclopedic-type entries within a collection of other theologians or religious figures and will cite CVSS and a general description of his interests in and interactions with science, or his interests in science within his broader work in apologetics without demonstrating progress or development in his thought. Examples are Vanhoozer, "Bernard Ramm," 290–306; Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought: With Special Reference to Baptists in Britain and North America*, 499–503. One example showing development of Ramm's thought is Grenz and Olson, *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age*, 301–306.

³⁰ Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History*, 201. This was noted in chapter 1 of this dissertation as one of the main goals of neo-evangelicals at the outset of their formation in the 1940s. Cf. fn. 201.

that could be observed or verified, at least in theory, by everyone.”³¹ His earliest books, which were heavily used by many conservative Protestant seminaries of different denominations, relied on this theological method, as evidenced by their titles: *Problems in Christian Apologetics*, *Types of Apologetic Systems: An Introductory Study to the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, *Protestant Christian Evidences: A Textbook of the Evidences of the Truthfulness of the Christian Faith for Conservative Protestants*, *CVSS*, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics for Conservative Protestants*, and *The Pattern of Authority*.³²

In the latter portion of the 1950s, however, Ramm began to reconsider his “evidentialist” position. While speaking at a conference in the mid-1950s, one of the attendees asked him to “define American evangelical theology more precisely.”³³ Although he had believed himself to be part of the broad evangelical tradition, Ramm suddenly “experienced inward panic. Like a drowning man who sees parts of his life pass before him at great speed (an experience I have had), so my theology passed before my eyes. I saw my theology as a series of doctrines picked up here and there, like a rag-bag collection. To stutter out a reply to that question was one of the most painful things I have

³¹ Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology*, 301.

³² Bernard L. Ramm, *Problems in Christian Apologetics* (Portland, OR: Western Baptist Theological Seminary, 1949); Bernard L. Ramm, *Types of Apologetic Systems: An Introductory Study to the Christian Philosophy of Religion* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953); Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences: A Textbook of the Evidences of the Truthfulness of the Christian Faith for Conservative Protestants*; Ramm, *CVSS*; Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics for Conservative Protestants*; and Bernard L. Ramm, *The Pattern of Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957). During the writing of this dissertation, multiple graduate students and scholars were encountered who had familiarity with Ramm through the use of his books in their seminary training, especially *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*.

³³ Philip Thorne notes that this conference occurred sometime between 1954 and 1956, but the exact location and date are unknown at this time. Thorne, *Evangelicalism and Karl Barth: His Reception and Influence in North American Evangelical Theology*, 126. Ramm, *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology*, 1.

ever had to do on a public platform.”³⁴ Ramm saw that his theological foundations had been drawn from Enlightenment thought, from his work in the philosophy of science, from his theological training and reading, and from Christian history.³⁵ What he lacked, however, was a methodical and comprehensive theological approach. He wrote, “I did not have a theology whose methodology was scientifically ascertained, nor doctrines scientifically interrelated nor properly defended. That is why I could not give a reasonable account of my theology when asked to do so.”³⁶

From this experience, Ramm initiated a concentrated effort to understand his own beliefs and formulate a more robust theology, and it was at this time that he encountered the ideas of Karl Barth. Publishing an article in *Eternity* magazine in 1957 titled “The Revolution in Theology,” Ramm attempted to provide readers with “a simple explanation of developments in theology important to every literate Christian” about the growing divide and incompatibility between extreme orthodoxy (i.e. Fundamentalism) and extreme liberalism within Protestant Christianity.³⁷ Ramm then gave simple description of the “quiet revolution” of the neo-orthodox theologians, describing them as

A group of scholars (Swiss, German, and English) [who] refused to be impressed by the liberal approach to the Bible. These scholars were not Fundamentalists because they thought the Fundamentalist doctrine of inspiration was too strict, and that it failed to admit the [merits] of biblical criticism. On the other hand, they disagreed with the liberals and insisted that the critical approach to the Bible did not rule out a theological appreciation and understanding of the Bible. These [neo-orthodox scholars] wrote significant theological works, commentaries, and biblical studies... reasserting the theological validity of Sacred Scripture.³⁸

³⁴ Ramm, *After Fundamentalism*, 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1–8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

³⁷ Bernard L. Ramm, “The Revolution in Theology,” *Eternity* 8 (May 1957): 14.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

At the end of the article, Ramm averred that further examination of neo-orthodoxy was in order. Ramm had heard about Barth and neo-orthodoxy during his years as a student, but explanations given to Ramm by professors attempting to explain Barth's theology, along with Ramm's own reading of Barth, were far from intellectually satisfying. Ramm did what he could to grasp Barth's theological project, but he needed further guidance and closer experience with neo-orthodoxy. Thus, "When the chance came for me to study in Europe for an academic year, there was no question in my mind but that the place to go was Basel, where Barth was still alive and teaching. That was the year 1957-58."³⁹

While in Basel, Ramm found much more than he had expected in Barth. Writing in April 1959, Ramm found "an intensely human and friendly man. It would take a determined effort not to like him. ... Barth is also a very honest man-the most honest man we have ever met concerning scholarship and theological craftsmanship. He wants no dark corners unexamined, no theological problems living unseen... he wants no possible source of light on biblical exegesis or theological analysis cut off."⁴⁰ While reading and studying in Basel, Ramm not only attended the English-speaking sessions held in Barth's house for students, but was also able to have occasional personal conversations with Barth when they encountered one another around town. The intimate conversations about theology they shared, along with Barth's willingness to explore all areas of theology made a powerful impression on Ramm. Barth shared at one of the weekly lecture sessions, "just as love casts out fear (I John 4:12), in the territory of one's spiritual life even so a belief in God and His gracious gospel casts out fear in one's theological life. ...

³⁹ Ramm, *After Fundamentalism*, 10. This opportunity to study with Barth came while Ramm was at Baylor University from 1954–1959. This article in *Eternity* was published in May 1957, just after Ramm had received a travel grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts and just before he was set to depart for Basel.

⁴⁰ Ramm, "Europe, God, and Karl Barth," 11.

Therefore we need not fear the opening of any door or window, for it cannot bring fear if we truly believe the gospel and the God of the gospel.”⁴¹

Taking Barth’s advice to heart, Ramm returned to the United States emboldened with a commitment to be unafraid of what he found in reading other types of theology. By studying and engaging with other avenues of thought, Ramm believed that his own theology would only become richer and stronger and that the implications for neo-evangelicals were clear as well. Ramm wrote, “Contemporary philosophy, contemporary theology, and contemporary science may be very unfriendly to evangelical theology. They seem to be opening all sorts of doors and windows to let in soul-chilling drafts of air. But Barth argues that if the love of God in our hearts drives out fear even so the Word of God in our hearts should drive our fear – fear of an unexpected discovery in science or archeology or psychology or sociology.”⁴² For Ramm, this meant not only reading other people’s ideas and theologies but also making a point to read those ideas and criticisms that were from those that were opposed to him. Again, writing of Barth, he said, “Barth took his own advice. In one of his shorter writings he discusses the characteristics of an evangelical theologian. He says to be a competent theologian one must read everybody, which includes those theologians of radically different views from his own.”⁴³ Taking this advice and applying it to his own work in order to stretch his abilities, Ramm composed a new book in order to engage with thinkers that were not just beyond the neo-evangelical community, but also among non-believers. As a consequence of his experience with Barth, “Eventually this resulted in a book, *The Devil, Seven Wormwoods*,

⁴¹ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 64.

⁴² Ibid., 65.

⁴³ Ibid.

and God. In it I review the philosophical system of seven men who are anti-Christian: Sartre, Nietzsche, Freud, Camus, Heidegger, Hume, and Wittgenstein. Taking Augustine's cue that humility is a virtue of the Christian intellect I attempted to show that by faithfully listening to these men we find something that is profitable to Christian faith."⁴⁴

The final portion of Ramm's statement is most telling about the transformation that he experienced in doing his theological work. Ramm purposefully engaged with those that were radically different from him in order to find that which could benefit his theology and Christians as a whole. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to parse the particular theological implications of Ramm's engagement with Barth and the theological character of his works; many other theologians have written such pieces.⁴⁵ What should be noted historically is the changed mindset with which Ramm approached his work after the 1950s. Ramm was deliberate about opening himself to a world of ideas in order to expand his understanding and theology proportionately. Reflecting back on his work as a theologian, he wrote, "Because evangelical theology represents a minority report in the present theological scene, evangelicals should not be defensive and hostile. The Christian scholar is not only freed from the judgment of God, freed from the tyrannical fear of sin, but also freed in his mind in the world of academia where he can be God's free scholar."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Examples of such theologically evaluative work can be found in the many encyclopedic entries on Ramm such as Vanhoozer, "Bernard Ramm," 290–306; Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, 520–524; Day, "Bernard Ramm," 588–605. Works on reception history of Karl Barth often include a section on Bernard Ramm, such as Ramm, "Helps from Karl Barth," 121–125; Thorne, *Evangelicalism and Karl Barth: His Reception and Influence in North American Evangelical Theology*; and Lewis, "Bernard Ramm."

⁴⁶ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 66.

This freedom is what Ramm intentionally sought and discovered in the 1950s, and what he intentionally encouraged and offered to other neo-evangelicals after him.

Because of this transformation during the 1950s, from the 1960s to the end of his retirement, the character of Ramm's writing shifted from an apologetic, "evidentialist" approach concerned with proofs, to that of an introductory, persuasive, and didactic quality. The contents of his books and articles changed from topics and titles written in the late 1940s such as "The Three Levels of the New Testament" (January 1949) and "Can I Trust My Old Testament?" (February 1949) to topics and titles published in the 1960s such as "Who Was This Man Anselm?" (April 1965) and "Have You Discovered Thielicke?" (May 1967).⁴⁷ Through his writings, Ramm took his evangelical readers along with him through his journey of ever-expanding and ever-widening learning and discovery. He provided a summation of current trends in theology and current theologians and then an assessment of topics for popular readers to contemplate and perhaps explore on their own. For example, Ramm provided a brief biography of the German theologian Helmut Thielicke, a summation of his theology, and then discussed what he perceived to be strengths and weaknesses of Thielicke's work. Ramm concludes by writing, "Our final word is simply this. If anyone feels that his Christianity is stale or jaded or in a rut let him discover Thielicke! In so doing he will meet one of the great spirits of our age, and could well come into a rejuvenation of his own living."⁴⁸ By writing in this manner, Ramm provided his readers with a suggestion to explore reading Thielicke's (and others') theology; a personal introduction to Thielicke, based on

⁴⁷ Ramm, "The Three Levels of the New Testament," 11–12; Ramm, "Can I Trust My Old Testament?" 8–9; Ramm, "Who Was This Man Anselm?" 25, 28, 38; Ramm, "Have You Discovered Thielicke?" 19–20, 29.

⁴⁸ Ramm, "Have You Discovered Thielicke?" 29.

Ramm's own interaction with and reading of Thielicke; a six-point outline to guide reading of Thielicke; and criticisms, rather than polemics, of Thielicke's theology and sermons. Ramm clearly distinguished himself from the militancy of Fundamentalists and helped his emerging audience of evangelical readers to adopt an attitude of openness in personal reading and study.

This trend of engaging with ideas that were not necessarily aligned with his own continued in Ramm's subsequent books as well. In *The God Who Makes a Difference* (1972), Ramm again approached the topic of apologetics, but this time with an eye towards the "Vienna Circle" methods of philosophy and verification, which allowed modern advances in physics and science to guide philosophical models and which were "radically anti-metaphysical" in nature.⁴⁹ In *The Evangelical Heritage* (1973), Ramm attempted to draw out connections between various aspects of evangelical theology and the broader history of evangelical theology and philosophy.⁵⁰ In *After Fundamentalism*,

⁴⁹ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 99. Bernard L. Ramm, *The God Who Makes a Difference: A Christian Appeal to Reason* (Waco, TX: Word, 1972). Summative statements about this series of books come from Ramm himself in "The Making of an Evangelical Mind." Thomas Uebel, "Vienna Circle," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2016 Edition) website, <https://plato.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/encyclopedia/archinfo.cgi?entry=vienna-circle> (accessed June 2, 2017).

⁵⁰ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 114. Ramm, *The Evangelical Heritage*. Many theologians have noted Ramm's understanding of theology to have distinct Reformed leanings: see Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology*, 300; Day, "Bernard Ramm," 591. Roger Olson criticizes Ramm for his Reformed view of evangelical history to the neglect of the Pietistic, Wesleyan, and Pentecostal influences in theological history. See Roger E. Olson and Christian T. Collins Winn, *Reclaiming Pietism: Retrieving and Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 113–114. Ramm's Reformed leanings may also explain why Ramm published extensively in *Eternity* magazine. *Eternity* magazine was founded in 1950 by Donald Grey Barnhouse, a Presbyterian minister who moved from a critical, fundamentalist background towards an open neo-evangelicalism, much like Ramm. "[Barnhouse's] harsh and public critique of other Christian leaders continued until 1953, when he published in *Eternity* his famous 'New Year's Resolution.' In his resolution, he described a changed personal attitude towards people with whom he disagreed. Among other things, he promised to focus more on the ideas and attitudes he held in common with others, rather than his former tendency to focus on their differences and where he felt they were wrong." From "Guide to the Donald Grey Barnhouse Papers: Biographical Note/Administrative History," Presbyterian Historical Society: The National Archives of the PC(USA) website, <http://www.history.pcusa.org/collections/research-tools/guides-archival-collections/rg-480> (accessed June 8, 2017).

Ramm laid out a history of his own journey away from Fundamentalism and the theological and logical reasons why he believed that the Fundamentalist movement could not sustain itself.⁵¹ In *Offense to Reason* (1985), Ramm engaged with the ideas of modern psychology and posited that, in contrast to efforts by modern psychology to provide a behavioral explanation for sin, “Christian theology says that there is a strip of responsibility in every mature person... we must not be too ready to eliminate the doctrine of sin from our vocabulary.”⁵² As he read through and evaluated other theologians’ work, Ramm strongly believed that an orthodox, evangelical theology should not eliminate the doctrine of sin as proposed by some liberal theological projects. The only way to understand human nature and the evil done by humans was to include in any theology a robust doctrine of sin.⁵³ In *An Evangelical Christology* (1985), Ramm brought his decades of work to a conclusion and attempted to address liberal challenges to orthodox Christology by developing his own take on the classic doctrine. Ramm emphasized that Christ could not be seen as an “afterglow” or “memory” in the church, for doing so would undermine prayer, baptism, and worship in Jesus’s name.⁵⁴ Finally, between 1990 and 1992, Ramm began work on what would be his final manuscript, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” a series of mini-lessons and reflections taking readers

⁵¹ Bernard L. Ramm, *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1982). See quotes taken from *After Fundamentalism* above.

⁵² Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 81. Bernard L. Ramm, *Offense to Reason: A Theology of Sin* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1985), 2, 5, 6, 9.

⁵³ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 117; Bernard L. Ramm, *A Handbook of Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966); Ramm, *Offense to Reason: A Theology of Sin*, 163.

⁵⁴ Ramm, “The Making of an Evangelical Mind,” 96–97, 117. Bernard L. Ramm, *An Evangelical Christology: Ecumenic & Historic* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1985). Note the use of the indefinite article in the title, in contrast with CVSS.

on a journey that once again addressed his move away from fundamentalism, but also addressed the strengths of the neo-evangelical movement and his reasons for finding a place within it. Unfortunately, due to his rapidly failing eyesight and the increasing symptoms of Parkinson's Disease, Ramm was forced to rely heavily on the assistance of his son, who was not theologically trained in any way, and was unable to edit or complete the manuscript before his death in August 1992.⁵⁵

This brief examination and discussion of Ramm's extensive volume of writings demonstrates that after his philosophical shift in the 1940s and his theological shift in the 1950s the quality and character of his writings moved away from a narrow and dogmatically doctrinal approach, to one that was broad, inclusive, and inquisitive in order to strengthen his own theology. Ramm closely studied the writings of other historians, theologians, and philosophers to find what could be usefully gleaned and what should be rejected. After doing so, Ramm submitted his evaluations to the readers providing a winsome and appealing invitation to his evangelical readers to come alongside and study and learn with him. He did not attempt to indoctrinate or force theological positions upon his readers; if anything, he laid his work before them so that they would engage and be empowered to make decisions on their own. He was keenly aware that all theological ideas and projects would have problems, including his own efforts, but that the key was

⁵⁵ Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind." By the early 1990s, Ramm's eyesight was failing, due to cataracts, a failed eye surgery, and a detached retina, and the symptoms of Parkinson's disease had become severe. The title page lists Bernard Ramm's son and daughter-in-law, Stephen and Liana Ramm, as assisting authors of the book. Ramm's son and daughter-in-law were film and drama majors at the University of California – Los Angeles; neither have any formal theological or divinity training. Much of Ramm's "writing" and editing had to be done by dictation through Stephen and Liana, making the process frustratingly slow.

for all Christians to strive forward continually with an attitude of openness, healthy criticism, and generosity.⁵⁶

Ramm's Relationships with Neo-evangelicals and American Baptists

Ramm's dual identity as both an American Baptist and a neo-evangelical was reflected in his relationships with colleagues and other people he encountered during his career. Reflective of his attitude of openness, healthy criticism, and generosity cited above, Ramm worked in and moved fluidly between both the American Baptist and neo-evangelical communities, fostering these kinds of interpersonal relationships and being supported through them in his own work as well. When free from teaching duties at the various American Baptist institutions he was employed at throughout his career, Ramm often used the time to work with other institutions, organizations, and churches as well. During the summers, Ramm taught at other universities both within the United States and overseas as a visiting professor.⁵⁷ Ramm also worked with Wycliffe Bible translators and at Young Life summer institutes in the States, as well as overseas with World Vision alongside founder and American Baptist minister Bob Pierce in Timor, Philippines,

⁵⁶ Ramm had a clear sense of his own theological limitations as a human being with an incomplete understanding of God. In Ramm, "The Making of an Evangelical Mind," 18–19, he writes, "There is no pure church, theologically speaking. Each group bears a measure of heresy and a measure of the [heterodox and] cultic. ... Hence I am not too upset to see such odd views in the church for if it were not one thing it would be another. God not only forgives our most grievous sins but also our doctrinal waywardness. ... I was led into the mainline Christian scholarship for all matters of interpretation of Scripture. I saw the cultic in every group. But this did not disturb me as there never was a pure church from Pentecost on. And my own theological convictions are to some either heretical or cultic or both."

⁵⁷ Examples of schools in the United States were Bethel Seminary in Minnesota, and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Simpson College, Fuller Seminary, and College of the Pacific in California. Overseas, Ramm taught at Haigazian Evangelical College (now Haigazian University) in Beirut and various schools in Singapore and Burma (now Myanmar). Ramm's daughter, Elizabeth Attig Ramm, provided the dates and places of her parents' life in a personally written document. This document will be cited as "EA Timeline" in future footnotes.

Europe, and India.⁵⁸ Ramm also was invited, as an irenic voice, to serve as a guest preacher at numerous Baptist churches, and an occasional non-Baptist church, throughout his career as well.

Among neo-evangelicals, Ramm shared a close working relationship with prominent figures such as Billy Graham, Carl F.H. Henry, Harold Lindsell, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, and Edward Carnell.⁵⁹ Ramm was a special guest of Billy Graham's backstage at the 1957 Crusade in Madison Square Garden in New York City, just before the Ramm family set sail for Europe and Ramm's studies in Switzerland with Barth. Graham personally introduced himself to Ramm's daughter, Elizabeth, and told her how significant of a theologian her father was for Christians around the world.⁶⁰ Koop was active in the conservative wing of the neo-evangelical movement beginning in the 1970s, writing *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* together with Francis Schaeffer, and later serving as Surgeon General under President Ronald Reagan. When Ramm's grandson, Daniel, was born, the infant required muscle therapy for his neck as well as inguinal hernia surgery. Due to their long friendship, Ramm called Koop, a

⁵⁸ Grenz and Olson, *20th Century Theology*, 299. Ramm started working with Wycliffe Bible translators in Oklahoma City in the early 1950s, but the exact years are unknown. Ramm began working with Young Life in Colorado Springs in 1955 and taught with them during the summers for the next twenty-five years. Ramm traveled around the world with Bob Pierce in the summer of 1959. "EA Timeline."

⁵⁹ Details of Ramm's relationships with these four figures are covered in chapter three of this dissertation. Ramm's daughter, Elizabeth, attended Wheaton with Henry's daughter, Carol, and Lindsell's daughter, Judy. Although Lindsell worked with neo-evangelicals, especially as editor of *Christianity Today* from 1968-1978, he tended more towards extreme conservatism in later years, as evidenced by his book on biblical inerrancy, *Battle for the Bible*, published in 1976. The Ramms were particularly close with the Carnells due to their proximity in Southern California. Elizabeth Attig, email to author, April 29, 2017. Graham, Henry, and Lindsell identified most closely with Southern Baptists; Carnell was an ordained Northern Baptist; and Koop was raised Baptist but moved to Presbyterianism. See Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 155; Wills, *Southern Baptist Seminary 1859-2009*, 433; and Rudolph Nelson, *The Making and Unmaking of an Evangelical Mind: The Case of Edward Carnell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 53.

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Attig, email to author, April 29, 2017.

pediatric surgeon, for advice, and Koop insisted on personally examining the child and performing the treatments and operation. At another time, when Ramm's wife, Alta, was injured in an escalator accident, Koop came to the Ramm home to care for her and provide a measure of pain relief.⁶¹ During the summers in Southern California, the Ramm and Carnell families often enjoyed spending time together over picnic meals in the local parks, with the husbands drifting off into theological discussions, while the wives talked and the children played together.⁶² Ramm also had a close relationship with F. Alton Everest, who also lived in Southern California, as well as the members of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA).⁶³ A significant part of Ramm's life and work came from writing and contributing to the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* (JASA). Long before he announced his retirement, JASA produced a separate festschrift issue in December 1979 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of CVSS's publication and to discuss its importance to Christians in America, and to honor his many and significant contributions to the organization over the years. Multiple authors such as ASA founder Everest, biochemist Walter Hearn, and theologian Clark Pinnock wrote of the positive impact that Ramm had had upon them over the years through *The Christian View of*

⁶¹ Elizabeth Attig, email to author, June 9, 2017. Francis Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1979).

⁶² Elizabeth Attig details many events that the Carnells and Ramms attended together, such as the annual Rose Parade in Pasadena. Elizabeth Attig, email to author, April 29, 2017. Nelson, *The Making and Unmaking of an Evangelical Mind: The Case of Edward Carnell*, 221, refers to their close relationship and refers to Ramm as a "confidant" of Carnell. Ramm

⁶³ Elizabeth Attig, email to author, April 29, 2017. Elizabeth Attig recalls the Ramm family often driving over to the Everest household for shared dinners.

Science and Scripture as well as the numerous other articles he had published in JASA.⁶⁴

In the festschrift, Pinnock wrote of CVSS:

Bernard Ramm was the first to write on issues in science and religion from the neo-evangelical viewpoint. ... The intellectual significance of Ramm's book, which seems clearer to me now than it did then, lies in the rapprochement he attempts between biblical faith and contemporary scientific ideas. No more warfare between the two for him. So long as evolution is a complementary language alongside theological dogma it is no more in competition with it than is relativity theory. ... If I were to make a conjecture, I would guess that in 1979 Ramm and many of us are less anxious about vindicating the Bible on such points as these [from Genesis 1-2] and are even open, as we were not in 1954, to recognizing legendary elements in them. If so, then the intellectual revolution which Ramm was in on at the beginning a few decades ago has continued to unfold and is probably not over yet.⁶⁵

Multiple contributors to the festschrift praised Ramm's book for the way it brought a spirit of openness and cooperation among scientists who sought to understand how the Bible could be interpreted alongside the data of science. Because of his sincere approach to exploring these issues, scholars praised Ramm for how he helped to create an environment of cooperation and mutual respect among the ASA members. Providing evidence of this, chemistry professor Dewey Carpenter wrote, "It is not with respect to evolution or any other particular scientific issue or suggested resolution of a conflict

⁶⁴ Six articles were dedicated to honoring Ramm and his work: John W. Haas, Jr., "*The Christian View of Science and Scripture: A Retrospective Look*," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 31, No. 4 (December 1979): 177; Hearn, "An Interview with Bernard Ramm and Alta Ramm," 179–186; Alton, et al., 187–189; Russell Maatman, "Effect on the Literature of *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 31, No. 4 (December 1979): 190–191; Pinnock and Kaiser, "Two Reflections on the Book [*The Christian View of Science and Scripture*]," 191–192; and Claude E. Stipe, Owen Gingerich, Gordon C. Mills, Richard T. Wright, and Thomas H. Leith, "Responses in Specific Fields to *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 31, No. 4 (December 1979): 192–195. Efforts to contact Walter Hearn were unsuccessful, due to his failing health; Hearn died on April 11, 2017. For a brief synopsis of Hearn's life and work in the neo-evangelical movement as a scientist, see Glenn Branch, "Walter R. Hearn Dies," *National Center for Science Education* website, <https://ncse.com/news/2017/04/walter-r-hearn-dies-0018515> (Accessed June 2, 2017).

⁶⁵ Clark H. Pinnock and Christopher B. Kaiser, "Two Reflections on the Book [*The Christian View of Science and Scripture*]," 191.

where I have found my help from Ramm. Rather, it is in terms of general orientation of learning what the basic issues are, and of the need for bringing an irenic spirit to an investigation which must be both scholarly and devout.”⁶⁶ Multiple neo-evangelicals offered their praise for Ramm both before and after his death. Declaring Ramm to be one of the key leaders of the neo-evangelical movement, historian Ronald Numbers writes of Ramm’s writing and career, “Years after the appearance of Ramm’s book [*The Christian View of Science and Scripture*] another grateful ASA member credited it with having paved the way for ‘the majority of Christian biologists’ to accept evolution.”⁶⁷

Along with his work in neo-evangelical circles, Ramm was also a committed Baptist, who served at American Baptist institutions of learning and who worked to strengthen the denomination. Ramm had been converted in 1934 at Sammamish Bible Camp (now SAMBICA), a Swedish Baptist church camp, and demonstrated his identity as a Baptist throughout the remainder of his life. He chose to study at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (EBTS) in 1938 and later worked at Bethel Seminary, a Swedish Baptist institution, beginning in 1951. After leaving Bethel in 1954, Ramm moved to work among Baptists at Baylor University, and from 1959 until his retirement in 1987, a span of almost thirty years, Ramm worked exclusively at American Baptist institutions of learning. Due to his previous interaction with other non-Baptist individuals and groups, it is conceivable that Ramm could have left the Baptists and joined another denomination that affiliated with the NAE, thus allowing him to freely interact with NAE figures without hindrance. Ramm never did this, however, and as a committed member of the

⁶⁶ Alton, et al., “Five Personal Reminiscences [sic] on the Influence of *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*,” 188.

⁶⁷ Numbers, *The Creationists*, 187. Numbers outlines the profound influence Ramm had on the neo-evangelical community and Christians in general in this section of his book (184–187).

ABC, followed ABC denominational guidelines and never joined the NAE as a member.⁶⁸ Additionally, although Ramm could have found full-time work as a philosophy or religion professor at other non-Baptist or secular institutions of higher learning, he deliberately chose to remain with ABC schools.⁶⁹ Ramm taught and trained a generation and a half of ABC pastors and scholars while working at California Baptist Theological Seminary (CBTS, 1959–1974), Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (EBTS, 1974–1978), and American Baptist Seminary of the West (ABSW, 1978–1987) as a professor of theology and church history.

As mentioned in chapter three of this dissertation, Ramm also served the denomination by working on various ABC committees and acting as a representative at the national meetings. Ramm was chosen to serve as a delegate to the American Baptist Faith and Order Conference in Montreal in 1968. In 1974, Ramm's inquiries into the nature of the Holy Spirit and the interaction of the Holy Spirit with those within the Pentecostal and the charismatic movements led to the publication of *Rapping about the Spirit*.⁷⁰ Because of Ramm's book on the Holy Spirit, he was chosen to be the sole

⁶⁸ Inquiries made to the special collections at Wheaton College, to check the NAE's archive of membership records, confirm that Ramm never joined the organization. Keith Call, Special Collections Assistant at Wheaton College Archives and Special Collections, email to author, September 13, 2016.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Attig, Interview by author, January 15, 2015. Ramm's daughter confirmed that her mother wondered why her husband did not take better-paying jobs at state universities and that her father was committed to working at religious institutions only. The fact that Ramm could have found work at other religious schools but worked full-time at ABC schools exclusively for the last thirty years of his career is telling. Ramm did teach at other non-Baptist institutions on a piecemeal basis, but his full-time employment during the last half of his life was always at Baptist institutions. That being said, Ramm's ability to work in warmer weather at California Baptist Theological Seminary and American Baptist Seminary of the West, both in California, also benefited his wife in terms of her lingering back injury, caused by a fall down an escalator in prior years. There were other religious schools in California, though, that would have hired Ramm as a faculty member, but Ramm chose to remain with American Baptist schools.

⁷⁰ Bernard L. Ramm, *Rapping About the Spirit* (Waco, TX: Word, Inc., 1974). This book was later published under the title, *Questions about the Spirit*.

academic and theologian on the American Baptist “Charismatic Renewal Task Force” in 1978.⁷¹ Ramm’s books also made an important and powerful impression upon the younger members of the American Baptists. As many American Baptist college-aged students read Ramm’s works in school and in seminary, books such as *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* set the foundations for their biblical hermeneutics, and other works such as *CVSS* helped to “straighten out” the faith of those who struggled with the issues surrounding faith and science.⁷²

At home, Ramm also followed his Baptist principles as well. When his daughter Elizabeth and her friend, Mary Ann Martin, the daughter of the pastor of Chevy Chase Baptist Church in Glendale, both in elementary school at the time, came to talk to Ramm about what it meant to be a Baptist and the significance of baptism, he presented the various distinctives of the Baptist faith. After this talk, the two friends said that they were believers and decided that they wanted to be baptized. Ramm encouraged them both to take time to think about their faith individually before making a decision to be baptized. He emphasized that the two young girls needed to be sure of their personal commitments to Christianity before receiving baptism. Over time, the two youths confirmed their faith and were baptized by Mary Ann’s father, Rev. Martin, as confessed believers.⁷³

Ramm also shared close working friendships with numerous colleagues in American Baptist circles, such as former general secretary of the ABC-USA, Robert C.

⁷¹ Vanhoozer, “Bernard Ramm,” 292; Gary Kenneth Clark, “A Strategy for Advocating the Spirit-Filled Renewal Movement Among American Baptist Pastors Through the Holy Spirit Renewal Ministries” (Doctor of Ministry Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2000), 65.

⁷² At a recent meeting of the Baptist History and Heritage Society, after I presented a paper on Ramm, American Baptist historian Dr. Richard Pierard shared about his struggles with matters of faith and science and how reading Ramm’s *CVSS* helped to strengthen his faith and “straighten me out” during his college years.

⁷³ Elizabeth Attig, email to author, March 15, 2017.

Campbell.⁷⁴ At his retirement dinner, Ramm and his wife, Alta, were presented with a memory book containing sentiments and letters from fellow scholars throughout the American Baptist community across the country. Dozens of letters came from fellow workers at EBTS, ABSW, and other schools and institutions where Ramm worked.⁷⁵ Letters in the remembrance book also came from former students, even those beyond the American Baptist realm going all the way back to his days at BIOLA and Baylor University. Additionally, letters came from pastors, missionaries, and Christian workers around the world who heard about Ramm's retirement and wanted to contribute a sentiment to the volume. Considering the lack of electronic communication, which did not fully emerge until the early 1990s, this collection of almost one hundred letters and sentiments expressed a powerful impulse among its contributors to thank Ramm for his collaboration, scholarship, and teaching. Many of his colleagues spoke of the warmth of their friendship, Ramm's "irenic" and generous spirit, his wry sense of humor, and the impact of Ramm's life and scholarship upon theirs.⁷⁶ The National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion recognized him with a festschrift in 1990, and EBTS also honored him as the 1991 Alumnus of the Year.⁷⁷ At the 1991 ceremony, Ramm was honored as an outstanding American Baptist whose "mission has been to 'keep evangelicalism

⁷⁴ The Campbell and Ramm families had a close relationship through the years. Campbell was the longest-serving general secretary of the ABC-USA (1972–1987), and he indicated his trust in Ramm by appointing him as the sole academic on the 1978 seven-member "Charismatic Renewal Task Force." The task force's openness towards finding a place for charismatics in American Baptist life was consistent with Ramm's personal journey, which modeled a place for neo-evangelicals in the mainstream denomination.

⁷⁵ See the chapter three of this dissertation for a biography of Ramm's career. By the time of his retirement, CBTS and ABSW had merged into one school.

⁷⁶ Ramm's son, Stephen, has provided scans of these letters. Stephen Ramm, email to author, May 26–27, 2017. The collection of one hundred letters was compiled and bound by his co-workers at ABSW and presented at his retirement dinner on 2 May 1987.

⁷⁷ *Perspectives on Theology in the Contemporary World: Essays in Honor of Bernard Ramm*. Stephen Ramm, email to author, May 27, 2017.

intellectually respectable and to rescue it from charges of obscurantism, while preserving the core of evangelical doctrine.’ In steering the difficult middle course between fundamentalism and liberalism he has been a trailblazer with a passion for truth.”⁷⁸

Thus, Ramm’s identity as a theologian and as a Christian was defined by the quality of his relationships in both the neo-evangelical and American Baptist communities. Ramm was fiercely committed to seeking the truth, but he also did so with an open mind and an open heart. American Baptists were aware of his work among neo-evangelicals and the reverse was true as well, and both groups were claimed and embraced him as one of their own because of his generosity and integrity towards all. Ramm did not present a dual identity when among people in either community but rather, as he had done with his theology, married the best of two worlds into one integrated whole.

Conclusion

With a careful examination of his writing and relationships over his entire career, Bernard Ramm emerges as a model of transformation that uniquely combined the best of the American Baptists and the neo-evangelicals. At the overlap of these two realms, Ramm stood as a committed Baptist and orthodox Christian who gradually and humbly acknowledged the limitations of human theology and who accordingly set out on a lifelong academic journey to interact with others in order to understand better the nature of God. To do this, Ramm moved away from apologetics and his philosophical position as an “evidentialist” in the late 1940s, and over the next ten years shifted towards a position of openness and discovery. Though he had begun to slowly move from in the

⁷⁸ Taken from the program honoring Ramm as the 1991 EBTS Alumnus of the Year.

early 1950s, Ramm's encounter with Barth in 1957–1958 in Basel was the transformative event that liberated his thinking and writing. Reflective of this new freedom, the topics of his writing reflected a theologian in search of deeper meaning, who was not willing to insist dogmatically on one position but sought after deeper understanding from sources that existed beyond fundamentalist or Baptist traditions. Beginning with his work in science, Ramm explored new avenues of interpretation in regards to creation and evolution, which led him to explore new lines of thought in other areas of theology, such as ethics and Christology. What made Ramm's work significant was the style with which he wrote – a warm and invitational approach to his readers that brought them along in his own theological explorations. His writing exhibited a theological expertise that was accessible and understandable to his readers – both scholarly and lay, religious and scientific – taking difficult and novel concepts and making them comprehensible to Baptist students and colleagues, as well as neo-evangelicals across denominations. Ramm's theology was certainly not without problems, but despite the limitations of his work scholars who have evaluated Ramm's work agree that Ramm's scholarship was critical in helping to advance neo-evangelical theology.⁷⁹

Additionally, Ramm's interaction with people within the American Baptist denomination and the neo-evangelical worlds demonstrated a genuine commitment to both realms. Ramm resolved to work full-time as a scholar only at American Baptist institutions from the early 1950s to the end of his career, but he also used his time to teach and work with those outside of the Baptist denominations. He was a lifelong friend to neo-evangelicals such as Billy Graham, Edward Carnell, and F. Alton Everest, but also

⁷⁹ Grenz and Olson, *20th Century Theology*, 309; Vanhoozer, "Bernard Ramm," 305–306.

served as a faithful colleague at American Baptist institutions of learning, helping to teach and train ABC leaders for almost thirty years. At the end of his career, the appreciation for Ramm's work from both the American Baptist and neo-evangelical camps was heartfelt and evidence of a holistic identity drawn from both worlds.

By looking at the almost forty years of his academic career, a trajectory of growth and progress emerges, as evidenced by the challenges that Ramm tackled in his writing and in his relationships. Ramm was not one to hide or ignore problems; rather, he embraced the difficulties, emboldened by a confidence that an unrelenting pursuit of truth was tantamount to a pursuit of theological understanding. Because of this commitment, Ramm's writing served as an example and model for Christians to observe, and reflected a life of growth and advancement that he shared openly and generously with both American Baptists and neo-evangelicals alike.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

During the heart of the twentieth century, Bernard Ramm (1916–1992) emerged as a key figure in both American Baptist and neo-evangelical history. Donning aspects of each group's identity and history, Ramm helped to formulate a new theology that married the best of American Baptist characteristics and theology with the desire of neo-evangelicals to re-engage with culture and to reclaim evangelical heritage. Although he was one of the foremost figures among American Protestant theologians to do this, Ramm's significance in the history of American Christianity has been largely overlooked.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, two forces began to emerge in parallel with one another: the effort to organize the Northern Baptist Convention (NBC) into a formal entity, and the backlash of militant conservatives against modernist trends in theology and biblical interpretation.¹ With the formation of the NBC in 1907, Baptists in the North sought to consolidate the various voluntary societies into one entity in order to increase efficiency among churches for the purposes of evangelism. With these efforts came resistance from certain members within the newborn denomination, particularly those conservative members who strongly opposed centralization at the expense of eroding, or even sacrificing, orthodox beliefs. Ironically, these militant conservatives found support for their efforts to preserve their beliefs among conservatives of other denominations.

¹ In this conclusion, references to the Northern Baptist Convention (NBC) and the American Baptist Convention (ABC) will be used interchangeably to refer to the present-day American Baptist Churches of the USA (ABC-USA).

The resulting cross-denominational movement, which came to be known in the first two decades of the 1900s as the Fundamentalist movement, strongly supported a literal reading of scripture in defense against the modernist trends of higher criticism and evolution. Over time, leaders of the Fundamentalist movement became insular and defensive, leading a withdrawal of their members from the existing denominational structures and from the culture at large to establish their own groups and to protect their church members from the corruption of modernism. Within the NBC, this movement to protect and withdraw led to two significant exodus events among its membership: one in 1932–33, which led to the formation of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC), and another in 1947, which led to the formation of the Conservative Baptist Association of America (CBA). Remaining conservatives in the NBC were not as divisive as those who had departed, but they looked for a theological way forward in which they could hold to conservative beliefs while also being able to engage intellectually and productively with current cultural trends, such as developments in science.

As a response to the Fundamentalist movement, conservatives who rejected the militancy and withdrawal of their Fundamentalist peers similarly banded together across denominational lines to form the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1943. The members of the NAE were committed to sound intellectual growth, to active evangelism, and to social and political engagement with the culture. Many American Protestants joined or supported the efforts of this neo-evangelical movement to break free of the isolationism and narrow biblical interpretation of the Fundamentalists. One of the NAE's successful strategies was to allow individuals, churches, or denominations to

affiliate with the NAE without needing to leave their “home” groups or organizations. Members of the NBC, however, because of the policies set by Northern Baptist leaders who feared another conservative division and exodus, were not permitted to hold simultaneous membership in both the NBC and the NAE. Despite this restriction, some Northern Baptists, such as Ramm, utilized the freedom afforded them through the independence of their local Baptist congregations and associated with other neo-evangelicals without officially joining the NAE. In developing this method of association, Ramm remained a member of the NBC and gained the freedom to develop his own conservative theology as a Baptist while also being able to collaborate with other neo-evangelicals. Other Northern Baptist and neo-evangelical scholars eventually emulated Ramm’s model and found space within their own denominations and cultivated new relationships that helped them to expand and develop their ideas and their theology.

In many ways, Ramm’s personal background and physical journey mirrored his own theological development away from Fundamentalism towards neo-evangelicalism. From his conversion experience just before entering college; into his undergraduate years at the University of Washington, Seattle; to his introductory theological training at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (EBTS) in Philadelphia; to his pastorates and graduate studies in philosophy along the West Coast; and through his professorships in Minnesota, Texas, Philadelphia, and California, Ramm was frequently on the move throughout his life. Similarly, Ramm was never satisfied and continually sought, pursued, and moved towards a greater understanding of God. After coming to an intellectual crisis event while teaching an apologetics class at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) during the 1940s, he realized that he could no longer hold onto Fundamentalist

theological presuppositions, which were unable to bear the weight of the ideas they supported. At the same time, his studies at the University of Southern California (USC) helped him not only to develop a philosophy of science that related science to faith but also to understand why the relationship between the two was necessary. Thus, he eschewed Fundamentalist intellectual isolationism and “obscurantism,” which turned a blind eye to evidence and data in the name of religious faith, and found that the best path forward was to embark on a new theological path that connected Christian orthodoxy with biblical interpretation and various aspects of culture. New relationships that he developed with key neo-evangelicals such as evangelist Billy Graham, Edward Carnell of Fuller Seminary, and F. Alton Everest of the American Scientific Affiliation helped to solidify this commitment. Another key relationship that Ramm developed in the 1950s was with theologian Karl Barth. After studying with Barth in Basel, Switzerland, during the 1957–58 academic year, Ramm was emboldened to develop his theology without fear of asking difficult questions for which he would not necessarily have answers. Ramm returned home, and despite criticism from conservatives, who felt that his willingness to “explore” had ventured too far into liberalism, and from liberals, who believed that he remained overly bound by traditional Christian beliefs, many people found strength through his teaching, his theological work, and his extensive writing that took place over the remainder of his career.

One particular arena where Ramm developed his theology and from which many Christians found help was in the realm of science. At a time when many in the United States believed in the existence of an irreconcilable conflict between science and faith, Ramm’s thought served to create a new model of the relationship between reason and

faith, and demonstrated through his work and writings that one could be a Christian committed to traditional orthodoxy and engage with scientific discovery and data. After completing his graduate degrees in philosophy at USC, Ramm composed *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, which rejected both the idea of necessary conflict between science and faith as well as Fundamentalist efforts to read science into scripture. Instead, Ramm reconnected Christians with evangelical interpretations of the biblical texts from before the rise of the Fundamentalist movement, and he showed how scripture could be interpreted in ways that allowed Christians to embrace both traditional beliefs and science. The book found welcome reception from a widespread audience in many different denominations and in the neo-evangelical movement who agreed with the need for rapprochement between science and faith. Many Christians, after reading *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, felt that they could engage with science in various ways without fear of losing their faith. Ramm's subsequent scientific writings during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s also helped Christians to engage actively with emerging moral and ethical issues caused by the expansion and development of science as well.

Ramm's theology also continued to develop, and his work was published not only in scholarly journals, but also in popular neo-evangelical periodicals such as *Christianity Today* and *Eternity* magazine, which allowed regular members to follow along with him. Ramm's irenic and plainspoken style of writing unpacked difficult theological ideas and invited readers to explore theological topics and writers. His twenty-five books and more than one hundred fifty articles covered a spectrum of ideas and topics that reflected his own theological journey away from Fundamentalism and "evidentialism" towards an openness and willingness to explore and engage with different writers and their ideas. By

assuming a posture that was not unnecessarily defensive or hostile, Ramm blazed a path for students and readers away from restrictive dogmatism and towards respectable intellectual engagement.

Ramm's writing also occurred within the context of his continued work in American Baptist denominational (ABC-USA) schools and institutions. Throughout the span of his career, Ramm almost exclusively worked at ABC-USA schools such as California Baptist Theological Seminary, EBTS, and American Baptist Seminary of the West, from which he retired in 1987, and also served on various committees and task forces as part of his denominational commitments. Ramm's work as a professor at ABC institutions for more than twenty-five years helped to train hundreds of future American Baptist pastors and scholars. When free, however, Ramm also traveled extensively and taught at many other institutions both Baptist and non-Baptist within the United States and abroad, further affirming the dual identity that Ramm adopted as both a neo-evangelical and as an American Baptist.

Ramm quietly and courageously stepped beyond the boundaries of denominational and theological lines to create a dual neo-evangelical-Baptist identity. By the time of his death in 1992, many ABC schools, and the denomination itself, openly identified with several facets of the neo-evangelical movement. Ramm's curiosity, collegiality, and commitment to intellectual integrity created a place for other Christians to re-engage with theology and culture in fruitful ways. Bernard Ramm's development of a neo-evangelical-Baptist identity helped to open the doors for future conservative Christians to continue to grow and expand the realms of theological thought and study.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

American Baptist Churches USA “Identity Statement (1998)”¹

“We Are American Baptists” is an expression of Christian Faith representative of American Baptists adopted by the covenanting partners of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., 6/19/98. “We Are American Baptists” can be found in the Standing Rules, under Addendum #1.

American Baptists worship the triune God of the Bible, who is eternally one God in three persons. This one, true God is most clearly revealed to us in the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

American Baptists proclaim the Good News of the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, knowing that salvation (forgiveness of sins, release from guilt and condemnation, reconciliation with God) and eternal life are granted in grace to all who trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This Gospel is the central message of the Bible. American Baptists believe that the Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, is the divinely inspired Word of God, the final written authority and trustworthy for faith and practice. It is to be interpreted responsibly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit within the community of faith. The primary purpose of the Bible is to point to Jesus Christ, the living Lord of the Church.

Although Baptists have produced numerous confessions to express our common understandings of Christian faith, we hold the Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, as our final authority. We accept no humanly devised confession or creed as binding. American Baptists affirm that God is sovereign over all and that this sovereignty is expressed and realized through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we affirm the Lordship of Christ over the world and the church. We joyously confess that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord. We are called in loyalty to Jesus Christ to proclaim the power of the Holy Spirit, the Good News of God’s reconciling grace, and to declare the saving power of the Gospel to every human being and to every human institution. We celebrate Christ’s charge to “make disciples of all nations” and to bear witness to God’s redeeming reign in human affairs.

American Baptists are summoned to this mission in common with all Christians. With the whole body of Christ, we also believe that God has been revealed in Jesus Christ as in no other, and that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself” (II Corinthians 5:18). We anticipate the day when every creature and all creation, on earth and beyond, will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10–11).

¹ “Identity Statement (1998).” American Baptist Churches Website. <http://www.abc-usa.org/about-us/identity-statement-1998/> (accessed June 1, 2017).

God has given this particular community of believers called Baptists a distinctive history and experience. As we share in common with Christians everywhere, so Baptists everywhere celebrate a common heritage.

THEREFORE... With Baptist brothers and sisters around the world, we believe:
That the Bible is the final authority and trustworthy for faith and practice. It is to be interpreted responsibly under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit within the community of faith;

That the Church is a gathered fellowship of regenerated believers, a sign of the coming universal reign of God;

That the freedom to respond to the Lordship of Christ in all circumstances is fundamental to the Christian gospel and to human dignity; and

That witness to Christ is the ongoing task of every Christian and of every church.

Within the larger Baptist family, American Baptists emphasize convictions which direct our special task and ministry.

We affirm that God through Jesus Christ calls us to be:

A Redeemed People

- who claim a personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ;
- who follow the Lord in believer's baptism;
- who gather as a believer's church;
- who share in the meal of the kingdom known as the Lord's Supper;
- who honor the priesthood of all believers; and
- who live their faith as visible saints.

A Biblical People

- who affirm the centrality of Scripture in our lives;
- who pursue the study of God's inspired Word as a mandate for faith and practice; and
- who seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the understanding of Scripture, while respecting the common interpretation of Scripture within the community of believers.

A Worshiping People

- who gather regularly to praise God;
- who receive nourishment by communion with the Risen Christ;
- who share an open and public confession of faith; and
- who believe that personal devotion brings vitality to corporate celebration.

A Mission People

- who strive to fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples;

- who invite persons to receive salvation and follow Christ;
- who engage in educational, social, and health ministries;
- who seek justice for all persons; and
- who provide prayer and financial support to sustain a worldwide mission outreach.

An Interdependent People

- who affirm the Church's unity as given in Jesus Christ;
- who gladly embody in our practice the ministry of the whole people of God;
- who recognize God's gifts for ministry and honor all offices of pastoral ministry;
- who live and work together "in association;" and
- who bring the free church tradition to cooperative and ecumenical Christianity.

A Caring People

- who care for the needy, the weak, and the oppressed;
- who care for the earth and for all its creatures.

An Inclusive People

- who, gifted by a variety of backgrounds, find unity in diversity and diversity in unity;
- who embrace a pluralism of race, ethnicity, and gender; and
- who acknowledge that there are individual differences of conviction and theology.

A Contemporary People

- who have a remembrance for the past and a vision for the future;
- who are committed to religious liberty and to the separation of church and state;
- who call our present world to make Jesus Christ Lord of all life; and
- who trust the Holy Spirit for insight and power to live in the present age.
-

We further believe

- That God has called us forth to such an hour as this;
- That we live with a realizable hope;
- That all things are held together in Christ;
- That all creation will find its ultimate fulfillment in God;
- That we shall see the One whose we are; and
- That Jesus shall reign for ever and ever.

Biola University Doctrinal Statement²

Inasmuch as the University is interdenominational and yet theologically conservative, the Articles of Incorporation contain a doctrinal statement which is given below:

The Bible, consisting of all the books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God, a supernaturally given revelation from God Himself, concerning Himself, His being, nature, character, will and purposes; and concerning man, his nature, need and duty and destiny. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are without error or misstatement in their moral and spiritual teaching and record of historical facts. They are without error or defect of any kind.

There is one God, eternally existing and manifesting Himself to us in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Jesus was supernaturally conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin - Mary, a lineal descendant of David. He lived and taught and wrought mighty works and wonders and signs exactly as is recorded in the four Gospels. He was put to death by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate. God raised from the dead the body that had been nailed to the cross. The Lord Jesus after His crucifixion showed Himself to be alive to His disciples, appearing unto them by the space of 40 days. After this, the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, and the Father caused Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church. The Lord Jesus, before His incarnation, existed in the form of God and of His own choice laid aside His divine glory and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. In His pre-existent state, He was with God and was God. He is a divine person possessed of all the attributes of Deity, and should be worshiped as God by angels and man. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." All the words that He spoke during His earthly life were the words of God. There is absolutely no error of any kind in them, and by the words of Jesus Christ the words of all other teachers must be tested.

The Lord Jesus became in every respect a real man, possessed of all the essential characteristics of human nature.

By His death on the cross, the Lord Jesus made a perfect atonement for sin, by which the wrath of God against sinners is appeased and a ground furnished upon which God can deal in mercy with sinners. He redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse in our place. He who Himself was absolutely without sin was made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. The Lord Jesus is coming again to his earth, personally, bodily, and visibly. The return of our Lord is the blessed

² "Doctrinal Statement." Biola University. <https://www.biola.edu/about/doctrinal-statement> (accessed June 1, 2017).

hope of the believer, and in it God's purposes of grace toward mankind will find their consummation.

The Holy Spirit is a person, and is possessed of all the distinctively divine attributes. He is God.

Man was created in the image of God, after His likeness, but the whole human race fell in the fall of the first Adam. All men, until they accept the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior, are lost, darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, hardened in heart, morally and spiritually dead through their trespasses and sins. They cannot see, nor enter the Kingdom of God until they are born again of the Holy Spirit.

Men are justified on the simple and single ground of the shed blood of Christ and upon the simple and single condition of faith in Him who shed the blood, and are born again by the quickening, renewing, cleansing work of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the Word of God.

All those who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and their Lord, and who confess Him as such before their fellow men, become children of God and receive eternal life. They become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. At death their spirits depart to be with Christ in conscious blessedness, and at the Second Coming of Christ their bodies shall be raised and transformed into the likeness of the body of His glory.

All those who persistently reject Jesus Christ in the present life shall be raised from the dead and throughout eternity exist in the state of conscious, unutterable, endless torment of anguish.

The Church consists of all those who, in this present dispensation, truly believe in Jesus Christ. It is the body and bride of Christ, which Christ loves and for which He has given Himself.

There is a personal devil, a being of great cunning and power: "The prince of the power of the air," "The prince of this world," "The god of this age." He can exert vast power only so far as God suffers him to do so. He shall ultimately be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and shall be tormented day and night forever.

“Doctrinal Basis” of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary³

We believe that the Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, is inspired of God, and is of supreme and final authority in faith and life.

We believe in the supernatural as the vital element in the revelation and operation of the Christian Faith.

We believe in on God eternally existing in three Persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that man was created in the image of God, and that he sinned, and thereby incurred spiritual death.

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, and that He is true God and true man, and is the only and sufficient Mediator between God and man.

We believe in the vicarious death of the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins, in the resurrection of His body, His ascension into Heaven; and that salvation is received only through personal faith in Him.

We believe in the personality of the Holy Spirit and that His ministry is to reveal Christ to men in the regeneration and sanctification of their souls.

We believe that baptism is immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; setting forth the essential facts in redemption – the death and resurrection of Christ; also essential facts in the experience of the believer – death to sin and resurrection to new life.

We believe that a New Testament church is a body of believers thus baptized, associated for worship, service, the spread of the Gospel, and the establishing of the Kingdom in all the world.

We believe... that the Lord’s Supper is a commemoration of the Lord’s death until He comes.

Since its inception, the Doctrinal Basis has been signed annually by faculty and by members of the Board of Trustees. It has undergone only slight revisions, some of which were designed to make the language gender-neutral. In the early 1980s, provisions were made for non-Baptists who might not subscribe to the statement’s views on baptism.

³ Randall L. Frame, *Praise and Promise: A Pictorial History of The Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company, 2000), 14.

National Association of Evangelicals Statement of Faith⁴

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ “Statement of Faith.” National Association of Evangelicals Website.
<https://www.nae.net/statement-of-faith/> (accessed June 1, 2017).

Wheaton College Statement of Faith⁵

The doctrinal statement of Wheaton College, reaffirmed annually by its Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff, provides a summary of biblical doctrine that is consonant with evangelical Christianity. The statement accordingly reaffirms salient features of the historic Christian creeds, thereby identifying the College not only with the Scriptures but also with the reformers and the evangelical movement of recent years. The statement also defines the biblical perspective which informs a Wheaton education. These doctrines of the church cast light on the study of nature and man, as well as on man's culture.

WE BELIEVE in one sovereign God, eternally existing in three persons: the everlasting Father, His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, the giver of life; and we believe that God created the Heavens and the earth out of nothing by His spoken word, and for His own glory.

WE BELIEVE that God has revealed Himself and His truth in the created order, in the Scriptures, and supremely in Jesus Christ; and that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writing, so that they are fully trustworthy and of supreme and final authority in all they say.

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, was true God and true man, existing in one person and without sin; and we believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us as Lord of all, High Priest, and Advocate.

WE BELIEVE that God directly created Adam and Eve, the historical parents of the entire human race; and that they were created in His own image, distinct from all other living creatures, and in a state of original righteousness.

WE BELIEVE that our first parents sinned by rebelling against God's revealed will and thereby incurred both physical and spiritual death, and that as a result all human beings are born with a sinful nature that leads them to sin in thought, word, and deed.

WE BELIEVE in the existence of Satan, sin, and evil powers, and that all these have been defeated by God in the cross of Christ.

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, triumphing over all evil; and that all who believe in Him are justified by His shed blood and forgiven of all their sins.

⁵ "Statement of Faith and Educational Purpose." Wheaton College.
<http://www.wheaton.edu/About-Wheaton/Statement-of-Faith-and-Educational-Purpose> (accessed June 2, 2017).

WE BELIEVE that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God and are enabled to offer spiritual worship acceptable to God.

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit indwells and gives life to believers, enables them to understand the Scriptures, empowers them for godly living, and equips them for service and witness.

WE BELIEVE that the one, holy, universal Church is the body of Christ and is composed of the communities of Christ's people. The task of Christ's people in this world is to be God's redeemed community, embodying His love by worshipping God with confession, prayer, and praise; by proclaiming the gospel of God's redemptive love through our Lord Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth by word and deed; by caring for all of God's creation and actively seeking the good of everyone, especially the poor and needy.

WE BELIEVE in the blessed hope that Jesus Christ will soon return to this earth, personally, visibly, and unexpectedly, in power and great glory, to gather His elect, to raise the dead, to judge the nations, and to bring His Kingdom to fulfillment.

WE BELIEVE in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, the everlasting punishment of the lost, and the everlasting blessedness of the saved.

APPENDIX B

Bernard Ramm's Scientific Works in Chronological Order

These works are arranged chronologically to demonstrate the development in Ramm's thinking on science and faith.

Ramm, Bernard L. "The Idealism of Jeans and Eddington in Modern Physical Theory." M.A. thesis, University of Southern California, 1947.

———. "An Investigation of Some Recent Efforts to Justify Metaphysical Statements from Science with Special Reference to Physics." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1950.

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- . “Substitutionary Pregnancy.” *Eternity* 27 (May 1976): 53–54.
- . “The Elderly—Who Will Care?” *Eternity* 27 (July 1976): 42–43.
- . “The Gene Death of Humanity.” *Eternity* 27 (August 1976): 45, 48.
- . “Aladdin’s Lamp or Pandora’s Box?” *Eternity* 34 (February 1983): 21.
- . “Does Anybody Have the Right to Tell Me What to Do?” *Christianity Today* 27 (November 1983): 46–49.
- . “An Outline of Eric Rust on Science and Theology.” Typewritten manuscript. Fleming Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.¹
- . “The Making of an Evangelical Mind.” Unpublished Manuscript.²

¹ This typewritten manuscript is undated.

² This manuscript covers Ramm’s overall theological movement in life – from his conversion, to his introduction to Fundamentalism, to his shift to neo-evangelicalism. Although the focus is mainly theological, components of the manuscript, as cited at various points throughout the dissertation, address the topic of science and faith.

APPENDIX C

Bernard Ramm's Complete Bibliography in Chronological Order

The complete list of Ramm's works are arranged chronologically to demonstrate the development in Ramm's theology.³

1940s–50s

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