

Activist Scholar and Entrepreneurial Administrator: The Contributions of Carl F. H. Henry and Kenneth S. Kantzer to Evangelical Theological Education

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Carl F. H. Henry (1913–2003) and Kenneth S. Kantzer (1917–2002) rank among the most prominent American evangelical theological educators of the second half of the twentieth century.¹ In one respect, the two men share significant similarities: both were doctoral students in Boston in the 1940s, Henry at Boston University and Kantzer at Harvard; both taught at Wheaton College, even sharing office space at one point; and both served as editors of the evangelical magazine *Christianity Today*.² However, in their primary contributions, Henry and Kantzer differ significantly. Henry was a professor and prolific journalist and author who gratefully records being “divinely diverted from administrative work” in the 1940s, despite several close calls.³ Kantzer,

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at a meeting of the Chicago Area Theological Library Association on April 24, 2015, examining the history of theological education in the greater Chicago area, where both Henry and Kantzer invested years of service.

² Henry was founding editor from 1956 to 1968; Kantzer was the third editor, from 1978 to 1982. See “Message from the Publisher,” *Christianity Today*, April 7, 1978, 3; “Editor’s Note,” *Christianity Today*, October 22, 1982, 4.

³ See Carl F. H. Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian: An Autobiography* (Waco, TX: Word, 1986), 110, for his “divinely diverted” comment. The specific offices and institutions (all Baptist) were academic dean of Gordon Divinity School in Boston (*Confessions*, 107) and president of both Sioux Falls College in South Dakota and Western Baptist Theological Seminary in Portland, Oregon (Henry, *Confessions*, 109–10). In 1963 Bethel Seminary

on the other hand, already chair of a ten-person department at Wheaton College, passed up a year-long sabbatical to assume the deanship of a small, struggling ethnic denominational school.⁴ He would transform Trinity Seminary into Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS), one of the largest and most influential evangelical seminaries. Kantzer's scholarly publications were limited to journal articles and book chapters, but his visionary academic leadership enabled many other scholars to write scores of volumes. The two evangelical educational activists, then, represent two different versions of productive theological scholarship-activism.

Evangelical Activism

David Bebbington's well-known quadrilateral identified activism as one of the defining elements of Evangelicalism, along with conversionism, biblicism, and crucicentrism.⁵ Mark Noll has acknowledged that evangelical activism has accomplished much in missions, evangelism, and church planting, while lamenting its short-sighted emphasis on immediate action as an impediment to long-term projects of greater depth.⁶ "The tendency of American evangelicals, when confronted with a problem, is to act."⁷ When evangelicals identify a need—whether unconverted persons, substance abuse, or the effects of natural disasters—activism inclines them to undertake solutions that eliminate or ameliorate the effects in the short-term. Incalculable good has been done by evangelical work in evangelism, church planting, rescue missions, disaster relief, and many more such activities. On the other hand, evangelicals' activism makes them impatient with investing time and money in research, for instance, into the socio-economic structural factors involved in substance abuse or

(MN), also Baptist, inquired about his interest in serving as a vice-president and dean (Henry, *Confessions*, 217).

⁴ Paul Bechtel, *Wheaton College: A Heritage Remembered* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1984), 260; "Biography of Kenneth S. Kantzer," in *Doing Theology in Today's World: Essays in Honor of Kenneth S. Kantzer*, ed. John D. Woodbridge and Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 496; see also Scott Manetsch, *Trinity Evangelical Divinity School: The Early Years* (Deerfield, IL: Trinity International University, 2014), 7, hereafter cited as Manetsch, *The Early Years*. I am indebted to this excellent brief history for information, analysis, and direction to sources.

⁵ David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 2–17.

⁶ Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), e.g., 8, 29, 141, 243.

⁷ Noll, *Scandal*, 243.

homelessness. Urgent needs demand immediate solutions, to the typical evangelical way of thinking. Noll's assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of evangelicals' restless activism helpfully illuminates the work of both Henry and Kantzer.

Henry once confessed, "In some ways, I'm my own worst enemy, torn constantly between the academic and the activist."⁸ Kantzer himself described Henry as a "scholar" and "theological strategist."⁹ Speaking often of "striking a blow" for the faith, of "advances" and "penetrating the secular world," Henry was always concerned about consequences, about accomplishing something with his teaching, writing, and promoting.

Embodying Chicago architect Daniel Burnham's famous motto, Henry made no small plans; indeed, sometimes his plans bordered on the grandiose. The lead editorial in the first issue of *Christianity Today*, with Henry serving as editor, stated that the magazine's goals included "national stability and survival," "national problems," and "the contemporary social crisis."¹⁰ According to George Marsden, Henry was "a dreamer of big dreams."¹¹ In this, Henry was not alone, for other evangelicals such as Harold John Ockenga and Wilbur Smith likewise conceived grand plans for publications, organizations, and events.¹² Henry and his associates Ockenga, Smith, and Edward John Carnell hoped that their newly founded Fuller Theological Seminary would lead a new Reformation that would preserve and renew the church and Western culture, "rebuilding Western civilization."¹³

⁸ Carl F. H. Henry to Gordon H. Clark, June 13, 1970. Carl F. H. Henry Papers, Roling Library Archives, Trinity International University, Deerfield, Illinois.

⁹ Kenneth S. Kantzer, "Carl Ferdinand Howard Henry," in *God and Culture: Essays in Honor of Carl F. H. Henry*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993): 374.

¹⁰ *Christianity Today*, October 15, 1956, 20–21.

¹¹ George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 26; see also chapter 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 26. Owen Strachan likewise observed that "the neo-evangelicals, led by Carl Henry, dreamed big." Strachan, "Carl Henry's University Crusade: The Spectacular Promise and Ultimate Failure of Crusade University," *Trinity Journal* 35 NS, no. 2 (2014): 92.

¹³ Henry, *Confessions*, 117; Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 25–26, 60–63. Marsden entitles chapter 3, on the opening year of Fuller Seminary, "Rebuilding Western Civilization." Cf. Rudolph L. Nelson, "Fundamentalism at Harvard: The Case of Edward John Carnell," *Quarterly Review* 2, no. 2 (1982): 94, who refers to "the grand scope of Carnell's purpose" in *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948); Rudolph Nelson, *The Making and Unmaking of an Evangelical Mind: The Case of Edward Carnell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 216.

Kenneth Kantzer's life and work do not display the same type of promotional activity,¹⁴ yet his greatest contribution to Evangelicalism is likely his innovative leadership in transforming Trinity Seminary into Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS) as dean (1963–1978). Kantzer's vision for what TEDS could be, and for what American Evangelicalism needed, exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit of evangelical activism. The drive to build and enlarge, to transform, to reach more people and extend farther geographically has characterized evangelicals since Whitefield and the Wesleys.¹⁵

In the remainder of this article, I examine Henry and Kantzer through the lens of the complex, restless evangelical activism that Noll both salutes and bemoans. Their scholarly activism illustrates evangelical scholarship and the range and pitfalls of evangelical activism.

Carl F. H. Henry (1913–2003)

Often called the leading evangelical theologian of the later twentieth century,¹⁶ Carl Henry was one of four founding professors of Fuller Theological Seminary¹⁷ and the founding editor of *Christianity Today*, the evangelical magazine launched in 1956 to counter the *Christian Century*.¹⁸ Henry formatively shaped evangelical theological education, teaching throughout the United States and abroad, with a prolific writing and editing output: thirty-three books authored and ten edited, in

¹⁴ Kantzer, along with Carl Henry, was co-convenor and co-chair of Evangelical Affirmations (1978) and was a member of the board of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (1978–1988), but such positions are notably few compared to others, including Henry.

¹⁵ See Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003); D.W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005) and Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*.

¹⁶ According to Kantzer, Henry “is reckoned *the* theologian *par excellence* of the second half of this century.” Kantzer, “The Carl Henry Who Might Have Been,” *Christianity Today*, April 5, 1993, 15, emphasis original. *Time Magazine* (February 14, 1977) stated that the “publication of the two volumes [of *God, Revelation, and Authority*] establishes Baptist Henry, 64, as the leading theologian of the nation’s growing evangelical flank.”

¹⁷ See Henry, *Confessions*, chapter 8, “Fuller and Its Fortunes,” 114–43; Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 26. Henry taught at Fuller 1947–1956.

¹⁸ Henry, *Confessions*, 144. Henry edited the magazine from 1956 to 1968. Henry’s major work is *God, Revelation, and Authority: The God Who Stoops, Stands, and Stays* (6 vols.; Waco: Word, 1976–1983; reprinted, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1999).

addition to scores of magazine and journal articles.¹⁹

Karl Ferdinand Howard Heinrich was born to German immigrants Karl and Johanna Heinrich, in New York City on January 22, 1913.²⁰ Young Karl spoke German exclusively until entering public school, but when the United States entered World War I, the family anglicized their name and ceased speaking German, even in private.²¹ Despite his late start with English, Carl eventually skipped three grades, graduating from high school at sixteen.²² He resumed this accelerated pace upon entering Wheaton College six years later, completing his BA in three years (1938). He then pursued simultaneously an MA in theology from Wheaton in Chicago's far western suburbs and a BD from Northern Baptist Seminary in Chicago, completing both in the spring of 1941.²³ He later completed a ThD from Northern Baptist in 1942 and a PhD in philosophy from Boston University in 1949, having also taken courses in philosophy at Loyola University in Chicago and later at Indiana University during the summer of 1944.²⁴

Prior to serving at Fuller Seminary and *Christianity Today*, Henry taught at Wheaton College (part-time, 1935–1947) and Northern Baptist (part-time, 1938–1942; full-time, 1942–1947). For five summers, while taking summer courses at Boston University toward his PhD, Henry also taught at Gordon College.²⁵ He would later teach at Eastern Baptist Seminary (1969–1974) and in 1971 became visiting professor of theology at TEDS.²⁶

Journalism fundamentally shaped Henry's life and ministry, beginning in high school when he reported (simultaneously) on sports for rival newspapers in Islip, Long Island.²⁷ He eventually served as a news reporter or stringer for Long Island papers and several major papers in

¹⁹ A comprehensive, but not exhaustive, bibliography of Henry's writings exceeds one hundred pages.

²⁰ Henry, *Confessions*, 15.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²² *Ibid.*, 16, 30.

²³ Northern was at that time located in the near West Side of Chicago on Washington Boulevard. See Warren Cameron Young, *Commit What You Have Heard: A History of Northern Baptist Seminary, 1913–1988* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1988), 49–53.

²⁴ Henry, *Confessions*, 107, 109, 120–23.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 332, 339, 353.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 30. "Since the editors were not on speaking terms and seldom used bylines, neither one knew that I was also reporting for the other."

New York City and was appointed editor of a weekly paper at nineteen.²⁸ Entering Wheaton College at age twenty-two as an experienced journalist, Henry reported news for Chicago and suburban papers and taught at the college, first typing courses, then journalism.²⁹ When Henry entered Northern Baptist, he also taught journalism courses, including religious journalism, in the undergraduate school, as well as English and American literature, continuing to teach graduate courses in religious journalism after he became professor of theology.³⁰ Throughout these years, Henry “regularly churned out newspaper and magazine features from 1942 onward, increasingly for evangelical publications.”³¹ These feature articles eventually numbered more than forty, primarily in evangelical publications such as *The Sunday School Times*, *Sunday School Promoter*, *Power*, *Good News*, *HIS*, and *Moody Monthly*.

Publicity work provided another outlet for Henry’s journalism well into the 1950s, locally (in Chicago and Pasadena),³² nationally,³³ and internationally.³⁴ Notably, Henry wrote his Northern Baptist ThD dissertation on “Successful Church Publicity.”³⁵ This is a striking choice for a doctoral dissertation in theology, even though the title page of the published book identifies Henry as “Instructor in Religious Journalism, Northern Baptist Seminary” and “Instructor of Journalism, Wheaton Col-

²⁸ Ibid., 33–41.

²⁹ Ibid., 60–64.

³⁰ Ibid., 103.

³¹ Ibid., 111.

³² In Chicago, among others, the annual Soldier Field Easter Sunrise Service (Henry, *Confessions*, 100, 102); Life Begins Campaign, April–June 1946 (Henry, *Confessions*, 111); Christian Worker’s Foundation (see <http://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/memorial/carlhenry/henry16.html>); and the Finney Sesquicentennial Memorial Conference (Chicago, June 21–28, 1942). In Pasadena, the Rose Bowl Easter Sunrise Service, whose committee Henry “spearheaded” (Henry, *Confessions*, 100). Institutional publicity for Fuller was also involved. Henry’s semester sabbatical in fall 1953 compensated “for research and writing time preempted by development drives duty” (Henry, *Confessions*, 132; cf. 128).

³³ E.g., the early annual meetings of the National Association of Evangelicals (Henry, *Confessions*, 106).

³⁴ With Billy Graham, Henry co-convoked and promoted the World Congress of Evangelism in Berlin in 1966 (Henry, *Confessions*, 252–62). Conference papers were published as *One Race, One Gospel, One Task: Official Reference Volumes: Papers and Reports*, ed. Carl F.H. Henry and W. Stanley Mooneyham (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967).

³⁵ Published as *Successful Church Publicity: A Guidebook for Christian Publicists* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1943); it went through at least two editions.

lege.” The dissertation reflected his earlier profession, current teaching, and continuing role in evangelical publicity. Henry describes *Successful Church Publicity* as an “appraisal of religious journalism,” which is not self-evidently equivalent to “church publicity.” Henry then identifies the goal of such publicity or journalism as “the propagation and defense of the faith.”³⁶ The relationship of “journalism as publicity” and “journalism as proclamation and apologetics” is fundamental to Henry’s contribution to Evangelicalism, though unduly neglected.³⁷ Henry’s activist-scholar dilemma is, more precisely, a journalist/publicist-scholar dilemma.³⁸

Perhaps Henry’s most notable choice of activism over scholarship was his leaving Fuller Seminary to edit *Christianity Today*, despite a lengthy list of future scholarly projects he regularly complained was not being accomplished.³⁹ We might understand Henry’s assumption of the editorship as a sacrificial act on behalf of the larger evangelical movement, though it is not clear that this was Henry’s motivation.⁴⁰ In Henry’s words, “the hours of opportunity had struck for a new evangelical magazine.”⁴¹ This was a strategic opportunity he could not neglect.

The decision to locate *Christianity Today* in Washington DC reflected Henry’s desire for the magazine to be close to the center of political action. When the magazine board chose in 1977 to relocate to Carol Stream, Illinois, Henry told *Newsweek* that the decision “seems to reverse the ideal

³⁶ Henry, *Successful Church Publicity*, “Preface to the First Edition” (unpaginated).

³⁷ Note the description of Henry as “an aggressive and crusading journalist,” “Carl Henry the Journalist,” *Evangelical Thrust* 4, no. 5 (May 1978): 8. *Successful Church Publicity* deserves a careful analysis for insights into journalism’s contribution to Henry’s theology.

³⁸ Henry’s rather distinctive style reflects his journalism background, including headline writing, in which nouns are made into verbs (e.g., his references to “foregrounding” a subject to make it more prominent). The memoir of the noted newspaper journalist and war historian S.L.A. Marshall (*Bringing Up the Rear: A Memoir* [San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1979]), an older contemporary of Henry’s who began his journalism career a decade earlier, shows notable similarities.

³⁹ See his comments at the time in correspondence and his later editorial comments, both found throughout his *Confessions*.

⁴⁰ See *Confessions*, 144–74, for Henry’s account of the planning and inauguration of the magazine. For more on the journalistic activism of *Christianity Today*, see Phyllis E. Alsdurf, “The Founding of *Christianity Today* Magazine and the Construction of an American Evangelical Identity,” *Journal of Religious and Theological Information* 9, nos. 1–2 (2010): 20–43; Daryl Alan Porter, “*Christianity Today*: Its History and Development, 1956–1978” (ThM thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1978).

⁴¹ Henry, *Confessions*, 148.

of evangelical penetration of secular society that motivated the founders of *Christianity Today*.⁴²

By 1956 Henry had published twelve books, including three of his four academic theses and dissertations, and had edited three more. Henry's output during this period has no evangelical rival for size or for the complex mixture of journalism and theology. Before he wrote his dissertation-turned-book on church publicity, he had published his Northern BD thesis on *The Missionary and the Press*.⁴³ Between 1939 and 1946, he edited a volume of Wheaton chapel talks, edited an evangelistic college pictorial entitled *Youth Looks at Life*,⁴⁴ co-edited a book of evangelical sermons,⁴⁵ and wrote books on his father-in-law's mission work in the Cameroon,⁴⁶ stewardship,⁴⁷ and Chicago's Pacific Garden Mission.⁴⁸ He later wrote a combination travelogue-news report on his sabbatical tour of Palestine, the Mediterranean, and Africa.⁴⁹

His more theological publications in this period are even more impressive, including *Remaking the Modern Mind* (1946), the widely influential *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947), and seven more books in quick succession.⁵⁰ The lengthy *Christian Personal Ethics* (1957) was largely written during this time.⁵¹ Henry's early theological writings

⁴² *Ibid.*, 364; see also Douglas A. Sweeney, "Christianity Today" in *Popular Religious Magazines of the United States*, ed. P. Mark Fackler and Charles H. Lippy (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995), 147.

⁴³ *The Missionary and the Press* (Chicago: Good News, 1941).

⁴⁴ Privately printed, March 1939.

⁴⁵ *Not by Bread Alone: Wheaton Chapel Talks* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1940).

⁴⁶ *Bender in the Cameroons: The Story of Missionary Triumph in a Dark Region of the World's Darkest Continent* (Cleveland: Roger Williams, 1940).

⁴⁷ *Such as I Have: The Stewardship of Talent* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1946). This is notable as a rare Henry publication with a mainline Christian publisher.

⁴⁸ *The Pacific Garden Mission: A Doorway to Heaven* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1942). This book enjoyed at least twelve printings and at least four lightly revised editions.

⁴⁹ *Glimpses of a Sacred Land* (Boston: Wilde, 1953). See Henry, *Confessions*, 131.

⁵⁰ *Remaking the Modern Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946; rev. ed., 1948); *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947); *Notes on the Doctrine of God* (Boston: Wilde, 1948); *The Protestant Dilemma: An Analysis of the Current Impasse in Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948); *Giving a Reason for Our Hope* (Boston: Wilde, 1949); *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology* (Boston: Wilde, 1950); *The Drift of Western Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951); *Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen, 1951).

⁵¹ *Christian Personal Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957). See Henry, *Confessions*, 140.

introduced and interpreted the latest American and European theological works for evangelical readers. He read more widely than most evangelicals, aided no doubt by his facility with German,⁵² and served as editor, literary editor, or book review editor for several evangelical periodicals.⁵³

Leading by example, Henry also called evangelicals to address the wider world of ideas and thinkers, including social and political issues, as they published evangelical scholarly literature. Henry decried the Fundamentalist separatism that dismissed thoughts and thinkers outside their own ecclesial circles and ignored the broader culture.⁵⁴ He insisted that evangelical scholars should read the leading contemporary writings from non-evangelicals. This was a novel, sometimes even alarming, suggestion for an ecclesial community too often inclined to read only its own literature. Carl Henry's theological writings reflected his reading patterns. Few other fundamentalists, evangelicals, or conservative confessional theologians wrote books that engaged thinkers and issues outside of their own ecclesial communities.⁵⁵ Most conservative theological books were doctrinal expositions, focused on Scripture or a confessional heritage.⁵⁶

⁵² Even as a native German speaker, however, Henry needed help reading Swedish. Henry met for several Saturdays with a Swedish Covenant pastor in Los Angeles for assistance in reading Anders Nygren's untranslated doctoral dissertation, *Religiöst apriori* (*Confessions*, 245).

⁵³ *Good Books Digest* (associate editor, January–March 1946); *Christian Life and Times* (contributing editor, May 1946–April 1947); *Religious Digest*, which merged with *Christian Life and Times* (contributing editor, January 1947–December 1947); *Gideon* (author of monthly column, “Book Lover’s Rendezvous,” November 1948–December 1949); *United Evangelical Action* (various editorial positions, August 1, 1945–December 15, 1955).

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Henry, *Uneasy Conscience*, chapters 6–7, and Henry, *Confessions*, 94, where he faults Wheaton College’s graduate school in the late 1930s and early 1940s for “its lack of touch with contemporary European trends.” This commitment also led to Henry’s call for a Christian university and, later, the formation of the Institute for Advanced Christian Studies (IFACS). For IFACS, see Henry, *Confessions*, 341–44.

⁵⁵ Louis Berkhof published the forty-seven-page *Recent Trends in Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1944), a lecture originally presented at Moody Bible Institute. Cornelius Van Til wrote at greater length (384 pages) about Karl Barth and Emil Brunner in *The New Modernism* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1946).

⁵⁶ E.g., Louis Berkhof (Christian Reformed), *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1932), later revised as *Systematic Theology* (1941); *Vicarious Atonement through Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1936); *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950); *The Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951); *The Second Coming of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953); J. Theodore Mueller (Missouri Synod), *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1934); *Faith of Our Fathers: A Review*

The juxtaposition of these formidable journalistic and theological publication efforts is striking. Henry had much to say about contemporary theological developments and the way forward. He also had a considerable interest in organizing and promoting the (primarily) evangelistic efforts of other evangelicals. Henry's journalistic output decreased over time, but he would publish at least eight essays on journalism or religious journalism after leaving *Christianity Today* in 1968. When local organizers neglected local events, he could, on the spur of the moment, write a feature article, publicizing his own speaking engagements in the process.⁵⁷ Carl F. H. Henry was compelled to announce and promote, to explain and clarify Christianity. He was an activist-theologian, continually torn between scholarship and leading and promoting evangelical causes, often combining both activities.

Kenneth S. Kantzer

Born March 29, 1917, in Detroit, Michigan, Kenneth S. Kantzer received catechetical training in his family's Lutheran church.⁵⁸ By his own admission, he lost whatever faith he had gained there and by high school considered himself an atheist.⁵⁹ Kantzer experienced an evangelical conversion at Ashland College in Ohio, where he completed his BA degree in 1938, going on to earn an MA in modern history at Ohio State (1939) and a BD (1942) and STM (1943) from Faith Theological Semi-

of Our Holy Christian Faith as Set Forth in the Apostles' Creed (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939); *Thy Kingdom Come* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1935), *My Church and Others: A Summary of the Teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as Distinguished from Those of Other Denominations* (3rd ed., 1945); Lewis Sperry Chafer (dispensational), *Systematic Theology* (8 vols.; Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947); John F. Walvoord (dispensational), *The Holy Spirit* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1943); and H. Orton Wiley (Nazarene), *Christian Theology* (3 vols.; Kansas City, MO: Nazarene, 1940–1943). Henry also contributed a doctrinal volume, *Notes on the Doctrine of God* (1948), but this is the exception. Some of his books also have chapters on doctrinal loci, but these treatments survey the contemporary viewpoints at considerable length. See, e.g., *The Protestant Dilemma*, in which chapters 2–4 present the “mid-century view” of revelation, sin, and Christ, respectively.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., “Carl Henry the Journalist,” 7–8.

⁵⁸ Carl F. H. Henry and Kenneth Kantzer, “Standing on the Promises,” *Christianity Today*, September 16, 1996, 28.

⁵⁹ Kenneth S. Kantzer, “Why I Chose the Ev. [sic] Free Church,” *Evangelical Beacon*, July 7, 1964, 6; “Standing on the Promises,” 29.

nary in Wilmington, Delaware.⁶⁰ After his seminary graduation, Kantzer moved to Boston to pastor a church in Rockport, Massachusetts, while teaching Hebrew part-time at Gordon College and Divinity School. He received a PhD from Harvard in the history of philosophy and religion in 1950, writing on “John Calvin’s Theory of the Knowledge of God and the Word of God.”⁶¹ In 1946 Kantzer joined the faculty of Wheaton College, eventually becoming department chair of Bible, Philosophy, and Religious Education.⁶² At this time, he moved his ordination to the Norwegian and Danish Free Church Association ministerial association, later the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA).⁶³

In the early 1960s, the EFCA’s Trinity Seminary, newly moved from Chicago to Deerfield, Illinois, faced increasing enrollment and financial challenges. Enrollment dropped from fifty-eight students in the 1959–1960 academic year⁶⁴ to only thirty-five students by fall 1961,⁶⁵ and the seminary suffered significant deficits.⁶⁶ When Trinity’s president H. Wilbert Norton approached Kantzer about becoming dean, he initially “turned the invitation down flatly,” in part because of Trinity’s “low academic standards.”⁶⁷ Yet Kantzer was deeply interested in initiatives for improving evangelical theological education. Wheaton, however, would not attempt a first-rate seminary, increasingly focused on under-

⁶⁰ “Standing on the Promises,” 29; “Kenneth Sealer Kantzer,” 182. Kantzer wrote the 195-page “God and Magog,” likely as a thesis for his STM degree at Faith Seminary. The library catalog at Covenant Theological Seminary dates it between 1942 and 1950 (see the OCLC record #61282947, available in the WorldCat catalog).

⁶¹ This was likely supervised by J.A.C.F. Auer, who specialized in the “philosophy of the Reformation” and taught courses expounding “the thought of the great men of the sixteenth century, especially John Calvin.” Levering Reynolds Jr., “The Later Years (1880–1953),” in *The Harvard Divinity School: Its Place in Harvard University and in American Culture*, ed. George Hunston Williams (Boston: Beacon, 1954), 215–16; cf. 220–21. See also Kenneth S. Kantzer, “Calvin and the Holy Scriptures,” pages 115–55 in *Inspiration and Interpretation*, ed. John F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957). Kantzer stated that this chapter contained the heart of the dissertation. Conversation with author, Spring 1990, St. Paul, Minnesota.

⁶² Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 260; “Biography of Kenneth S. Kantzer,” 495.

⁶³ Kantzer, “Why I Chose the Ev. Free,” 6; Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 7.

⁶⁴ Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 36, n. 16.

⁶⁵ *Evangelical Beacon*, October 10, 1961, 10.

⁶⁶ Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 3.

⁶⁷ “An Interview with Kenneth S. Kantzer” in David V. Martin, *Entrusted with the Gospel: Trinity International University, 1897–1997* (Deerfield, IL: Trinity International University, 1998), 142, 144; Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 7.

graduate liberal arts education. If Trinity would commit to the changes required for an academically demanding seminary, Kantzer would accept the deanship.⁶⁸

Kantzer became dean, passing up a year-long sabbatical in which he had planned to write a book on Karl Barth's theology. Kantzer had attended Barth's lectures and seminars in Basel during a previous sabbatical and had already published an article on Barth's Christology.⁶⁹ When Kantzer accepted the deanship at Trinity, he returned the money raised by Wheaton College's senior class to fund his sabbatical.⁷⁰ Already shouldering administrative duties as departmental chair, Kantzer sacrificed a career of teaching, research, and writing in taking up the dean's responsibilities at Trinity. He never entirely left teaching, but the amount of teaching allowed in an academic dean's schedule was minimal.

To the EFCA constituency, Kantzer spoke of "a great vacuum" in evangelical seminary education of "a high order."⁷¹ Evangelicals required faithful, fervent seminary education that also maintained "high standards of Christian scholarship."⁷² "True scholarship" is "one of God's prize gifts," and evangelicals, Kantzer insisted, need not fear it.⁷³ Accordingly, the EFCA would be financially responsible for the school, faculty would not be pressured to join the EFCA, and the seminary would provide a high level of scholarship and instruction for ministerial training.⁷⁴ TEDS was to be "a love gift from the EFCA to the entire church of Jesus Christ."⁷⁵

Kantzer acknowledged that these mutual commitments "involved some radical applications that were difficult for some [board] members to swallow."⁷⁶ In particular, faculty received leeway on church polity and

⁶⁸ Kantzer, "Why I Chose the Ev. Free," 6–7; David V. Martin, *Entrusted with the Gospel: Trinity International University, 1897–1997* (Deerfield, IL: Trinity International University, 1998), 73–74; "An Interview with Kenneth S. Kantzer," 141–46.

⁶⁹ Kenneth S. Kantzer, "The Christology of Karl Barth," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 1, no. 2 (1958): 25–28.

⁷⁰ Todd Herz, "Kantzer, Kenneth S., 1917–2002," *Christianity Today*, August 5, 2002, 20; Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 7.

⁷¹ Kantzer, "Why I Chose the Ev. Free," 6–7. Published in July 1964, these remarks were earlier delivered as an address to the denominational general conference in summer 1963.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ "An Interview with Kenneth S. Kantzer," 144–45.

⁷⁵ Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 9.

⁷⁶ "An Interview with Kenneth S. Kantzer," 145.

eschatology not extended to EFCA ordained ministers. Kantzer's commitment to raising the level of scholarship at Trinity entailed additional financial commitments. He insisted on immediately adding at least "three outstanding scholars,"⁷⁷ with salaries matching "the best evangelical seminaries."⁷⁸ This salary policy resulted in a two-tier structure, with current faculty at lower levels and new hires at a significantly higher rate. This was a temporary arrangement, as additional new hires were paid at the higher rate and the current faculty soon departed.⁷⁹

By 1965 Kantzer boasted of the academic pedigree of his faculty.⁸⁰ In 1967 he announced that competition for entrance had increased sharply, with less than half of applicants accepted.⁸¹ In Kantzer's first year (1963–1964), TEDS added MA degrees in every theological department, emblematic of its new goals of preparing students for university doctoral programs.⁸² Two professional doctorates, the doctor in missiology (later intercultural studies) and the doctor of ministry, were introduced by the late 1970s, and an EdD, later revised to a PhD, in education was launched. However, funding constraints delayed until 1986 the PhD program in theological studies, one of Kantzer's longstanding desires. The library, only fifteen thousand volumes when Kantzer became dean, surpassed fifty thousand volumes by 1973 (in part because of a donation from Carl Henry's library).⁸³ The growth and development of TEDS as

⁷⁷ Ibid. The first three faculty added were Wilbur Smith (English Bible), Walter Liefeld (New Testament), and Lloyd Perry (practical theology). The next year added Robert D. Culver (systematic theology), who had taught at Trinity Seminary for several years in the 1950s, John Warwick Montgomery (librarian, church history), Richard Troup (Christian education), Richard Longenecker (New Testament), and Walter Kaiser (Old Testament). The following year Gleason Archer (OT) and David Hesselgrave (missions) joined the faculty, with further significant additions, such as Clark Pinnock (systematic theology), Herbert Kane (missions), Gary Collins (pastoral counseling), Thomas McComiskey (OT), and David Wells (church history), before the decade ended. Visiting professors and lecturers included Paul Little (evangelism), John Gerstner (church history), and Carl Henry (systematic theology). Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 11.

⁷⁸ "An Interview with Kenneth S. Kantzer," 145–46.

⁷⁹ Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 12.

⁸⁰ Including Harvard, Columbia, Strassbourg, Chicago, Northwestern, and Brandeis, with Cambridge, St. Andrews, Aberdeen, London, Manchester, Syracuse, and Loyola (Chicago), among others, represented in the next decade. See Kenneth S. Kantzer, "Trinity Evangelical Divinity School," *Evangelical Beacon*, January 19, 1965, 4.

⁸¹ Ibid., 11.

⁸² Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 10.

⁸³ John Warwick Montgomery, "Don't Worry about the Seminary Library?," *Evangelical Beacon*, January 19, 1965, 9; Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 18.

a center for evangelical theological study mirrored the broader evangelical intellectual resurgence, challenging the stereotype of evangelicals as narrow and uneducated and easing the evangelical inferiority complex.⁸⁴

Kantzer was “innovative down to his toenails,” according to one TEDS faculty member.⁸⁵ Under his leadership, TEDS offered an “Evening School” with courses for laity, summer courses at Camp-of-the-Woods in the Adirondacks in upstate New York, and an Alumni Institute.⁸⁶ These and other formats for instruction increased the visibility of TEDS among potential students and supporters and expanded its contribution to the membership of the EFCA, both ministers and laity, and beyond to the broader evangelical world.

Kantzer’s administrative activism at Trinity was sustained and multifaceted. For fifteen years he was academic dean of TEDS (1963–1978). After returning from his editorship of *Christianity Today*, he served for nearly a decade as president, then chancellor, of Trinity College (1982–1983, 1983–1991), navigating the college through complex and difficult challenges that imperiled the school’s existence. In the latter portion of this period, Kantzer also served, fittingly, as director of the newly launched PhD program in theological studies (1986–1990), as TEDS finally realized his long-cherished dream of a scholarly evangelical doctoral program in theology.

Academic Activists: A Study in Contrasts

For Henry and Kantzer, in common with many evangelical academics, mainline denominational and university academics remained a constant point of reference. Both earned PhD degrees from such schools, though they had remained within fundamentalist (Kantzer, at Faith Seminary) or evangelical (Henry, at Wheaton and Northern Baptist) boundaries for their master’s degrees in theology. Both men aspired to match the academic standards for scholars, instruction, and resources while seeking with equal vigilance to avoid the doctrinal “drift” they identified in liberalism and modernism. Other traditions, such as confessional Lutherans and Reformed as well as Pietists, do not appear to have been as focused on measuring themselves over against the mainline schools and universities.

⁸⁴ Manetsch, *The Early Years*, 11–12.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

The fundamentalist heritage of Henry, Kantzer, and many evangelicals may explain this. Those whose heritage had left, ignored, or avoided the establishment schools for a time seemed most concerned to re-enter and measure themselves in terms of those schools.⁸⁷

Henry was a member of the Northern Baptist Convention (later the American Baptist Churches in the USA). He taught first at Northern Baptist Seminary, a denominational school that clearly identified with the conservative wing, having been founded in 1913 as a counterpart or “protest school” to the modernist University of Chicago Divinity School.⁸⁸ Henry primarily worked with evangelical schools, projects, and publications, even if his writings addressed the broader theological world. Similarly, along with other evangelical scholars such as Edward John Carnell and George Eldon Ladd, Henry sought to publish with mainstream academic publishers, though he met with even less success than Carnell and Ladd.⁸⁹ Kantzer, by contrast, joined the Scandinavian Pietist heritage EFCA in 1947, which more fully aligned with American Evangelicalism over time, shedding some of its Pietist characteristics. Kantzer and Henry thus represent two forms of twentieth-century Evangelicalism, some in mainline denominations and some in evangelical denominations.

For many years, Henry campaigned for a Christian research university that would embrace all of Evangelicalism and embody the highest level of

⁸⁷ Contrast, for example, North Park Theological Seminary’s faculty credentials in the early and mid-twentieth century, which included degrees from Harvard (Nils Lund, Peter Person, Algoth Ohlson, Frederic E. Pamp), Yale (Ohlson), University of Chicago (Lund, Karl A. Olsson, Eric Hawkinson, Donald Frisk), and Union Theological Seminary in New York City (Frisk) among others.

⁸⁸ See Henry’s account of how ordination councils in the Chicago Baptist Association reflected the theological divisions among the Northern Baptists (*Confessions*, 105). The Northern Seminary website states that the school began as a “protest school” (<http://www.seminary.edu/about/history-of-northern>; accessed July 12, 2018). See Young, *Commit What You Have Heard*, 10–15. For Henry’s alignment with Baptists, see his “Twenty Years a Baptist,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal of History and Theology* 1, no. 1 (1958): 46–54.

⁸⁹ See Nelson, *The Making and Unmaking of an Evangelical Mind*, e.g., 103; John A. D’Elia, *A Place at the Table: George Eldon Ladd and the Rehabilitation of Evangelical Scholarship in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. 121–48. Throughout the manuscript review process, Henry carried on a lengthy correspondence with Oxford University Press (New York), seeking to publish his *Christian Personal Ethics* with them. When Oxford eventually declined, Henry published the book with Eerdmans. See “McCauley, Leon (Oxford University Press)—Correspondence” in the Special Correspondence, Henry Archives, Trinity International University.

research and scholarship, but the vision never came to fruition.⁹⁰ Kantzer's vision for TEDS was achieved more slowly than he anticipated, but he saw much of it realized. Kantzer began from an extant denominational school, however small and struggling, and greatly enlarged and diversified its faculty and student body without losing its EFCA roots. Henry's vision for a pan-evangelical university could not resolve the incommensurability of evangelicals' diverse conceptions of Christian freedom and behavior, among other hurdles. Kantzer's more modest vision proved more feasible and was accomplished gradually over several decades.

Though Henry called for an evangelical research university for decades, he never interrupted his teaching, traveling, and writing long enough to establish such a school. Henry's vision for addressing the worldwide church, in print and in person, clashed with what could be accomplished within a single institution. Henry neither devoted himself to his research and writing as he wanted (despite his impressive publications list) nor did he step away from his writing projects to launch the university he envisioned. Instead, he remained torn between the callings of the activist and the scholar. Kantzer, on the other hand, sacrificed his scholarly writing plans, contenting himself with reduced teaching and publishing, and embraced administration. His vision for evangelical theological education, in contrast to its state in the early 1960s, was crucial. Kantzer was not the only evangelical theological educator who saw the contrast between what was and what should be. He was, however, distinctive in doing something about it on the scale of his transformation of TEDS.

Kantzer and Henry thus represent alternative versions of activist theologians. Henry avoided administrative responsibilities while continuing his promotional work and leadership for events and organizations, all the while planning a multitude of writing projects. He lived with the persistent tension of writing projects that would never be written because he instead chose opportunities for action for the cultural outreach of the gospel. Kantzer's choice to envision and build the institution and programs he was convinced Evangelicalism needed involved the sacrifice of his own scholarly productivity but enabled the productivity of several generations of faculty scholars.

Kantzer's and Henry's scholarly activism contrasted in another signifi-

⁹⁰ See Strachan, "Carl Henry's University Crusade"; Owen Strachan, *Awakening the Evangelical Mind: An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 127–58.

cant way. Henry's dilemma, "torn constantly between the academic and the activist," frustrated him for many years, as witnessed in his autobiography and correspondence. He seemed unable to resolve the dilemma in a personally satisfying way and lived with conflicting forces pulling him in opposite directions. Kantzer, on the other hand, resolved his dilemma early and apparently remained content with that resolution throughout his career. Rather than attempt to accomplish both activism and scholarship himself, he sacrificed his own scholarly aspirations for the sake of an institution that would foster scholarship in its faculty and students.

Facing a choice between activism and academics, Henry attempted to accomplish both. Some will give thanks for his choice to promote and lead in so many ways, despite the cost to his scholarship; others will lament the loss of scholarship. Faced with a choice between administration and his own scholarship, Kantzer chose a life of innovative, entrepreneurial administration. Evangelicalism lost Kantzer's lifetime of scholarly publications but received TEDS in its place.

Given the limits of human finitude, Christian academics are compelled to choose how to invest their time, energy, and expertise. In those choices, Carl F. H. Henry and Kenneth S. Kantzer illustrate alternative paths forward.