

BEYOND THE OLD AND THE NEW EVANGELISM

*Zopp
with Notes*

The believers say, "We have seen the Lord!" The world says, "Unless I see the wounds, I will not believe."

--John 20:24-26

Jesus makes himself one with the world's wounds. These wounds, his and the world's, are the only context for proclaiming and understanding the text of the Word which he is and brings.

At the recent World Congress on Evangelism,¹ which was conceived in the heart of Billy Graham and born through the sponsorship of the U. S. religion fortnightly CHRISTIANITY TODAY, the Congress coordinating director Stanley Mooneyham, asked me which evangelism I was for, the old or the new. Said I, "I am against both in the name of what God wants to give us all when we become humble and open enough to listen, through the world and through each other, to Jesus Christ as Lord of the future."

This Division of the National Council of Churches has the commission to discern Christ's will for his church in the United States today and tomorrow, to "hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches" (Revelation 3:22). My assignment within this commission is to establish a polar position for dialog with the old evangelism as represented by Billy Graham--specifically, the dialog you of this Division are to have in your small groups immediately after the reading this position paper.

First let me get rid of myself if I can manage it. In doctrine I am an orthodox believer; in attitudes, a liberal; in social, economic, and political matters, a radical. My technical

self-description is "orthodox open," one who prays that our holy hope will in the power of the Spirit make available to us our holy heritage for ministry through the holy here and now. The heart of our holy heritage is a Story--our cosmizing and sacralizing story--about the Holy Love, source of all life, that became a Jew and we killed him and he didn't stay dead and is with us now and will be at the end of the age. As stories go, it's not a nice story, and in our secular culture is embarrassing, and it would be nice if we could get along without it or at least demythologize-remythologize the embarrassment out of it. But we are stuck with it, and we hold to it unless we apostatize from it through erosion of faith and evasion of witness. God even, sometimes, gives us the grace to glory in our Story with a glory not of human pride but of gratitude for the newness of life that appears in our time, our history, through wounds.

In short, the words of this Story--the gospel Story--and the wounds of the world are meant for each other, and evangelism is the process through which God enables the world, through us who believe this good news, to understand its wounds through Christ's wounds and its opportunities through Christ's resurrection.

Dialog: Fraudulent and Authentic

Because of the inseparability of our Lord's words and wounds, we Christians should judge fraudulent a debate in which ideological hardening occurs through the polarization of wound and word. Yet just such a debate is now going on in the world Church between the verbalists (who ran the Berlin Congress independently of existing ecumenical fellowship) and the actionists (whose fascination at

"being where the action is" strongly tempts to the neglect of the Word, to righteous alibis for not telling the Story, and to disdain for those believers who at all times and places seek openings for "naming the Name").

(Laity, have patience with me! If at the moment I seem to be expounding a clergy squabble that bores you, you will soon see that you too are caught up in this fraudulent debate, even if only by virtue of the fact that squabbling priests are trying to corrupt you with their party spirit. Part of the ministry of the laity is to help God save the priests from unholy and fruitless squabbings.)

It is inauthentic, I am saying, to be a partisan of the Word without wounds or a partisan of wounds without the Word, to exalt the voice above the deed, or the act above the telling, to separate--by use or by disuse--the larynx from the rest of the incarnate reality. Of course there are times that call for the silent act and times that call for the simple word, but witness is normally both, each reinforcing the other.

Do you say, isn't that obvious? It is elementary, but the changing times and this inauthentic debate have made it far from obvious. The debate is inauthentic not only because the ideological hardening at the poles does not correspond with the plastic reality of current situations of witness, but also because it prostitutes to strife energies which should be used in the authentic dialog of mutual correction and mutual seeking of the real questions and of appropriate responses.

No, I have not forgotten my specific assignment; but I have had to provide an irenic context for a paper which from here on will not be peaceful. In the name of what God wants to give us beyond verbalism and actionism, I have had to make clear that my ensu-

ing attack on the verbalists is from that perspective--from beyond the old verbalistic evangelism and the new actionistic evangelism--and not from the fraudulent, ideological position of the actionists.

Notes for Dialog

The rest of this paper consists of revisions, for the occasion, of some of the notes I made while attending the verbalists' convention in Berlin. He who reproves and chastens us because he loves us (Revelation 3:19), bids us, as members of his Body, to the painful ministry of mutual accusation. Is it not a test of our responding love for him, and for each other in his Body, that we be honest and open with each other, and is it not to his glory when the world sees us in deep disagreement with each other without breakdown of dialog in mutual rejection? And cannot such open dialog better prepare us for dialog in Christ with the world? Can we not be, in this will to unity with diversity, a model of peace, "that the world may believe (John 17:21)" and be at peace. Far from apologizing for my directness, then--as though the world's standard of politeness should establish the terms of Christian interchange!--I ask that my words be received as an act of faith, hope, and love--by the verbalists, who are already angry at me for calling them verbalists.

Scribal Evangelicalism

The day the Congress ended, the prestigious German weekly CHRIST UND WELT carried only a photo of the Congress, with the indication that this was a gathering of "Bible-believing Protestants" (bibelgläubigen Protestanten). One did not know whether to read this as faintly disdainful, though certain other sectors of the European press left no doubt! The reporting was accurate: of its stated purposes, the Congress' first was "To define and clarify Biblical evangelism for our day."

From start to finish there could be no doubt that the Congress was a promotional meeting for a party within Protestantism. Nothing signals this more clearly than the eristic twist with which terms for Scripture were used. Why, for example, "Biblical evangelism"? Because of the pervasive intention to use the Bible as a bludgeon against the evangelism of people who would disagree with the Congress management. CHRISTIANITY TODAY's own report on the Congress is explicit here: "In the most sobering sense, CHRISTIANITY TODAY's tenth-anniversary project [i. e., the Congress] was a council of war... to battle evil... and to defend the Scriptures."

Here I must, in fairness, make the distinction American propaganda makes between the peoples and their naughty "masters" in communist countries: my complaint is against the Congress management, not against the delegates. Many of the latter were not fiery-eyed contenders for the biblicist-scripturalist-scribal-evangelical faith, but were present out of profound concern for the Word of witness in this present world, and out of wistfulness toward any call to consider this concern. But the management--and here I refer especially to Billy Graham and Carl Henry--was obsessed with the promotion and protection of a particular angle on the Bible. They called that angle "evangelical," but the term claims too much territory.

In that all Christians are "evangelical" in the sense that their very existence as Christians depends utterly on the Evangel, the Good News, our Story, I grant the Congress management the term "evangelical." But since these people represent a party in the Church and not the whole Church, I want to help them find a self-description which will clarify their stand and escape the danger of overclaim. How about "biblical evangelical"? No, that

won't do, for all Christians are biblical in that only the Bible provides us with the Story in which our existence as Christians and as churches centers. "Conservative evangelical"? Better, but there's too much it fails to conserve, and the term does not express what these folk have a concern to conserve. "Bookish evangelical"? Closer, for they do center on a book--but "bookish" does not point to a particular book, and besides it has irrelevant connotations. Then how about "scribal-evangelical"? I fear they won't be happy with this as a party name, but I am happy to apply it to them, for I believe that (1) it honors them as striving to be loyal to the Evangel, (2) it qualifies "evangelical," thereby avoiding overclaim, (3) it accurately describes how they use a particular book, the Bible, to sanction and support their understanding of the gospel.

Since I consider the point crucial to any dialog between this party and others in the world Church, permit me to expand on the term "scribal."

What is the scribal mentality?

1) (See Note.)

In any particular religion, the scribal party will be that group which treats a particular sacred book or books as having primary, normative, decisive, and supreme value for the religious community, so that by the group the sacred text is taken more seriously than the living context within and beyond the community. The text is held, as it were, so close to the eyes that what is seen beyond its edges is of secondary import and must, at all costs and with all powers, be shaped into conformity with the text.

Of course for us Christians the classical instance of scribalism must ever be "the scribes" who, both unable to see the working of God in Jesus and unable to force him into

conformity with their understanding of their sacred text, instigated his crucifixion. The fact that these scribes were Jesus-killers so taints the word "scribal" that Billy Graham and others who use the Bible as he does would not select the word as describing their position. I, however, must press the matter: I consider the term appropriate and accurate.

For ten days the Berlin Kongress-halle was a sacred city behind the Bible curtain, the scribes in near-absolute control (even knowing what was in the papers that were to be read). Except for an occasional sentence here and there, the noises in the perfectly orderly plenums were scribal noises--monotonously predictably scribal noises.⁴ While occasionally acknowledging the existence of the world and the evangelist's assignment to go where the fish are, the Bible studies, in good scribal fashion, were content to begin with the Bible, continue with the Bible, and end with the Bible-- and so were biblicistic rather than biblical.⁵ The scribe's tunnel vision sees "freedom" primarily in terms of his freedom, specifically his freedom to "spread the Word": freedom for others to spread their word (religious, political, economic, social, cultural), and freedom of access to the facilities and powers essential to freedom, and freedom from multiform oppressions --these freedoms are peripheral.⁶

This same tunnel vision characterized the bibliographies distributed before and during the Congress and the booktable at the Congress: strictly kosher, guaranteed not to shock scribes. Virtually nothing on nonscribal evangelism, certainly nothing on "the new evangelism."⁷ Piles of preachy scribal Bible expositions seemed to satisfy as to the what of evangelism. More piles of Bible-

believing stuff on the how. The Berlin bookers were bookies of one book: homines unius libri! This myopia-- the eyeballs almost touching the pages of the holy book--is for many a matter of pride, almost as though in the divine accounting this righteousness might offset the sin of those "liberals" whose eyes are too far from the holy book: as though the overeating of the former could cure the malnutrition of the latter. Unrepresented were the major texts reflecting Christian sensitivity to contemporary cultures, to the world we are now living in. Nor was there any of the wealth of imaginative literature now speaking to the suppression of the spiritual in our technopolitan world. Surely this was not due to slovenly indifference: the Congress was the best managed (in the good sense!) large gathering I have ever participated in. No, rather it is that scribes are teachers, not students.⁸

2)

Again, the scribe not only sees all things through his book; he also intrudes his book into all things. Consider, e.g., the Congress statement's section on race: "We recognize the failure of many of us in the recent past to speak with sufficient clarity and force upon the biblical unity of the human race. . . . In the name of Scripture and of Jesus Christ we condemn racialism." Proper sentiments, indeed. But note the placing of "Scripture" before "Jesus Christ," and the interloping insertion of the term "biblical" in the first sentence, where it serves as a me-too scribal rider. If an adjective were used here, "anthropological" would be better than "biblical": a straight line can be drawn from the human sciences to the modern conscience on racism, but only a crooked line can be extended from the Bible, whose voice (as the racist preacher well knows) is ambiguous on the subject: even the Bible's most quoted passage against racism--Paul's

Areopagus sermon (Acts 17:22-31)-- is, ironically, clear only when quoting pagan authors; the non-pagan portion of this text can be used neatly by segregationists (vs. 26b). To put "biblical" in front of "the unity of the human race" would appear to many (a) to be making an excessive claim for Scripture, (b) to be snubbing science's role, and (c) to be insinuating a Christian-imperialist motif and motive.... Do I seem picky? Not in view of two facts: (a) We may presume that the brief statement was meticulously drafted; and (b) The Congress statement's references to the Bible are, in dynamics, typical of those throughout the major papers of the Congress... Am I demeaning the Bible? I have two earned doctorates in Scripture, have taught hundreds to read it in the original languages, and count it the Book of books. But when overclaims are made for it, I am irritated in the name of fair play; when it is used in ways that exploit its content and deflect its intent, I am distressed in the interest in integrity; and when it is put above my Lord, in the position in which it can betray him and fight the future, I am infuriated.

3) (See Note.)

Again, while I must not take time to develop this, the scribe's book provides him, "Tiny-Alice"-like, with a castle within a castle, a world within a world, an oblong - shaped psyche the archetype of which is his book. His book's origin-time is his own illud tempus: for him, the period in which history centers, the Golden Age. Since his book is almost certainly old if not ancient, the scribe himself is an old man in his thinking, with an old man's preference for the old and distrust of the new. How the scribes must have been irritated by Jesus' attack on their antiquity-orientation! Said he, the new-style scribe "who has been trained for the kingdom... brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (Mat-

thew 13: 52). How "not like the scribes" our Lord was, not only in including the new but also in giving it priority! The environment of the kingdom scribe is the world and more (the kingdom), not the book and so less than the world; the time of the scribe is a yesterday constricting today and tomorrow, but the new scribe's time is tomorrow releasing today through the wisdom of yesterday and today. The old, Jesus-killing scribe's vision was triply distorted by his word-, book-, and old-orientations: the sons of the kingdom (Jesus stretches "scribe" to make his contrast) are not to be verbalizers, bookers, or antiques but rather, correcting for these distortions, are to use the total resources of nature, history, and grace without prejudice for old or new but with openness to truth and love.

4) (See Note.)

The scribe's super-claim for his book is that it is perfect, numinously partaking (by "inspiration") of the god's perfection--perfect in two senses: errorless and adequate. We are all familiar with, and doubtless have been embarrassed by, the preposterous posturings of handsome, well-scrubbed Mormon missionaries toward their distinctive holy book--to mention only one native-American scribalism. We do well to note also that this total-truth claim for a holy book is a highly successful weapon in cultic competition: people yearn for tangible certainty and move almost without thinking (yes, without thinking!) toward priests who pander to this yearning. The professional religious leader's temptation to be this kind of priest is staggering.

After a liberal upbringing, I adopted (on the occasion of a conversional experience) this position on the Bible and for seven years held it to be, and grew facile enough to prove it to be, infallible.

But when I began my teaching of Scripture, I found myself morally unable to pass on to my students the artful dodges and legerdemain I had used to "defend the Word of God." The very question whether to teach others this elaborate chicanery--the very question, I say, the Spirit used to condemn me inwardly. How great was my freedom, peace, and joy when I grasped that God did not want me to do to myself what he would not let me do to others! How great the relief from intellectual dishonesty as well as moral turpitude! A gnat is a gnat, and an error is an error, and a camel is a camel and a truth is a truth!

But I found that few of my colleagues thought that this joyous freedom was something to praise God for. Even if one believes, as I do, that the errors are gnats and the truths camels, the scribes' fear of losing, and their pride in maintaining, the dogma of the perfect book are so great that instant ostracism hits when it becomes known that one has given up what I must call bibliolatry.

My most recent experience of this oppressive atmosphere was at the Berlin Congress. Early the third morning a member of the Billy Graham team asked to see me, and told me that the Congress executive committee had sent him to me to silence me. Had I not noticed his anguish over his thankless task, I'd have burst into laughter (since I remembered him, three decades ago, as a gay fellow with a deadpan wit). But it was really true! The scribes had that Congress under such tight control that an observer, who by a proper enough rule could not speak in "the official discussions" and had not, was muzzled... or at least that was the management's intention. I thank God that

the fellowship we all had at the Congress was in the Lord: but as for the peace and quiet, that was strictly a production of the management from the careful screening of delegates to the last prayermeeting. Well, it was a promotional meeting; what could you expect? As the ten days drew to a close, the best known of the hundred newsmen breathed a sigh of relief and said to me, "It's been a dull meeting, hasn't it."

5)

Again, the scribe sees things in the size his holy book (and its accretions) sees them, and he sees his book as enormous (what with it so close to his eyes!). Real camels are camel size; but if his holy book says they are gnat-size, gnat size they are. You will recognize that I choose these animals as illustrations because our Lord so uses them in the passage in which more than anywhere else he excoriates the scribes, and in a sentence in which he calls these scribalists "blind guides" (Matthew 23:24). The scribes were biblical, all right: they were in the Bible --but on the wrong side. I can't help but think, at this moment of writing, of two sentences from Harold John Ockenga's address to the delegates: "The Bible is our authority.... We're here because we believe the Bible." I would prefer to think that most of the delegates were present because the Lord Jesus Christ is their authority, and they trust him for their identity and destiny--him as their continuity, him who was and is the point of intersection in relations between God, man, and the world--him (not any book) as their power of internal coherence and of their service and witness. I am not saying Bible or Christ. I am not saying Bible and Christ. I am saying Christ, in and through Bible and Church and history and nature and the world of here and now. The difference may seem small but the chasm is wide. In this position paper I am not widening the chasm: I am only pointing to it to

say, See how wide it is! Let the Spirit through truth and love bridge it, and let us discover how to work with him on the project! As for those who want to yell from the other side of the chasm, by all means! How much yelling and listening it takes to build a bridge! But of course the polite term for this is "dialog."

6)

This loss of the senses of proportion and perspective from cancerous overattention to the holy book helps explain the scribe's use of his book for non-seeing, and that of two sorts:

(a) The scribe tends to see not at all what his holy book does not see (and that, sometimes because of what his holy book does see). For example, none of the cultures mentioned in the Bible provided common, everyman leisure. In those cultures, the leisure of the classes was taken at the expense of the sweatly subjugation of the masses. Hebrews, Israelites, Jews were more often among the oppressed than among the oppressors, so their religion sanctioned hard labor and condemned luxury. But in what we have learned to call "the leisure revolution" in American and a few other countries, a radical change is occurring. Practically everyman (and soon, through the guaranteed annual wage, everyman) has or soon will have an excess of expendable hours and disposable dollars: will the gospel help him to be more free, more human, not in spite of but because of this "luxury"? But in the ten days of the Congress I never heard this crucial question raised; yet often I heard speakers peddling the old Puritan work-ethic, which is "biblical" and not only increasingly irrelevant but also increasingly an impediment to facing the here-and-oncoming realities of "the leisure revolution." On this matter the Bible is not just useless: it is worse than useless. Has God revealed to our generation a new "error" in the Bible? Not in the

Bible, but in the scribes' sinful use of it to blind themselves (albeit unwittingly) to changing realities in our own time, this here-and-now in which our Lord calls us to serve and witness. Those who permit themselves to be chained to the emphases and blinded by the omissions of an old book are not fit--indeed, are misfitted, misshapen--for the kingdom of the here and now, not to mention the world of tomorrow.... (b) But the second blindness is even more culpable: the scribe tends to use the silences of his book as a sword against uncomfortable environing realities and a shield against disturbing environing responsibilities. This argumentum e silentio was thoroughly discredited centuries ago in biblical interpretation, but it has proved just too convenient to die out. Listen to this, for example, a reprint in the 2 Mar 66 CHRISTIANITY TODAY: "Jesus commanded us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He did not command us to go into the world and organize a peace corps or civil-disobedience demonstrations. He did not resort to law or coercion as a means of improving society." Scripture used to sustain rather than remove blind prejudice! Of course almost everybody can recognize in this quotation that dirty old scribal trick; but it is often used more subtly, and closer to our bone. Take this, from one of the plenum Bible studies of the Congress: "The commission of the Church is not to reform society but to preach the gospel." The polluting of Scripture with that "not" phrase reminds me of Gospel portions now being studied by the World Council of Churches in Geneva--portions distributed in African languages, but printed by the Red Chinese with subtle additions to the text to sneak in Marxism. What was our Bible teacher sneaking in? I do not consider the Red Chinese

pollution more dangerous than that of John R. W. Stott, the main Bible teacher at the Congress. But of course the silences of Scripture are used only against what the scribe opposes on other than scriptural grounds: usually he is fed by some property-holding ecclesial institution, so you aren't apt to hear him mention that the New Testament is silent about church-ownership of property; or he may be fed by some evangelistic organization, so is not apt to indicate that the New Testament gives no instructions for such an organization.

Scribe after scribe at the Congress sounded good till you asked yourself such questions as What's left out, and why? How did that slip in? Is he trying to blind us on purpose, or is he on this one just innocently unaware of what he's doing? Why do these scribes handle so shabbily this Book of which, overagainst others, they are so proud? How in good conscience did they ever manage to get the Book to reflect their own prejudices so loyally?

7)

Again, closely allied to the unscrupulous use of what isn't in Scripture (the Bible's "silences") is the structurally selective use of what is in Scripture. The canon of the heretic Marcion consisted of parts of a few books of the Bible: for a good 95% of it he had no use. It seems less heretical for a scribe to hop and skip over the Scriptures, digging up plants to transplant into his garden, or gathering materials to build his house. By the time the scribe gets through he may actually use all the biblical matter in his well-appointed house and his well-arranged gardens--a place for everything and everything in its place, just as he planned it all. Another scribe, less an esthete but more a philosopher, may find in Scripture what he considers "a key to

the Scriptures" (though unlike Mary Baker Eddy he may not write a book on it).

Now what characterizes these two and all other scribes at this point is their "structurally selective" use of Scripture. Everybody, of course, is selective: the Spirit is to guide us in selecting what in Scripture is appropriate to each situation. But the scribal element is in the word "structurally": Scripture is highly unstructured, and on it the scribe, by tradition or his own imagination, imposes a structure. If by tradition, he may find that structure already present in Scripture and may strive to bring all other biblical data into captivity to that tradition; or the tradition may be post-biblical. (Forgive me if this exposition sounds abstract! It won't much longer.)

The one man whom humanly we have to thank for the Berlin Congress, which did much good and harm, is scribe-evangelist Billy Graham. Notice the hyphenate: he is an "evangelist," and I thank God for him. While by now you have perhaps surmised that I am not exactly a Billy Graham fan--and you may find it hard to believe what I am about to say, but it is the truth--when Billy is on TV wherever I happen to be, I turn him on and throughout the program am in prayer that the Spirit will use the Word. Billy's favorite biblical author, or at least the one he most uses in his evangelistic preaching, rejoiced whenever Christ was preached "whether with ulterior motive or in sincerity" (Philippians 1:18). In my mind there is no need for that "whether/or" qualification in the case of Billy, for I no more suspect him of ulterior motives than I do myself (if you'll pardon the self-compliment): I quite simply rejoice when I hear my Lord Christ preached. If my brother preaches

Christ brokenly and twistedly, I pray that the Spirit will make Christ whole and straight between my brother's mouth and my neighbor's ear--the same prayer I must pray for myself when I preach. But in addition to this the Lord may reveal to me that I should try to straighten my brother-preacher out on a point or two, and that I am about to do in the interest of the evangelism God wants to give us "beyond the old and the new evangelism" (which is the title of this position paper).

But back to the hyphenate "scribe-evangelist." I say we all have God to thank for evangelist Billy Graham, but sadly I must say that we all have the Devil to pay for scribe Billy Graham. Let me quickly pare away the image-nonessentials to my point--his godlike transcendence over the masses,⁹ the Sistine-ceiling frowning God-eyebrows, the Olympian masculinity, you name it he's got it: both clarity and power of image. Now let me pare away everything in a BG campaign except the sermon (with the passing comment that I consider invalid and carping the criticism that his operation is over-technologized). Now let me pare away all sermons but one--the one open-air sermon during the Congress. Now let me pare away from that sermon everything but its structural matrix, with a view to exposing a particular scribal element which generally in his preaching distorts the gospel and impedes dialog between his so-called "biblical" evangelism and other evangelisms.

The bite in the sermon in question had both lowers and uppers. The lower teeth intoned, "You have a soul living in your body," and the upper teeth said equally solemnly, "You will live forever." Quickly let me sketch along three lines my criticism of any sermon which as its major

pressure puts this bite on people:

(a) How do these two sayings appear in biblical light? "You have a soul living in your body" can be said to any animal (i. e., non-plant), including man. A pig has a soul (nephesh/psych) living in its body, but from this fact we should be careful not to draw any evangelistic conclusions. What about "You will live forever"? A Greeky piece of arrogance, if you ask most of the Bible. (Of course we are more apt to ask Plato than the Bible, for his answer is easier on our ego. Besides, Plato uses "soul" the way Billy does.) Scripture could not be more explicit in denying immortality to man: every section of the canon attacks man's illusion that he will "live forever." Consider just four passages: (1) At the beginning of the first section the God of the garden, seeing that Adam-and-Eve man by eating of the fruit of the first tree has gained ethical independence from him, has them thrown out of the garden before they can eat of the second tree and "live for ever" (Genesis 3:22).¹⁰ Ethical independence is all that Adam and Eve are going to cheat God out of: they are not to steal ontic independence. In their deciding they have become God's competitors: they shall not be that in their being, which remains, like that of all other creatures, temporary and evanescent, like the grass. (2) Yes, grass. So let's go to the Psalter, where a Greek would be shocked to discover man's mortality used to sanction praise: the Psalmist must get his praises in now, before he dies, for when he is dead he can no more praise God than can dead grass: "in death there is no remembrance of thee" (Psalms 6:5).¹¹ (3) Try this one from the Wisdom Literature: "a living dog is better than a dead lion. . . the dead know nothing" (Ecclesiastes 9:4). (4) In the last section of the Pauline corpus--which section I believe to be the last part of Scripture--we get stated explicitly what is implicit in the garden story at the very beginning of our Bible: God "alone has im-

mortality" (1 Timothy 6:16): all the way through the Bible he has kept man from grasping it! But why all the sweat? Why is it so important to God that man should die like grass and lions and dogs? That, my children, is a story for another time. But I'll give you a hint. Have you ever seen a child jumping for something held high by his parent, and heard his parent say, "Stop grabbing and maybe I'll give it to you"? Then "fear not, little" children, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). The Lord and Giver of life gives whatever life there is and whatever life we have today and whatever life he wills us to have tomorrow. In this there is an absolute contrast between him and all his creatures, including us: we have neither the power to create our life nor the strength to grasp more life from him (as though he were grudging to give!). Over him and over him alone, death has no power. Creation is grace; and the hope and the promise of resurrection, these too are grace; and both creation and resurrection are mysteries through which comes the invitation to trust that Love which did not even grasp at what was its own (Philippians 2:6) but utterly, utterly and self-forgettingly, gave itself pro nobis, for us.

I must lift up that word "self-forgettingly." If that Love is for us to be the paradigm of our caring, the model of our serving, the pattern of our witnessing, what shall we say of a pitch that would shift the actional focus from giving to getting and the personal focus from others to the self? We must, I think, conclude that we are dealing here with something that is profoundly anti-Christian, something that is thoroughly Greek-pagan and came to influence pagan, Jewish, and Christian apocalyptic, in all three of which it was increasingly

ethicized to sanction moral seriousness.¹² Again, this pitch about the soul living forever in a good or bad place: how can it be Christian to get a "soul" to thinking, "It would please me, at that, to know I was going to heaven, and maybe this preacher can tell me how I can manage it"--I say, how can this pitch be honestly made in the name of One who "did not please himself" (Romans 15:3) and in whose name we are called "not to please ourselves" (verse 1)?

I'll tell you how it is done, though in my opinion shouldn't be. It is done by organizing the biblical materials around the magnetic poles of an ancient myth of which Scripture has only slight traces but which came to acquire great power in the later Hellenism and therefore in the Hellenistic mission of the Church. The myth has an Osirian (ancient Egyptian) matrix and runs about like this: THOUGH THE WORLD IS GOING TO RUIN, THERE IS A WAY THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL CAN GO TO HEAVEN WHEN IT LEAVES ITS BODY. Out of this matrix mythological beings are born, probably beginning with Osiris as a dying and rising savior-god. The myth gains power in cultures which are deeply threatened ("going to ruin"): note that this world-pessimistic motif is Billy's normal opener; each time he begins I have fun guessing how the doleful diapason is going to sound, but it probably isn't very decent of me. In cultures, such as the Hellenistic and ours (le bombe atomique!), the person tends to shrivel into an isolato, a lonely "individual," and is easily terrorized into flight inward (privitism, auto-mysticism, LSD), outward (joiner-ism, collectivism), or upward (otherworldliness, "heaven is my home"). Billy seems to have a natural instinct-- I do not think it is a calculated contrivance --for terrorizing lonely "souls" right up to the point of flight forward ("right down here in front") and upward (heaven)

Now I am not considering at this point the personal cost, inner and social, of this anxiety production: that is a question for therapists. Without doubt, some under the intense pressure break through the thin or thick walls of their ego, smash through the sound-barrier of heart-pounding fears, and emerge radiant in the divine sunshine of peace and joy and praise and the power of a risen servant-life: for some folks, Jesus and the Osiris myth make a winning combination, and genuine conversation occurs. In far more cases, I surmise, a pseudo-resolution of tension produces an Osirian conversion which ingrains the "soul" in selfish autonomy, for the Osirian-terror component proves stronger than the Christian-Love component. These demons become "faithful" churchmembers whose favorite ecclesial sports are crucifying the pastor and expanding their imperial egos within in God's flock. They are even more anticommunist than they were before, now that their individualism has acquired divine sanction; they are more apt to listen to the radical right and to wonder whether we shouldn't drop the bomb on Peking now. In the terms of the Osirian matrix they are now both more "individual" and more (Platonic) "soul" than they were before--a dual ideological perversion of the gospel. (There were quite a few of this type of "soul" walking around the Berlin Kongresshalle, and some of them came dangerously close to physical assault upon my person.) Now you can better understand why I pray straight through Billy Graham meetings: I am praying that the Holy Spirit will get in and the demons won't.

One more "soul" matter. CHRISTIANITY TODAY's report of the Congress admitted that the participants' strongest complaint was that the human context of proclamation today--economic, social, political--got so scanty attention. But

the defect was built-in: the Congress' official theology had the same soul/otherworldly orientation as the religion Marx knew and described as "the opiate of the people." When over and over one hears that nothing can compare in importance with the destiny of his immortal soul, he's apt sooner or later to get two messages: (1) that everything else in the world is relatively unimportant in comparison with self-concern, and (2) that as regards his self-concern, everything in this world is relatively unimportant in comparison with the next world. What twofold "message" could compare with this for making one comparatively nonserious about neighbor and world? What twofold "message" could compare with this for undercutting the Bible's fundamental notes both of creation and of redemption? A gathering of "Bible believers"--in the ironic sense of believers in a pagan myth which secondarizes both bodies (the individual physical body within which the "soul" is said to reside, and the collective body-politic)--may lament that it didn't get through the Word to the world, but because of its mythic albatross it never had a chance.¹³

I cannot imagine a more dramatic revelation of this endemic defect than Congress speakers' comments on the baby clock we all had to pass many times each day as it loudly ticked off the net millions of world-population increase during the ten days. Man after man plaintively pleaded with us to address this swelling flood of human flesh with the gospel. Man after man wrung his hands over the poor deal we Christians are getting: the non-Christians are out-reproducing us ten to one!¹⁴ But not a single man in any plenum suggested that we might have some responsibility in seeing that the baby faucet gets turned down to reduce the flow.¹⁵ Why is this form of religion impotent and irrelevant in the face of the population bomb, which most demographers consider

mankind's most urgent problem? Because it does not view the human being as a person having individual and collective aspects but as a "soul" separable from soma and society. When the reality of the "person" is thus mythologized into the ultimate "individual," politicians enter to manipulate this mythology into ideology, the ideology of "individualism" set over against "collectivism." The clever statesman can then sloganize the religious energies of a "free" nation into lethal violence (as, currently, L. B. J. in Viet Nam). Persons bleed, myths do not; but when power transmogrifies myths into ideologies, persons are crushed as the ideologies smash together. The myths are not real, but the blood is. The main worry many of our friends behind the iron curtain had about the Berlin Congress was that its father and figure-head was known to them to be the personal (though unofficial) chaplain of the world's most powerful and most dangerous man. In this modern world scribal religion is, culturally, a harmless backwater; but sometimes it gets into a position of power (L. B. J.'s religion is scribal), and then we may have to face a tidal wave.... To put the point in one sentence, Congress speakers were so captive to the ideology of individualism (economic, social, political, cultural, religious) at one end of the individual/collective polarity that they were not free to release their imagination to possible collective solutions at the other end of the polarity. What if, e.g., Christians were to push for the automatic-coercive sterilization of females at the third birth; but even to think such a thought requires deliverance from "Bible-believing," individualistic taboos.

(Do you see where I'm going? Maybe it looks complicated at this moment, but it'll all come out right in a few minutes if you stay with me.)

Now here's Billy as he goes to

preaching. He stands up and flops this old book up and down at about eye level to lend the sanctions of antiquity and eternity to what he is about to say. To this he adds his verbal-sanctional formula, "The Bible says... ." Then he trots out this old pagan myth, older than the book he has flopped and named! ¹⁶ Why doesn't the audience laugh at this ludicrous displacement? Because it believes, both from its residual Greekiness and from Billy's persuasiveness, ¹⁷ that the Bible actually says "you have a soul living in your body" (though the notion makes nonsense of resurrection) and "you will live forever" (though the notion is, in the light of the major tenor of Scripture on the subject, blasphemous). Then Billy sends the hand-raisers home to read the Gospel of John. ¹⁸

But to advance the argument: the pagan matrix serves as the material principle of selectivity within Scripture and the formal principle for programming the whole Bible into the gray computer--creating (unconsciously, I am convinced) the illusion that the Bible speaks structurally and totally of a "way of salvation" which has logical coherence and into which all the parts fit with no remainders. This is the primary scribal element in Billy's use of Scripture; and the secondary is like unto it: the smooth and apparently instant retrieval of biblical data to support his preachments creates the illusion that the preacher speaks with scribal authority both from and on this book (though Billy's Lord's authority was "not as the scribes"); and the tertiary ties in the other two: the visual use of the actual book--flopped, banged, struck with a finger, waved threateningly, or merely held peacefully in the hand (and perhaps not even referred to, though

open; and sometimes open somewhere else than at his text).

(a) There is a "way of salvation" from this contorted and procrustean use of Scripture. It is this: one must surrender the scribal longing for a tidy and comprehensive system and the scribal fascination with "harmonizing" the biblical data into a single structure. Thanks to the working of God in the modern mind, this is now easier than it ever was before: both the physical sciences and the human sciences have humbly surrendered their lust for tidy, comprehensive systems; at least one science (astrophysics) has demonstrated the incongruence of the human mind in certain data-areas, so that both tidiness and comprehensiveness are both theoretically and practically ruled out; the computer is rapidly demoting our pride in our brain's ratiocinative and retrieval powers; and the electronic environment has been converting us all into impressionists ("mosaic format").

Now it happens that the Bible, with its jungle manifolds of meaning, its rich and unsystematizable imagery, its pulsing, untidy, and unfinished life, fits into the form of consciousness now emerging.²⁵ Whole new vistas of preaching and teaching the Bible are opening up if our eyes do not remain scribally blinded against seeing (1) the vistas and (2) the Bible as it really is. GOD WANTS NOW TO FREE HIS WORD FROM SCRIBAL SLAVERY TO STRUCTURE AND SYSTEM.

I give one illustration, still staying with Billy's open-air sermon. To say "you will live forever" and mean by it that the human being is naturally immortal--to say this commits one to one of the mutually irreconcilable biblical views of the matter and forces one to force the other three views into harmony with this one. To name

them quickly, let us call Billy's view "dualism": perpetual heaven and perpetual hell constitute a firm promise/threat schema in apocalyptic literature in and out of the Bible and (among others) Jesus seems to have used this motif to raise decision to the level of ultimate seriousness (though a great many biblical scholars say that he did not). A second view in the Bible is "universalism," currently the most thumped on doctrine in the field of evangelism; yet there it is in the Bible, clearly stated and visible to all except scribes who must subvert this view in the interest of another. Its virtue and value is that it communicates the conviction that nothing, ultimately, can defeat the power of God's Love for his creatures, for all of his creatures, for each of his creatures. A third view is "conditionalism," clearly biblical and also clearly the most prominent of the four views in the early Church. Teaching that God grants eternal life in Christ to those who open to his forgiving love, while those who refuse move away from the Light into darkness and away from Reality into nothingness--teaching this, this third view says that decision before God is a life-and-death matter, but in the eschaton (history's denouement) God will be "all in all." The Bible teaches this. And finally there is "naturalism," the teaching that we die like dogs and should be about the business of praising God because after the funeral we won't be able to do it anymore. This Bible teaching has the power to peer us alongside of every other creature so that having the same status, unhierarchical, with the rest of God's creatures we may (1) know the joy of the single chorus of praise to the Creator and (2) experience a closer identification with the rest of the creation that any other view permits.

What hangs us up from believing the Bible's fourfold teaching on the afterlife? The little Socrates within

who says, OK, come on, give it to me straight: which of the four views is true? or at least which of the four do you think is true? Quite literally, this Greek question is to both the biblical and the modern mentality NON-SENSE.²⁶ Need I permit the Greek lust for system and symmetry to impoverish the Bible's manifold on this and other doctrines? Am I to continue the scribal-philosophical preference for logic-nomic "letter" over living "spirit"? Does not the Spirit rather wish to make available to me now this and now that opening toward the truth, so that the full riches of Scripture become potential resources for ministry in praise, prayer, service, and witness?

This speech has been a purely personal response to an assignment (no one else having seen any part of it before it was duplicated). You must judge whether I have dealt responsibly with my assignment, which has been to help you deal responsibly with yours. The world we are entering--which is now forming in the plastic inner lives of our children and grandchildren--is not just a world we adults are not prepared to enter: it is a world we are prēpared, shaped, hardened against entering. In us and our churches are demonic forces determined to fight off the future, and in this speech I have attacked just one of these demons, namely the scribal mentality.²⁷

Now while I do not equate the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of tomorrow, I say with confidence that more than any tomorrow before ours, our tomorrow demands that those who enter, enter as plastic, open, eager, children; and in this, our tomorrow is more like the Kingdom of God than was any yesterday. But just look at us adult Christians! Laden with effete tribal terrors and prides, full of old but comfortable treacheries and frauds, pouring our resources into the perpetuation of outmoded and competitive forms our children couldn't care less about and our

grandchildren will laugh at!

Yet, its Adventtime, and the Coming One is struggling to be born as the living Word for today and tomorrow. He is struggling now in every human being and institution, and evangelism is sharing the secret of who it is who's struggling to be born. Within the holy city and within our hearts are Herods ready to strangle the holy child. But among us and within is also the Spirit of truth and love, powerful to exorcize the strangling demons.

Our Lord commands us to drive out demons and live in the power of the Spirit. I am pleading that all who name the name of Jesus, all who claim his story as their Story, pray for and engage in such searching dialog among ourselves as the Spirit can use to repel from our hearts the demons of arrogance and fear and release in and through us and the institutions we are responsible for, the good angels of love and truth, that our responses to the world's wounds may be appropriate.²⁸

"Remember not the former things," says the Lord." Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19) The Pioneer of Faith, our Lord himself, calls us to pioneer: of this we can be sure. He came among us (as his first sermon-text says; Luke 4:18) "to preach good news" (there's the word) and "to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (there's the deed).²⁹ May he make us good news to each other where we are not at liberty, and good news to all earth's oppressed.

--Willis E. Elliott

NOTES supporting and extending the argument of this paper may be obtained by addressing my office, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 287 Park Avenue So., New York, N. Y. 10010

"NOTES supporting and extending the argument of" Willis E. Elliott's presentation,
BEYOND THE OLD... AND NEW... EVANGELISM

1. Paul's struggle against the scribalists--the "Judaizers," successors of the scribes who compassed our Lord's execution--appears in the gramm./nom. contrast in Ro. 2: 25-29. "The written code," intended to serve "the law," could become its enemy. The Gentile might well find it easier to become "a real Jew," not having the Jew's scribal burden. "Real circumcision"--true obedience--is to God as he comes to us here and now: it is not to a book. It is situational, not casuistic. It is "a matter of the heart, spiritual (pneum.) and not literal (gramm.) --the same verbal contrast as 2 Cor. 3:6.

In this connection one should not miss seeing that Paul can overwhelm the gramm./nom. ("written code"/ "law") distinction with pneum. ("Spirit"): Ro. 7:6. The scribe uses PROOF texts instead of (literary, historical, contemporary-global) CONtexts.

Finally, like his Lord before him, Paul was broadminded enough to transcend his inherited tribalism to such an extent that--again like his Lord--murder came into the minds of the book-minded. (Read again Ro. 2:25-29; and cp. Luke 4: 25-27.) And the Christian tribe? In the purview of pluralism and the emergence of global man, see Wolfgang Pannenberg's blend of objective and subjective (avoiding both mysticism and secularism) and Marshall McLuhan's environment/art (as two necessary ways of viewing our Story face to face with the emergence of global man).

2. The word "evangelism" is itself not biblical, and did not come into existence till the Constantinian period, when it expressed imperialistic overtones--as, subsequently, it always has. (NT, of course, uses the stem euaggel. extensively, as does the rest of the pre-Constantinian Christian literature.)

3. To cite but one example, its use caused considerable confusion and some mirth in Germany, where generally "evangelical" means "Lutheran."... The highly tendentious language of this party is loaded with overclaims: "evangelical" excludes other Christians from the gospel; and "Biblical evangelism" both reserves the Bible to the party's notions on evangelism and imputes bogus status to any evangelism which is not, in the party's meaning of the word, "Biblical." I am not calling foul on the use of these words for partisan ecclesial-political purposes, but I am saying that words in play on a political board undergo subtle value-shifts and will surely distort the realities and destroy the very possibility of dialog if the discussants are, politically, insufficiently sophisticated to measure the verbal voltage and depotentiate the eristic verbiage. (Of course there are degrees both of modesty and of honesty in the use of words!)

NOTE on 1). The image is no artifice on my part: "scribe" is a real functionary, "the scribal mentality" an existing style of consciousness, and "the scribes" in many religions (though usually under other names) constitute a real party (a politicoreligious force to be reckoned with). In world Protestantism, that party dominated the Berlin Congress (which, indeed, was its creature and mouth) and drew more attention to itself than it had ever before managed in the history of Protestantism. In this sense, the Congress established a stance for world dialog among Christians; and this paper, in this grateful to the Congress, is a dialogic

response that takes the Congress seriously.... The "scribe" image is appropriate (1) for describing an isolable, historical-contemporary fact and force, (2) for providing a vivid continuity to the remarks I am making about that part, and (3) for establishing a verbal category for dialog. (Of course I do not imply that the image exhausts the reality: I am not saying that the Congress mentality is a neat and comprehensive describing of the human beings in the Congress management (as though they were nothing but scribes!)--that would be polemic, not dialogic.)

While "the Spirit" (working through Billy Graham) gives life, the written code (as Billy Graham uses it)"kills" (2 Cor. 3:6).... But of course the scribalists are not the only Bible-abusers among us: who can claim to use the Word purely? But I press the biblical contexts of scribalism, and insist on the term, so as to accuse of a specific Bible -abuse specifically this party which fatuously and gratuitously prides itself on "defending the Bible." Until this pride is humbled or at least wounded, other Christians can expect of the scribalists no true opening toward dialog.

4. A hallelujah exception, from Paul Rees: "We have loved the silken complacency of our verbal tidiness when what we have needed is to feel the savage rawness of human ache and fury and despair.... Abject poverty, family disorder and disintegration, work insecurity and joblessness, can erect psychological barriers to the reception of the Gospel that are as real as the suppression of free speech." This rare antiscribal moment was laudably included in CHRISTIANITY TODAY's 25 Nov 66 report on the Congress.)

5. I recall a gospel tract one of you here wrote. Page 1 has only these words: "CHRIST IS THE ANSWER!" Page 2 has only these words: "What is the question?"

6. Of course a gathering on evangelism must study the doors, open and closed, through which the evangelist wishes to pass; but it was the spirit in which the freedom to preach was given priority that chilled me: an American softdrink company plans that every human on earth will have tasted its product within the next ten years, and these scribes' primary worry was how to get "the Word" to everybody "in this generation."

7. E. g., a man in the management, a scholar in evangelism, admitted to me that he has not read a line in Colin Williams, not even seen the ecumenical evangelism studies on "The Missionary Structure of the Congregation." Why should he read stuff written by those who are not "Bible-believers"?

8. They already know! As a biblical-languages teacher in seminaries it was my experience that the more scribal the student, the more he resisted sweating on--of all things--THE BIBLE! His arrogance as gnostos ("in" on "the Truth") impeded also his other studies, my colleagues testified.... But certainly also non-biblical, non-theological, non-religious factors were (and are) at work. Scribalism is one way the cultural outsider can dig in and hold on. I am sympathetic to the psychosociodynamics at work here. Billy Graham and Carl Henry (the twin heads of the Congress) grew up outside the mainstream of U. S. culture-- Billy, rural southern; Carl, urban northern of immigrant parents. A scribal hold on Scripture has helped each to make it big in the American swim. This non-religious analysis does not disparage their religion: I am persuaded that the fundamental drive of both has been, since middle adolescence, to glorify God who through Christ makes his love known to and through them.... Generalizing aside,

some students of scribal mentality--some few--dig into Scripture with a passion and become also in other disciplines, assiduous scholars; of such is Carl Henry, briefly a student roommate of mine in seminary.

NOTE on 3). A man is known by the company he keeps, including books.... A scribal president of a college broke off correspondence with me when a letter of mine indicated that all five authorities he quoted in his immediately previous letter had been dead more than a quarter century: he was, bibliographically speaking, an old man--if not dead himself.... To come closer: At the Berlin Congress a world-known continental theologian-observer asked me why he recognized so few of the authorities being quoted by the speakers (especially Billy Graham). He laughed when I said that these authorities were nearly all (1) British, (2) reactionaries both theologically and liturgically, and (3) long dead. Reading such literature prepares us to preach to our grandfathers--also long dead.... I propose this as a test question in sermon-preparation: how would this sound to my grandchildren? Of course that's a harder question than it would be if you were to substitute "grandparents." To allow our minds, psyches (imaginative life), and spirits to dwell in the past is to betray the future and to turn from the call of Jesus Christ as Lord of the future.

Further evidence of this atavism: the preferred English version of the Bible at the Congress came out in--hold your breath!--1611. Clarity of biblical meaning was distained, in favor of antique flavor. Speaker after speaker used English archaisms that sound as queer as thee and thou to the modern ear: for example, the ablative "of" in a phrase like "used of (instead of "by") God." Such quaintness of speech marks one as a contemporary ancestor. It is like the sight and smell of old lace, and it has a certain nostalgic attraction for callow youth, something like going to a museum... a museum... In a recent University of California student survey, only 3% of the students said they would ever think of going to a clergyman for help.... A thrillingly alive and responsible woman said to me recently after a usual Protestant worship, "Isn't it comforting to know that now that religion has become art and the church a museum, art is becoming religion.") The 1611 English translation was used in that worship.

NOTE on 4). The 25 Nov 66 CHRISTIANITY TODAY has an article defending the dogma--written by a seminary president whose school would cease to exist without the dogma (indeed, whose school came into existence to defend the dogma).... At the Berlin Congress I met three old friends, all with doctorates in Scripture, all having privately surrendered the dogma. They argued that the cost of giving it up publicly would be too great. They know and fear the wrath of the scribes. They would rather live in duplicity than become excommunicate from the so-called "evangelical" fellowship. One put it this ponderously: "I decided to keep my reservations to myself, and not to make an issue of a minor matter." What sort of fellowship is it when a man considers minor the major premise constituting the fellowship? Every club has its dues, but is there no limit? What a sad prison sola scriptura can be!

But to be charitable, consider how great would be the loss to these three men. The scribe who achieves facility in perfectionistic "interpretation" of the Bible is accepted and welcomed among the scribes (i.e., other hermeneutic magicians and the affected clergy and laity). As this religious party accounts for a fat half of the U. S. Protestant population, the three would be cutting themselves off from a huge potential audience as well as from their own livelihoods. Besides, they would lose the ego-satisfaction of belonging and ministering to a self-styled

"remnant" of "the faithful few" who have "kept the faith" and not apostatized like the rest of those who call themselves Christians: the minority psychology of the Kerngemeinde (the kernel community) would have to go, or at least could no longer find social reinforcement.

The best way to gain objectivity for viewing this scribal pandering to a party's perfectionist appetite is to step over into another religion--say, Islam. The Muslim scribe provides the faithful with "helps at the hard place" in the Koran, making sense where there isn't any and invisibly changing the plain sense when the hearer-reader's mind-set demands it or is comforted by it. It's an old game, at best a kind consolation and at worst a disreputable fraud. Yet the fact that it pays so well, in inner satisfaction and in coin, inclines me to tolerance towards its practitioners, especially the innocent and the clumsy among them.... But what of the effects? What of the pride they nourish, the pride that abets half of American Protestantism in rejecting the other half? For the pusher of the perfect Book teaches his followers that all that threatens this perfectionist illusion is evil. At the Congress, biblical scholarship--"criticism of the Bible"--took repeated drubbings. Tending to super-criticism elsewhere, the scribe is anti-critical of the Bible. This peculiarity forced American Protestant scribalism to found scores of Bible schools and seminaries of its own since World War I; for it could not capture seminaries, though it did capture several colleges which have been the primary spawning-beds of its leaders (Billy Graham and Carl Henry being from the same one of these).

It would be dreary to catalog all the supports adduced for this dogma. A particularly effective scare-tactic is a religious version of what in politics is currently called the domino theory. It is not true that granting one error in the Bible starts you automatically and irretrievably downhill to the total denial of Scripture. It is true that it is your first step out the door of a powerful, oppressive style of life.

(But we Christians did not invent the perfect-Book myth, passing it on to Muslims and others. We can get some objectivity by looking to our own roots before Jesus: Hellenistic Jews even propagated the myth of a perfect translation--the Septuagint, said to have been translated by 70 scholars independently with absolute verbal identity!)

God has given us, through textual and contextual criticism of the Bible, the power to free Scripture from the prison of this myth and the power to free the Church from the corrupt homage it demands--to free us for a flexible use of Scripture in ministering in this secular age.

Finally, a comment on two extrapolations. Those who have achieved a cozy historical absolute by pious though invalid extrapolation from the unique value of the Bible to its inspired perfection are not about to tolerate one who undertakes the reverse journey: this we have seen. But neither do they find helpful the equally pious but I think valid extrapolation from the errors in Scripture that those errors are inspired--that God put mistakes in his book so his people would worship him, not it. Here we are face to face with the scribal absolute: no revisionism or deviationism can be tolerated. The post-World-War-II unsuccessful hedging at the American Protestant scribalists' most prestigious seminary is prime evidence of this rigidity.

9. To my knowledge he never once appeared publicly at the Congress except to preach or to lead a plenum: it would be bad for his transcendence-mystique. That he was very busy is no excuse: L. B. J., equally busy but with his immanence-mystique to promote, would have been buzzing all over the place. But I grant a man the right to decide how he shall present himself to the world.

10. I recall 5 ways to pervert the obvious meaning of this text so as to rectify it to the Greek opposite of its plain intention. But I have alluded to this dreary business: it bores me even more than crossword puzzles, and besides makes me feel dirty, which crossword puzzles don't.
11. May I entertain you with another set of Greeky evasions? I haven't the stomach for it.
12. The so-called radical theologians, and more popularly Bishops Robinson and Pike, are trying to unfreeze the gospel from later Greek structurings --labors for which they can expect from the scribes no thanks, but only wrath slightly softened (if at all) with an arch pity.
13. Some evangelists specializing in children complained to me that the Congress didn't even mention child evangelism. "Souls" really don't have age.
14. Remember, in another connection, Satchel Paige's famous remark: "Don't look back. They may be gaining on you."
15. One speaker said George--"politicians"--ought to be more worried about this and do something more about it.
16. I own a statue of Osiris that is a thousand years older than Abraham.
17. In a Congress plenum, an unimpressive mortal who thought he had an important announcement announced, "I have an announcement to make, but I want Dr. Graham to make it: he can make the trivial sound important." True. He can make anything sound important: nonsense, blasphemy, truth, etc.
18. Seeing that at the end of the sermon he did this, immediately after the service I turned to Leighton Ford and said, "Why didn't he send them home to read the Gospel of Luke?" Leighton smiled his handsome smile and said, "I really don't know; Luke is my favorite Gospel." I think I know: the Osirian matrix can't find much food in the third Gospel with its earthy parables, but it can thrive on the mysticism of the fourth Gospel. Billy's preaching mines the rich conversational ore of the Paul-John literature in the New Testament. As a corpus it's not much bigger than Marcion's, but the Osirian matrix can empower this small corpus to cookie-cut the rest of the Bible.
25. Our children's perceptive and apperceptive patterns and also their psyches (not Platonic "souls" but their imaginative, fantasy, dream lives) are closer to the Bible than are ours, and their children's will be closer still. This I see as so momentous that I must say it another way for emphasis: a child of ten today, 1966, has an inner life more accordant with the Bible's inner life than with his father's or mother's. I speak of shape and style: the parent probably knows the objective content, the data, of Scripture better than does the child. But this qualification reinforces my point. Above the eyebrows, into his gray computer, the parent may have programed masses of biblical information. Let's say he's a scribe, and he has. But his mind's knowledge of objective biblical facts may be of negative value for opening his life to God's Word and God's world. (Surely many of the professional, full-time, old scribes who tried to trap Jesus in his words had gray computers better programed with holy-book data than was Jesus' mind.) The deeper questions are of the heart: Has the Word of God through

nature, history, and the person's own history been allowed to shape his imaginative life (psyche) and to style his life (through his spirit, through which God's Spirit gives him the power to rule himself)?

Cur dilemma is that those who care most about handing on the Bible to the children's children are those who have used that same book to insulate their inner lives from the inner life of the new age--and therefore from the children!

26. Mosaic-psyche Marshall McLuhan (NYT 22 Nov 66) sounds like a child but also like the avant-garde man of today and the man-on-the-street of tomorrow: "I poke these sentences around to probe and feel my way in our kind of world." Cp. psychologist Maslow's "thrashing about."

27. I have been crying to the scribe, "Stop hiding in the holy book and making it your own private, rearranged, comfortable home!" As I am in the non-scribal half of American Protestantism, far more often in my work I must say, "Look in the holy book!" Both parties, however, need to hear the words (of five days ago) of Eugene Carson Blake as he became the WCC executive: "The Church must get out of itself and into the world."

28. The category of "the appropriate" may help get the "soul" back down to nitty-gritty earth, help reknit body and "soul" (as decision is one and action is one), help heal the sacred/secular split ("a cup of cold water"), help reveal the illusory character of religious walls, and help the Church turn itself out into the world. Herethree conversions are implied:

(1) Conversion within the Church--getting the gospel into the Church. Much of the current "renewal" efforts of the churches aim at this, seeing the church prophetically as under divine judgment for being only a religious institution (or, less, only an institution of religion) rather than a beloved community with a changing institutional life.

(2) Conversion into the Church--getting "the world" (meaning persons) into the Church. There is here no difference in kind between every other Christian and Billy Graham: all are commanded and commissioned by the one Lord to this witnessing-winning work. But the subtle danger is that this task will be seen simplistically and imperialistically: identifying the Church with the kingdom of God, getting people to enter this ark of salvation through repentance and baptism, competing with other historical forces and institutions for converts. This obscures many truths about the Church and many truths about the world. (In NT, e.g., "the world" is chiefly whatever resists God's will--without distinction between religious groups, or between "sacred" and "secular" institutions.)

(3) Conversion into the world--getting the Church (as Christian persons and institutions) into "the world" (meaning all human realities other than "the Church" in the (3rd sense). Here the church is seen fundamentally as a Christian presence, individual/collective, in all our "worlds" of residence, work, leisure, and the public sector. "Conversion" here is Christians and their churches discovering and fulfilling their ministries out there where they are sent, in the world.

29. Pastor Niemoeller's beautiful saying on the unity of word and deed: "If a man needs God's Word and you give him bread, you despise Jesus; and if he is hungry and you preach the Bible to him, you despise Jesus."