

The Evangelical Quadrilateral: A Response

It is a pleasant task to respond to the six panelists who considered the Evangelical quadrilateral at the conferences in Washington and at Pepperdine in 2014. In some ways it is surprising, and certainly a cause for gratitude, that the subject is still considered worth discussing twenty five years after the publication of *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*. But perhaps in another way it is not surprising, because the introductory chapter of the book was designed merely to summarize what everybody knew. The idea that the quadrilateral was breaking fresh ground did not occur to the author, who was trying to capture the consensus of opinion amongst existing writers on the subject. In some measure that goal seems to have been achieved, for even the contributors to a volume assessing the case outlined in chapter 2 of the book, several of them critically, did not question the characterization of the Evangelical movement given in chapter 1. Of seventeen other writers of articles in that work, none of them challenged the fourfold description of the movement in terms of emphases on the Bible, the cross, conversion and activism.¹ So that approach to describing Evangelicalism appeared to meet with widespread consent. Yet more can be said about issues surrounding the quadrilateral, and the six commentators have raised a variety of points. The observations of each of them will be considered in turn.

1. Kelly Elliott, The Quadrilateral in Space

Kelly Elliott discusses the applicability of the quadrilateral to the British Empire. Did a conceptualization originally sketched in order to explain the nature of the movement within Britain also fit its expression in the Greater Britain beyond the seas? Was it restricted in space or did it suit a wider movement? In the first place there is agreement between us about

¹ Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (eds), *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Evangelical Continuities* (Nashville, Tenn.: B & H Academic, 2008).

the activism of indigenous converts. Local folk were generally responsible for most of the spread of the gospel on the mission field and so activism was certainly marked in other lands. And in the second place there is concurrence about the attitude of the various missionary agencies to 'native agency'. The Serampore trio believed in rapid Indianization of the mission, but, as Kelly shows, the Baptist Missionary Society became more wary of that policy from the 1820s. That process, however, was not yet the outcome of the Romantic temper discussed in chapter 3 of *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*. Cultural currents associated with Romanticism did not affect the policies of existing missions until later in the century. Rather the increasing reluctance to entrust indigenous people with responsibility sprang from the respectability that Kelly mentions. After the death of Andrew Fuller, the first secretary of the society, in 1815, the Baptist Missionary Society became based in London, not the provinces, and was run by businessmen. They required the affairs of the society to be orderly, efficient and under their direction, a stance that led to a breach with William Carey at Serampore. Native agents were therefore to be subject to close oversight. There was later, by the 1850s, a shift back towards the earlier approach as the society adopted the 'three-self' policy of self-government, self-propagation and self-support as its program, but there was a subsequent return, in the age of high imperialism at the close of the century, to tight missionary control. The result was an inhibiting of church development in the early years of the twentieth century.² But none of this oscillation affected the basic point, that intense activity was expected of indigenous believers in the lands reached by Evangelical missions.

Kelly suggests at the end that the imperial context shaped missionary policy more than British culture. That proposal deserves full exploration, but there were definitely signs of denominational variation. The Methodists made their foreign mission a part of their denominational structure and so British cultural influences were often in the ascendant. Thus

² Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992).

at a Wesleyan Methodist Sunday school anniversary in the Eastern Cape in 1876 the children received cricket bats and balls.³ The Presbyterians also normally put British culture first, with the great Scottish missionary Alexander Duff developed a strategy of mission through education, teaching the worldview of Thomas Chalmers.⁴ And, if anything, the Evangelical Anglicans of the Church Missionary Society generally were even more British in their methods because of their association with state authority and their identification with superior social classes. Faith missions were to be most open to the contextual influence of the mission field, but of the denominations the one most likely to espouse indigenous ways was probably the Baptists, Kelly's choice for scrutiny. In China from the 1870s onwards, for example, Timothy Richard adopted highly flexible techniques because of sensitivity to local influences.⁵ Perhaps therefore the form of the quadrilateral on the mission field was most deeply modified by the cultural setting among the Baptists. Yet it still constituted the set of priorities adopted by those, whether missionaries or missioned, across space.

2. Tommy Kidd, The Quadrilateral at Origin

Tommy Kidd, the historian of the Great Awakening and the biographer of George Whitefield, raises an issue derived from his detailed work on the origins of the movement. He is happy that early Evangelicals were concerned with Bible, cross, conversion and activism, but sees another attribute as equally important among them. In the 1730s and 1740s, he points out, they regularly insisted on the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing about the quickening of new

³ D. W. Bebbington, "Of this Train, England is the Engine": British Evangelicalism and Globalization in the Long Nineteenth Century', in Mark Hutchinson and Ogbu Kalu (eds), *A Global Faith: Essays on Evangelicalism and Globalization* (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1998), p. 122.

⁴ A. A. Millar, *Alexander Duff of India* (Edinburgh: Canongate Press, 1992).

⁵ Andrew F. Walls, 'The Multiple Conversions of Timothy Richard: A Paradigm of Missionary Experience', *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 2002).

birth. The evidence he adduces in his two books can leave no doubt about that.⁶ At the start of the Evangelical movement, he therefore suggests, it displayed a fifth salient characteristic. To strengthen his case, it can be said that the movement showed the same additional feature at other times and places. Thus in Kelly's paper *Sebuk-Rama* is noted as having stressed the Holy Spirit in India around 1800, mentioning the work of the Spirit twice within a short passage.⁷ So it is clear that an emphasis on the third person of the Trinity can often be discerned within the Evangelical movement.

Yet it cannot be conceded that the ministry of the Spirit was consistently on a par with the other prominent features of Evangelicalism. Characteristics need to have existed over time if they are to be treated as valid marks of the whole movement. There may be variation in the degree of stress, but some emphasis is called for. The Holy Spirit, however, was not always given prominence. Thus in the 1920s, when the Pentecostals, a growing sector of the Evangelical movement, did give a large place in thought and experience to the Spirit – and largely *because* Pentecostals accorded the Spirit this honor – the Fundamentalists did not. They went further. They denounced the Pentecostals for misleading their hearers by unduly magnifying the role of the Spirit in the Christian's life. The Pentecostals, claimed the Fundamentalists, were distracting people from Christ by constantly pointing to the Spirit.⁸ The Fundamentalists were a species of Evangelicals, but they opposed any special place for the Holy Spirit. Consequently it would be a mistake to claim that the ministry of the Spirit has always been a leading feature of Evangelicalism.

Even at the start of the Evangelical movement there are indications that some were wary of according what they considered undue importance to the signs of the Spirit's presence. Isaac Watts, the Congregational divine and hymn-writer, Tommy notes, criticized

⁶ Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009); *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2015).

⁷ Above, p. [?].

⁸ Gerald W. King, *Disfellowshipped: Pentecostal Responses to Fundamentalism in the United States, 1906-1943* (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick, 2011).

Whitefield for claiming special revelations of the Spirit.⁹ While at the height of the early Great Awakening some radicals showed a liking for signs and wonders induced by the Spirit, more moderate Evangelicals looked askance on exaggerated spiritual claims. Thus teaching about the Holy Spirit actually divided the early Evangelicals. That doctrine did not serve as a uniting factor, an essential of any feature that could be considered a hallmark of the entire movement. Even at its origin, Evangelicalism evinced four salient characteristics rather than five.

3. Amanda Porterfield, *The Quadrilateral in Theory*

More theoretical questions surrounding *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* form the subject of Amanda Porterfield's panel contribution. She enquires how the method establishing the quadrilateral relates to other approaches to the study of religion. Amanda contends that it is a mistake to neglect the ideas of Evangelicalism, and that is shared ground. The intellectual history of the movement is essential to grasping its place in the past. Its ideas formed much of its identity. On the other hand, however, ideas are not separate from society. As Amanda points out, society shapes thinkers. Thus the leading English Evangelical of the later twentieth century, John Stott, was molded by his experience of Rugby School.¹⁰ Society also creates a willingness to welcome new thought. Holiness teaching took hold in England from the 1870s, for example, in part because of dissatisfaction with the slow rate of Evangelical growth.¹¹ So ideas and society should be seen as parts of a whole.

The quadrilateral is not just about beliefs. It is true that the convictions that Christ saves through the atonement, that the Bible contains all that is necessary for salvation and

⁹ Above, p. [?].

¹⁰ Alister Chapman, *Godly Ambition: John Stott and the Evangelical Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹¹ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 152.

that a person must be born from above are irreducibly theological assertions. Yet activism is primarily about deeds, conversion is an event in life and the Bible has to be read. All of these Evangelical priorities concern behavior. Even the doctrine of the cross entails motivation for a Christian lifestyle founded on gratitude for redemption. Although, then, the quadrilateral draws attention to ideas, it is not meant to exclude conduct.¹² The approach adopted in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* is therefore, as Amanda observes, much closer to the school of thought identified with ‘lived religion’ than might be supposed.

The method undergirding the book does not rely on texts alone. The primary sources are often printed publications, but Amanda is right that the author was self-consciously a participant-observer. I have undertaken fieldwork on Evangelical (and other) congregations since 1965 by recording the content of services. The notes describe not just what is said in the sermon, but also features of congregations like the proportion of ladies wearing hats and the number of arms raised in worship. The set of notebooks forms a continuous run covering nearly half a century.¹³ They often cast light on the long-term characteristics of Evangelicalism. Thus at the Baptist church in which I was brought up, a solitary text was displayed at the front: ‘We preach Christ crucified’. Asking myself why that alone was selected helped identify the salience of crucicentrism in the Evangelical movement. So contemporary observation contributed to the genesis of the quadrilateral.

Amanda notes that *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* tries to bring out cultural processes that are top-down. The diffusion of the values of the Enlightenment, Romanticism and what the book calls ‘Modernism’ in and around the movement give the book its structure. They are envisaged as gradually spreading downwards and outwards from cultural innovators to wider numbers. The lived religion school insists, by contrast, that religion is formed from

¹² *Contra* Todd M. Brenneman, *Homespun Gospel: The Triumph of Sentimentality in Contemporary American Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 156-57.

¹³ They are used in D. W. Bebbington, ‘Evangelicals and Public Worship, 1965-2005’, *Evangelical Quarterly* 79 (2007), 3-22.

below, by ordinary people in the course of their everyday existence. Yet, as Amanda also proposes, the two approaches can be integrated. It is definitely the case that Evangelicalism embraced groups on the lower rungs of the social ladder who were immensely creative. Thus the Cokelers, a sect living in north Sussex from the later nineteenth into the following century, added some unusual articles to their impeccably Evangelical creed. Believing in the supreme value of ‘oneness’, they discouraged marriage as a symptom of ‘twoness’ – and so tended to die out. But they also believed in wearing Sussex ‘smocks’, the white working clothes of agricultural laborers, long after others discarded such apparel, for the costume became a symbol of purity.¹⁴ The local way of life formed religious practice. Yet acknowledging such developments does not entail abandoning the top-down element in cultural processes affecting Evangelicalism. There has been a trickle-down process, as *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* tries to show, from a cultural elite to a mass public.¹⁵ That was crucially formative within the movement. High culture created the ‘spectacles behind the eyes’ through which the world was viewed. Hence the optimism of the Enlightenment generated postmillennialism and the pessimism of the Romantic spirit fostered premillennialism, so establishing alternative eschatologies. Because ordinary folk create their own religious practice does not mean that they are immune to a pervasive cultural mood.

Certainly there is no intention in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* to do battle with Clifford Geertz, the prevailing influence on the lived religion school, or any of its other exponents. It is crucial, as Geertz would recommend, to examine local Evangelical creativity in detail and depth. That is what is attempted in my *Victorian Religious Revivals*, an account of awakenings in local communities throughout the English-speaking world.¹⁶ Nevertheless,

¹⁴ Peter Jerrome, *John Sirgood's Way: The Story of the Loxwood Dependants* (Petworth: Window Press, 1998).

¹⁵ It is analyzed in D. W. Bebbington, ‘Evangelicalism and Cultural Diffusion’, in Mark Smith (ed.), *British Evangelical Identities Past and Present: Volume 1: Aspects of the History and Sociology of Evangelicalism in Britain and Ireland* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), 18-34.

¹⁶ D. W. Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

as is argued in the historiographical chapter of that book, there are many twentieth-century models for the study of religion that ought to be discarded. In particular the ‘religion and society’ school, seeing religion as an epiphenomenon of a class society, should be superseded. That is to reject a point of view espoused equally by Marxists and by right-wingers upholding a determinism of money and power. Their perspective is mistaken precisely because it leaves out of account the religious experience of ordinary people. In that book I recommend an alternative model, one called ‘culture and piety’. Culture encompasses the whole of everyday life; piety highlights the Christian spirituality lived out in that context. Hence I agree with Amanda that there is much more theoretical common ground between my methods and that of Geertz than might be imagined from *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* alone.

4. The Quadrilateral in Time

Darren Dochuk concentrates on a particular period of time, the twentieth century, for his evaluation of the quadrilateral. There are several topics covered in the second half of his paper on which, as he says, we entirely concur. Evangelicalism was indeed marked by sentiment, flexibility of method and an ethos varying according to place. Sentiment was commonly as much a part of Evangelical life as intellect, a case now made out more fully by Todd Brenneman.¹⁷ Experience, felt emotion, was not, however, independent of conversion but its fruit. Sentiment was a consequence of hearts strangely warmed. Nor was it constant: a few Evangelical groups made a virtue of an absence of feeling. So it does not qualify as a factor in the delineation of the Evangelical movement. Again, Evangelicals were often strikingly willing to adopt novel methods. Their zeal to transmit the gospel meant that they were unusually eager to take up fresh techniques such as radio and film so that by all means

¹⁷ Brenneman, *Homespun Gospel*.

they might save some. But this innovative capacity was no more an independent attribute than sentiment, for it was a corollary of activism. Evangelicals sought the best means of passing on their message in successive generations. And Evangelical religion has regularly reflected its specific place, something that *Victorian Religious Revivals* tries to illustrate. The seven awakenings discussed in the book were all profoundly shaped by their settings. So there is much agreement with Darren on specific points.

There is more divergence when Darren proposes that certain features common in twentieth-century Evangelicalism should be seen as defining qualities of the movement as a whole. Like Tommy Kidd on the origins of the movement, Darren discerns an emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit as an Evangelical distinctive. Certainly it was common among twentieth-century Evangelicals, especially those swayed by Pentecostalism or charismatic renewal. Yet, as was commented on Tommy's idea, the Holy Spirit was not always prominent among Evangelicals. We can go further. Sometimes there were deliberate efforts to downplay the work of the Spirit. Thus in the course of my fieldwork in the 1970s, I visited a strong and highly Evangelical Baptist church in Bournemouth, England, which was trying to hold back the tide of the charismatic movement. The members of the congregation were instructed not to sing a verse in a Trinitarian chorus expressing adoration of the Holy Spirit for fear of diverting our gaze away from Jesus Christ. An emphasis on the Spirit was by no means a universal attribute of Evangelicals. It cannot be treated as a characteristic on the same level as the points of the quadrilateral.

Nor can fellowship. Darren contends that the spirit of togetherness was as much a mark of the movement as anything else. It is true that fellowship was frequently an Evangelical trait. Early Methodists, for example, were defined by their meeting weekly in classes. Yet a communal emphasis was by no means a consistent attribute of Evangelicalism. Many have claimed, on the contrary, that isolation of particular people, each alone before the Almighty, is more typical of Evangelical ways. Mark Hutchinson and John Wolffe, for

instance, have written about individualism as a fifth note of Evangelicalism.¹⁸ That estimate of the importance of prioritizing single persons reflects the standard criticism of the Evangelical party in the Church of England: it lacked a sense of churchmanship. If that view is valid, it follows that Evangelicals, as individualists, are at the opposite pole from emphasizing fellowship. Although there is no good reason to add individualism to the list of Evangelical characteristics, a truth lurks here: because of the high rank attributed to conversion, Evangelicals did normally stress particular persons at least as much as any corporate expression of the Christian life. Consequently fellowship cannot be seen as another hallmark of all Evangelicals. Rather, sometimes the individual and sometimes togetherness received greater weight among them.

Darren draws attention to the strength of premillennial eschatology in twentieth-century American Evangelicalism. The dispensational version of premillennialism looms especially large. Yet that has not always been the case. In the eighteenth century postmillennial teaching was common and its premillennial equivalent was rare. So premillennialism itself cannot justifiably be treated as a persistent element in Evangelicalism. Darren, however, provides a modification of his case. Evangelicals, he avers, were ‘an intensely expectant lot’, upholding *some* form of eschatology.¹⁹ But even that formula does not carry conviction. During the nineteenth century the postmillennial hope elided with the secular idea of progress, eventually ceasing altogether to be other-worldly. Advance, according to such broad-minded Evangelicals as Hugh Price Hughes, would take place within this world and the Christian hope would merge into social reconstruction.²⁰ An assertive eschatology was not always firmly grasped by Evangelicals. It joins Darren’s other candidates for addition to the way of characterizing Evangelicals as a feature prominent in the

¹⁸ Mark Hutchinson and John Wolffe, *A Short History of Global Evangelicalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 19.

¹⁹ Above, p. [?].

²⁰ D. W. Bebbington, ‘The Evangelical Conscience’, *Welsh Journal of Religious History* 2 (2007), 27-44

twentieth century but not consistently so before. All of them prevailed at a particular time, but not throughout the course of Evangelical history. The quadrilateral remains a four-sided device.

5. The Quadrilateral and Metaphysics

In his paper Mark Noll refers to *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, the volume examining my interpretation of the emergence of the movement. I concur with Mark's assessment of that book. Although, as my response at the end of the volume explains, I do not share the view of several of the contributors that there was little novelty about early Evangelicalism, I do agree that John Coffey's essay on Puritanism and Evangelicalism in particular offers a cogent critique of *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*. Coffey points out that several features of Evangelicalism that the book claims were new had been anticipated by some within the earlier Puritan movement. The diversity of seventeenth-century Puritanism means that there was more overlap with Evangelicalism than my book allows.²¹ Yet, as has been pointed out, that does not affect the case for the characterization of its subject in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*. The quadrilateral is independent of the debate about the degree of originality shown by Evangelicals in the eighteenth century.

Mark, however, makes a fundamental claim about *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*. There is no such thing as Evangelicalism, he proposes, though I have made the best possible attempt at defining it. Here we enter on metaphysics. Mark writes as a nominalist, holding that Evangelicalism has not actually existed because it is no more than a name. That is to reject the realism attributed to me, the belief that Evangelicalism has existed. A philosophical excursus is called for. Different kinds of realism can be distinguished.

²¹ John Coffey, 'Puritanism, Evangelicalism and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition', in Haykin and Stewart (eds), *Advent of Evangelicalism*, 252-77.

Realism may fall into the type of which Plato was a leading proponent, according to which historical phenomena reflect ‘forms’ that are timeless, eternal. On the other hand realism may be of the sort discussed by Aristotle. For Aristotle, Platonic forms do not exist, but form is located in individual objects. Form should be contrasted with matter, the form making the matter what it is. Thus a tower is the form of a pile of playing bricks until a child knocks it over. So the Aristotelian version of form is very different from the Platonic. Yet Aristotle rejects nominalism, believing that form can be perceived. Mark attributes the Platonic version of realism to me: Evangelicalism on my account, he says, is a ‘thing outside time and space’.²² But I hold a view that falls in the Aristotelian category rather than the Platonic one. Evangelicalism is a term for something that has existed in time and space. It is a phenomenon to be investigated. So the Evangelical quadrilateral is a description of what has been, not a definition of what must be. The task of specifying what it must be can safely be left to theologians.

We can return from metaphysics to history. It is important to recall that Evangelicals have believed that Evangelicalism existed. The current website of the National Association of Evangelicals, for example, discusses the nature of ‘Evangelicalism’. It cites my four characteristics of Evangelicalism and gives two references for further study, books by me and Mark Noll.²³ It has been common for Evangelicals themselves to have supposed that Evangelicalism did exist. And agents have privileges. If a historian ought to see things in the same way as agents in the past, a case that has been persuasively argued, then the presumption must be that something called Evangelicalism has been there for investigation.²⁴ In this case the opinion of Evangelicals should be respected.

²² Above, p. [?].

²³ ‘What is an Evangelical?’, National Association of Evangelicals, <http://www.nae.net>, accessed November 20, 2014.

²⁴ Alister Chapman, John Coffey and Brad S. Gregory (eds), *Seeing Things their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 2009).

There is a parallel between Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment. Mark holds that people in the eighteenth century showed features of an age of reason, but he dislikes the idea of *an* Enlightenment. There is surely some truth here. Historians tend now to stress the variety of expressions of Enlightenment and so to speak of *Enlightenments*. More concessions to that mode of understanding could usefully have been made in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*. Yet there was a cluster of assumptions emerging in the eighteenth century that provided the spectacles behind the eyes of the early Evangelicals. Their ideas were molded by reason, empiricism, optimism and pragmatism. This combination formed something like a worldview, a real cultural atmosphere. So Evangelicalism was deeply affected by an eighteenth-century body of ideas that can justifiably be labeled the Enlightenment. That is a confession of an unrepentant realist.

6. The Quadrilateral and Debate

Molly Worthen points to many areas of agreement between us. The relation of gospel and culture is one of them. Evangelicalism was never isolated from mainstream culture, even if sometimes it was in one of the eddies. Again concerns about authority, we agree, were major preoccupations. That theme, which Molly has illuminated for recent American Evangelicalism in her *Apostles of Reason*, is not dwelt on in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*.²⁵ Yet authority was often at issue among British Evangelicals too. Over 150 years Anglican Evangelicals held an annual Islington Clerical Meeting precisely to set out an official line on ecclesiastical issues. Eminent speakers delivered pronouncements that functioned rather like the deliverances of a magisterium.²⁶ And Molly makes an important

²⁵ Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²⁶ D.W. Bebbington, 'The Islington Conference', in Andrew Atherstone and John Maiden (eds), *Evangelicalism and the Church of England in the twentieth Century: Reform, Resistance and Renewal* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2014), 48-67.

point that we share over the composition of the Evangelical movement. In late twentieth-century America, she shows, it encompassed not just those of Reformed and Methodist pedigree but also groups such as sections of Mennonites and Churches of Christ. Neither originated as Evangelical bodies, but they became so over time. So there is much common ground in our analyses.

Yet we do disagree. Molly explains that the quadrilateral proved inadequate in her exploration of the debates taking place in the late twentieth-century Evangelical world. The quadrilateral, she submits, provides a characterization that is ‘static’. The category of ‘born again’ does not fit all Evangelicals because some saw conversion as incremental. And biblicism is too imprecise to be illuminating. On each of these questions I should not wish to concede. The quadrilateral is intended to be dynamic, not static, altering with the times. As Darren remarks, it ‘functions differently across the generations’.²⁷ Conversion among Evangelicals can indeed be gradual, but that is fully acknowledged in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*. The process varied enormously between denominations and at different points in time, often encompassing slow and unconscious varieties. As for biblicism, the pages of Molly’s book give eloquent testimony to its centrality in the Evangelical movement. The debates over inerrancy were symptoms of the unfading priority of scripture. I should wish to stand by the value of the quadrilateral.

Perhaps a suggestion may be allowed. Molly concentrates on the anxieties of what in *Apostles of Reason* she calls ‘the evangelical imagination’.²⁸ Its preoccupations were the relation of faith and reason, the question of personal salvation and the tension between personal belief and the public square. Molly concedes that the content of these debates was not unique to Evangelicals, for similar issues rocked the Roman Catholic Church during the same period. My suggestion is that the *way* in which these issues were addressed more than

²⁷ Above, p. [?].

²⁸ Worthen, *Apostles of Reason*, chap. 11, esp. p. 264.

their content reflects a distinctive Evangelical ethos. That is because the theme of faith and reason reflects an emphasis on the Bible, the subject of personal salvation arises from concern with the cross and conversion and the personal belief/public square antithesis emerges from strains over contrasting modes of activism. Consequently these anxieties derive from biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism and activism. The debates discussed in *Apostles of Reason* illustrate the prominence of the aspects of the quadrilateral.

Conclusion

The commentators on the quadrilateral have raised a series of questions that stimulate much further thought but not a significant change of mind. Its four elements do seem to reflect the nature of Evangelicalism. There is no persuasive call to add to their number and certainly no reason to drop any of them. Perhaps to my surprise, I find I want to uphold a modern equivalent of the Vincentian canon. In the fifth century Vincent of Lérins taught that Christian truth was what was believed *ubique, semper et ab omnibus*: everywhere, always and by all. I still believe that emphases on cross, Bible, conversion and activism reflect the reality of the Evangelical movement *ubique, semper et ab omnibus*.