

# **Evangelical Protestants in the Public Square: Drawbacks and Opportunities**

*The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Prophetic Voices of the Church Lecture*

APRIL 10, 2003

GASSON HALL, ROOM 100, BOSTON COLLEGE  
CHESTNUT HILL, MASSACHUSETTS

## **ALAN WOLFE:**

There's a long historical relationship between Park Street and the Fuller Theological Seminary, which we may hear a word about, and then I'll be back to the microphone to introduce our speaker.

## **DANIEL HARRELL:**

Hi, my name is Daniel Harrell (sp?). Lucy Guernsey had contacted me about saying a little bit about the connection between Park Street Church and Fuller Seminary. I got a chance to meet a couple of former Park Street folks who knew Dr. Harold John Ockenga, of course, who was one of the founders of Fuller Seminary.

I spent the week going around to some of our members who were around during that time, getting a sense from them what it was like to have their pastor in Boston be also president of a seminary out in Pasadena, and I think their general memory was that he traveled a lot. I think he went back and forth like 200 times over the course of the early years of Fuller's founding which, of course, in the late '40s and early '50s was no small feat. And they remarked as well that given his workaholic habits that he was able somehow to keep both things in balance and somehow do both things well.

As we were talking around the staff a little bit about the Ockenga legacy, we thought of three things that were important to us as we think of Park Street Church, but in some sense of Fuller Seminary too. I've had a bit of experience with Fuller, getting to teach out there a couple of years ago, and some of their graduates have made their way to Park Street Church, and some of my friends serve as professors there.

And as we think about Harold Ockenga and the Park Street/Fuller connection, three things came to mind. One was how it seems that Ockenga insisted during this time that he was beginning this neo-Evangelical movement in response to American Fundamentalism, that it was so important that we engage with a culture rather than separate out from it. And thus, he encouraged people in his church, and we still have this legacy today, to be involved for us in the City of Boston, to be involved with the universities and with the things that are in our neighborhood – the financial district and the neighborhoods – not to just preserve or defend, I should say, the faith and sit on the corner where we sit on the Boston Common in Boston.

The second thing that we remember so much from Ockenga is his insistence that rather than drawing lines, that we seek to dissolve them. Never make an enemy when you can make a friend. One of the things that the old-timers remember most at Park Street Church is Ockenga's feuding with Cardinal Cushing during the '50s, but that how, nevertheless, he received an invitation to speak at the Paulist Center which is next door to us. And he took that invitation and went and spoke and, I understand, was received warmly.

And, finally, the thing we appreciate most from Ockenga is his insistence that we never retreat as Evangelicals intellectually. And thus, his founding of Fuller Seminary and Gordon Conwell Christianity Today, as well as his legacy of preaching and other things, have been an encouragement to us to continue that intellectual pursuit that is such an important part of what it means to be a Christian in our world. So on behalf of Park Street Church and its long history with Fuller Seminary, we welcome you, Dr. Mouw, and welcome to Boston. And if any of you are ever in the downtown area, be sure to stop into Park Street. We'd love to say hello. (applause)

**ALAN WOLFE:**

For reasons that, perhaps, I might owe you an explanation for, which I'll give you in a minute, I'm often asked about Western Europe and, in particular, I'm asked about Holland, and one of the questions that people always ask me about Holland is why is Holland the most secular country in the world? And the answer I always give is because all the Christians left to come to the United States and teach at Calvin College. Now the reason why people ask me about Holland is because my wife is from Denmark, and as all Americans know, either Amsterdam is the capital of Holland or Copenhagen is the (coughing, laughing) – or Amsterdam is the capital of Denmark or Copenhagen is the capital of Holland. But we get this all the time in our family, and so because I'm married to a Dane, I somehow feel a special connection to things Dutch.

Rich Mouw was at Calvin College for 17 years before moving in 1985 to the Fuller Theological Seminary where he is now the President. He is one of the most important Evangelical voices in the United States, if not the most important Evangelical voice in the national conversation about religion that's been taking place in the United States for some time. As I'm sure most of you know, he's a philosopher with a Doctorate from the University of Chicago. He's the author of a number of extremely important books, including *Political Evangelism* and *The Smell of Sawdust: What Evangelicals Can Learn From Their Fundamentalist Heritage*. He served on numerous editorial boards and other institutional affiliations.

I have a long and, for me, very valued friendship with him and his wife, Phyllis, that goes back to a series of seminars that were funded by the Lilly Endowment, that brought together people who write and think about religion in American public life in a number of different settings, ranging from the luxurious retreats of South Bend, Indiana, to Key Largo and other work-a-day places. And over the course of these seminars and over the course of the years, I've had a special affinity with Rich, and I've just learned so much from him. It's been an extraordinary pleasure, as well as an intellectual experience, to have gotten to know him so well, to have gotten to know him as a person, and to have gotten to know how he thinks. Since the seminar ended a couple of years ago, we've been able to keep up this connection.

He graciously hosted a group of Muslims from the Middle East and Southeast Asia that came to Boston College under the auspices of the U.S. State Department to learn about the separation of church and state in the United States last fall. And I was asked by the State Department, when they asked me to direct this program, to pick one other location and one other institution in the United States from which they would learn the most, and I immediately called Rich and asked if Fuller would host that, and they did and we had eight marvelous days in Pasadena. A truly remarkable experience of bringing together – a secular Jewish Professor from Boston College, a Catholic institution, bringing 15 Muslims to an Evangelical seminary in Pasadena, California. It seems to me the very definition of what the United States is about.

So Rich is the second of our annual lectures. This is our most important event of the year at the Boisi Center, our lecture on the prophetic voice of the Church. The first one last year was given by Donald Monin (sp?), the President of Catholic Charities. This year, Richard J. Mouw, the President of the Fuller Theological Seminary. We're – did I say – I'm sorry, Brian. Father Brian Hare, the President of Catholic Charities – please forgive me Father Monin. It just goes to show you who my two favorite Catholic presidents are. Rich, after that faux pas, the floor is yours. Thank you so much for coming and honoring us with your presence and to address the themes of the evening. (applause)

## **RICHARD MOUW:**

It's an honor to be here, but it's also a delight. To think of the – I have good friends at Boston College and chief among them is Alan Wolfe. I recently offered a comment to his publisher on his forthcoming book, which is a wonderful book, and I said I consider Alan Wolfe one of my teachers, and I've learned so much from him, but even more than that I cherish our friendship. And the connections with Boston College – to be back here on this campus and to connect with Fuller people who are in this area, I was just delighted that Fuller alums have come this evening, and then also with Park Street Church.

The Eerdmans Publishing Company is going to reissue a book by Carl Henry, who was one of the founding members of the faculty at Fuller Theological Seminary, a book that he published in the year of Fuller's founding, 1947. A very important book, really, for the discussion this evening, a book entitled *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* in 1947. And Harold John Ockenga wrote the foreword to that book. And in an amazing few sentences for 1947, he says Bible-believing Christians, fundamentalist Christians, have typically been on the wrong side of the issues of race, militarism and a concern for the poor. That's amazing, I think, in 1947. As a matter of integrity, I have to add that – and I'm embarrassed to say this on a Jesuit campus – but that he also felt they hadn't been strong enough in opposing the liquor industry, but we'll just take that to be a throwaway line this evening.

But I want to talk about the present state of that Evangelical mind as it bears on issues of public life. What would it take for Evangelicals to have an important and positive healthy voice, a prophetic voice, in American public life? And when I say what would it take, it's going to be clear from what I say that I don't think we, as yet, have enough of what it takes.

In case some of you need a definition of Evangelicals to start with, I'll offer a very brief one. I could spend a whole series of lectures on how to define the term Evangelical. It's been much debated, but it's an interesting phenomenon that a British historian, an Evangelical historian of the British churches, David Bebbington who actually teaches at the University of Sterling, published a book in 1989 where he set out four, what he took to be four defining characteristics of Evangelicalism. And it's quite amazing that this set of criteria has "taken," and it's generally used as an adequate working definition or account of what it means to be an Evangelical.

Four characteristics: Evangelicals are people who place a very strong emphasis on personal conversion. They're conversionists, he says. And as they place a strong emphasis on the need for repentance and having one's life transformed from our natural sinfulness to a life of obedience to God through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Secondly, he uses the word *Biblicist*, and he means this in a positive way. A group of people who take seriously Biblical authority as the supreme guide for matters of faith and practice, not as the only source of truth, but rather as the test of truth. Wherever else we get our information from, ultimately the Bible trumps. The Bible is the supreme authority. And, thirdly, he uses the word *crucicentric* or *crosscentered*. Evangelicals place a very central emphasis on the cross of Jesus Christ and the substitutionary atoning work of the cross as really the only source of salvation that is available to us. And then, finally, it's an activist movement. There's a very strong emphasis on very ordinary Christians doing stuff. Typically, it's doing personal evangelism, witnessing to one's neighbors, but there are other dimensions of Evangelical activism as well.

The typical number that gets thrown around in American discussions of religious movements is that there are 50 million Evangelicals. That's an interesting number politically, because that means that the Evangelical vote is roughly similar to the Roman Catholic vote, and if somehow Evangelicals and Roman Catholics were to work together, they could be a very powerful combined voice in American public life. And in fact, the similarities, the growing similarities and rapprochement between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics is a very

interesting phenomenon in recent years, and I'm going to be paying special attention to that this evening, not just because I'm on this campus – but it is certainly one motive – but also because I think the growing relationship is a very important one for matters that we will be talking about this evening.

Many of you know about the much discussed book by Philip Jenkins called *The Next Christendom*. Philip Jenkins, who's a professor at Penn State. There was an essay version of this in a recent –the October, 2002— issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, in which he points out that easily the growing edge of Christianity in the world is in the Southern Hemisphere in what we often think of as the Two-thirds World. And indeed, by the year 2050, the vast majority of Christians in the world will be in Africa and Asia and Latin America, and that all the signs are that the overwhelming pattern of faith among the increasing numbers of Christians in the Two-thirds World is either Evangelical or Roman Catholic. And that on the Evangelical side, they tend to be Pentecostal-Charismatic, and on the Roman Catholic side, they tend to be very traditionalist.

So that the phenomenon of, say, liberal Protestantism in the United States or even the more progressive side of Roman Catholicism in the United States, in terms of world presence, just sheer numbers, is going to be an increasingly diminishing factor in the tone of global Christianity. And so as we think about how Evangelicals can assume a more – a healthier prophetic role in American religious life, and also what they can learn from and be engaged in partnership with Roman Catholics in this project, this has very important implications for global Christianity and, indeed I think, the global culture.

Before going any further, let me just say some things about my own personal interest and involvement in the discussion of Evangelicals in public life. I've spent most of my life, including my academic life, within the Evangelical Protestant community, and I've devoted most of my attention as a teacher and as a scholar to promoting a healthy Evangelical involvement in the public square. When I began my career in the late 1960s, the Evangelicals did not show much of an interest in pursuing issues of public life. With all the publicity given in recent years to the Christian Right, it takes some effort to remember that there was a time, not too many decades ago, when Evangelical Christians were regularly being criticized by the liberal establishment for being apolitical. The historian, George Marsden, once remarked that for American Evangelicals, the move from the 19th Century to the 20th Century was something like an immigrant experience, with the migration being spiritual rather than geographic.

As this century got started, those Christians who thought of themselves as Bible-believing Christians, loyal to the fundamentals of the faith, were in a mood where they no longer felt at home in the culture that they had once praised as “America the Beautiful,” with its patriot's dream of alabaster cities and the like. And for a while, they adopted a militant strategy of opposing the increasing secularization of American culture, but their public humiliation during the 1925 Scopes trial, coupled with the significant defeats that they experienced in the intra-Protestant fundamentalist/modernist controversies, where they basically lost control of some of the major seminaries and most of the denominational mission boards—their defeat in those areas led them to be increasingly pessimistic about the possibilities of social reform.

So for nearly five decades, American Evangelicals concentrated primarily on helping individuals get ready to go to Heaven. And that was the mood that prevailed when I was growing up in the Evangelical world. We did not think it was appropriate for our kind of Christians to be very involved in public life. One of our favorite songs began with these lines: “This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from Heaven's open door, and I can't feel at home in this world anymore.”

We saw ourselves as a faithful band of believers in a world that was headed for destruction. Our analysis of the larger culture was characterized by the kind of apocalyptic imagery that had been made popular by the 19th Century evangelist, Dwight L. Moody. Moody had said “The American ship is sinking and the only

task left is to urge individuals to scramble into the lifeboats”—the enclaves of Bible believing Christians who are awaiting the heavenly rescue operation.

Well, my own perspective changed significantly as a graduate student in the wild '60s. I became convinced that Evangelical Christians should be actively involved in political witness, and I engaged in such activities, often with a sense of deep alienation from the Evangelical community. Soon, however, I sensed the call to the Evangelical segment of the academy, a position from which I was able to work for an aggressive, Evangelical involvement in movements of social, political, and economic reform. In my first book that was published in 1973, entitled *Political Evangelism*, I made a sustained case for a more activist Evangelicalism.

Well, the Evangelical mood has changed dramatically in recent decades as Evangelicals, who had spent a half century thinking of themselves as a marginalized cognitive minority, suddenly emerged as a bold “moral majority”—that’s an amazing shift—a “moral majority” in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Nor has this political reawakening been welcomed by the liberal folks who had gotten accustomed to taunting Evangelicals for their escapist mentality. Many of those critics are probably praying passionately right now that Evangelical activists will soon go back to helping individuals board the lifeboats! Well, to be honest, I have sometimes been tempted to pray for that myself. Given the ways in which Evangelicals have been aggressively public in their social witness in the past few decades, there are times when I wish I were in a position to call the whole thing off, urging the Evangelical community to return to its earlier posture of politically passive otherworldliness. And that we would stop singing “Shine, Jesus, Shine, fill this land with the Father’s glory” and go back to saying, “this world is not my home, I’m just a-passing through.”

I’ve cultivated an appreciation for the sense of humor displayed in a comment made in 1656 by John Reeve, who was the self-styled prophet of a very interesting British sect known as the Muggletonians. Reeve ridiculed the notion that was quite popular in his day, that Christ would return to establish a literal millennial kingdom over which he would reign as king. Reeve insisted that it’s highly unlikely that Jesus would want to return to earth to establish such a political regime. After all, he observed, Jesus had already suffered much during the last time that he lived on earth, why would he want to come back as a politician and suffer again? Isn’t one round of intense divine misery enough? And I’ve been tempted to add my own spin to Reeve’s line of argument in the light of recent Evangelical behavior in the public arena. And even if Jesus did not suffer enough during his first earthly tour of duty, I’ve asked myself, isn’t likely that he has by now at least had his fill of Christian politics? Hasn’t, at least, his capacity for political suffering finally reached its limit?

But in my calmer moments I know that there should be no turning back, and instead we need to move forward to a more mature understanding of the issues of public life. And I think that this maturation prospect and process has to focus, to a large degree, on a new level, developing a new level of spiritual and theological wisdom. But there are some obstacles to this process with regard to Evangelical public life. And I want to talk a bit about why it is that there are – what these obstacles are to Evangelicals becoming more theologically and spiritually mature in their approach to the issues of public life.

One obstacle is just simply an imbalance in Evangelicalism on a popular level, but even also, among some of the elite types, in understanding the prophetic role itself. And I asked to talk tonight about an Evangelical prophetic voice. We talk a lot about prophecy, but the problem is it’s speculation about predicted events in the Bible. And that kind of prophecy tends to reinforce a pattern among Evangelicals of a passive observer approach, a sidelines approach to the issues of public life.

There’s an old distinction in theology that’s been used to distinguish between two dimensions of the prophetic task. Prophesying includes both – this is the old formula – foretelling and forthtelling. The Biblical prophets were allowed by the illumination of God’s Spirit to look into the future. They foretold events that were to come. But they also spoke boldly about God’s concerns about what’s happening in the present world. They forthtold. They told forth the will of God for present life. They told forth God’s

message for the way we live, calling human beings in both individual and collective settings to conform to the Divine standards of righteousness.

Bryan Hehir, in his very fine lecture here last year, talked about the prophetic tradition as really the teaching ministry of the Church. In the broadest, and I think most important, sense of prophecy, the Church is called to teach; to teach the church, teach the people of God what God wants by way of our involvement in public life, and what God wants by way of the patterns of righteousness in the larger human community that we are called to work for. This teaching dimension is very important, and that's a broader thing than simply the foretelling dimension of prophecy that we find, say, being expressed these days in the best selling *Left Behind* novels, and in the Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth* type genre of Evangelical literature. Both of those tasks, foretelling and forthtelling, are assigned to the Church, and we can foretell some features about what the end of history will be like, but we must also set forth our understanding of God's will for present day life.

As we approached the millennium, I got a lot of calls from reporters about all of the predictions about dire consequences that would occur when the year 2000 came. And I kept quoting Acts 1:11 to them, that Jesus, when he went to Heaven, when he ascended, the angels came and they talked to the disciples, and they said that "this Jesus who has been taken up to you into Heaven will come again in the same way as you saw him go in Heaven". But this word about the future came only after a very important conversation between the disciples and the Lord just before he departed from their midst. When they asked him whether he would now restore the kingdom, Jesus replied by warning them that it is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But this they could know, he quickly added: "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses."

And the important thing, then, is not that we worry about the end of the earth, but that we worry about the ends of the earth, that we worry about being God's witnesses in the global community, claiming the power of the Holy Spirit to tell forth, and to demonstrate in word and deed what God calls people to do by way of faithful obedience to the will of God. So that discerning of the will of God for present life and teaching, both within the Christian community and in the broader human community, about what God wills for this present context in public life, I think is a very important part of it, and that's a part that Evangelicals need to pay more attention to when they hear the word prophecy.

Another obstacle is a perspective on public life that has been shaped by many decades of the experience of cultural marginalization. I've already referred to that. Very interesting, back in the 1980s, Archbishop Rembrandt Weakland in America, the Jesuit magazine, wrote a fascinating article in which he talked about the role of Roman Catholics in public life. And he said one of the problems that we face right now in Catholicism and its relationship to public life is that the American Church has been shaped by a theology that was designed to equip an immigrant community to survive on the margins of public life. It was a theology for immigrant Catholics – and Boston is a good example of that, a theology for, say, Irish and Italian immigrants who came here – and it was a theology that gave them resources for surviving on the margins of public life.

The big problem, Archbishop Weakland said, for today is that the sons and daughters of these immigrants are in the State Department and they're heading up major corporations; but they're operating in positions of public leadership with a theology of cultural marginalization. And so there's a disconnect between the actual power that they have in their cultural location and the theology that has shaped their understanding of what it means to be a good Catholic in public life. I'm convinced exactly the same thing holds for Evangelicals today.

We have seen tremendous upward mobility in terms of the social status of Evangelicalism. 25 years ago, we were driving west and our next door neighbor, George Marsden, was editing an Eerdmans dictionary of

American Religion or something like that, and he asked my wife to take photos along the way of just ordinary churches in ordinary towns. And so we'd be going through Nebraska and we'd pull off Highway 80 and we'd go to some little town and we'd take pictures of four or five of the churches in town. And the pattern – it's right across from Michigan to California – the pattern was a rather consistent one, and that is in the center of the town there was a big Presbyterian or Methodist church, certainly a Roman Catholic church in a lot of places, an Episcopal church, sometimes an American Baptist Convention church, and then on the edges of town or on the wrong side of the tracks there was a Pentecostal church, and maybe a church that said, "Holdridge Bible Church, we preach Christ crucified, resurrected, and coming again" — or the Church of the Nazarene.

These were the churches that were on the edges of town, and it was a symbol of their marginalization. Those churches today own the best real estate in town. They are the megachurches. They're flourishing churches. And yet the theology that has shaped those churches is a theology of cultural marginalization, but the people who populate those churches are people who are in significant positions of cultural influence. And there has to be some way in which we rethink some of the issues. And the Moral Majority was an acknowledgement of that, but the problem was it was an acknowledgement without much theological savvy, and some of the leaders of the Moral Majority have recognized that and have washed their hands of a lot of the things that the Moral Majority did.

And a special challenge for Evangelicals is that we tend to fluctuate between two moods – cultural pessimism and cultural imperialism. To put it briefly or put it cryptically, Evangelicals either separate from the culture or they want to take it over. And there's no alternative to that. And so either it's "this world is not my home and I can't feel at home in this world anymore," or it's "Shine, Jesus, Shine, fill this land with the Father's glory," but that middle area of knowing that we're called to do some important stuff, but that we're never going to own the territory until the Lord returns, that we're in an interim period, or what the Mennonites like to call "the time of God's patience." How are we to act in that interim period, where we can neither separate ourselves from the culture nor take it over, but to do something between those two options of cultural pessimism and cultural imperialism?

My own view is that Evangelicals actually have two theologies that are in their collective subconscious. The first theology is the theology of Puritan theocracy. That's a theology that sees America, for example, as a chosen nation. "Oh beautiful, for patriot's dream that sees beyond the years, thine alabaster cities gleam undimmed by human tears. America, America, God shed his grace on thee. And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea." That eschatological verse of "America the Beautiful," which is really using imagery from the Book of Revelation, that the Book of Revelation applies to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem which will come down out of Heaven. America is the place of that kind of promise, and so we have this sense that God has destined America to be a light unto the nations and that we Christians need to be sure to call it back to its true Christian roots. That kind of – for those of you who know the "in" jargon – kind of post-millennial optimism about America as chosen nation with a manifest destiny, that's there.

But when Evangelicals experienced the defeats, first of all in the Darwinian crisis in the 19th Century, and then through the Scopes trial and various defeats in their struggles to control the northern denominations – Presbyterianism and the like – when they experienced those defeats, they trucked out another theology of eschatological apocalyptic views that America is Babylon, things are getting worse and worse, it's a sinking ship, to try to do anything good is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic and all of that kind of thing. And so you have these two theologies. And when we're feeling like we are on the margins of things, we think one theology, but as soon as it looks like we may be able to have a handle on things and gain a little bit of power, the other one emerges and we're never quite aware of what's going on. We really haven't thought it through. And I think the Moral Majority was an outbreak of that cultural imperialism based on a post-millennial optimism about America. And the danger is then that we move to "left behind" and apocalypticism again, and we need to explore an alternative to both of those moods.

And so I want to turn now for the rest of my talk to exploring some of the positive things. What would help all of this, spiritually and theologically? And I have a couple of points, and the first is this. Evangelicals need to develop a theology of the common good. I saw my friend Father David Hollenbach, who can't be here this evening, but he was nice enough to stop by and say hello. His book on Christian ethics and the common good is a wonderful book. And it's the kind of book that Evangelicals need to read and to struggle with and think about ways in which we might develop a very similar theological, philosophical understanding of the common good. I've been preaching this quite a bit.

And Roman Catholicism has much to teach us here. John Courtney Murray's wonderful explorations of a Roman Catholic theology of the American experience, of what it means to be in an American-type democracy in a pluralistic setting, is a wonderful resource for us to utilize and use as a reference point for our own discussion. When the Roman Catholic Church acknowledged openly that "error has rights," that's in many ways a profound acknowledgement both for Roman Catholics and for Evangelicals.

Back in post-Reformation Scotland, one of the Calvinist martyrs put to death by Catholics, James Durham, just before he was executed for his active opposition to any political concessions on the part of Presbyterians to either Anglicans or Roman Catholics, he proclaimed just before he was hanged, he said this: "Toleration doth either account little of error as being no hurtful thing and so there can be no esteem of truth, or it doth account little of the destruction of souls." Either you don't take truth seriously or you don't worry enough about souls, and he says, "both of which must be abominable." We can't compromise on anything.

And, in fact, that viewpoint corresponds closely to an assessment given a few years ago by the well-known Israeli philosopher, Rabbi David Hartman, in which he says that – when a reporter asked him about Jewish resources for understanding conflict in the Middle East, he says the Biblical framework – I'm quoting him here – you can find this in David Shipler's fascinating book called *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in the Promised Land*. Rabbi David Hartman said, "The Biblical framework is not the source of tolerance. That's not the place you go for that. You go there for passion, for zealotry, for extremes. Biblical people are extremists." And Roman Catholicism has had to struggle with that, thinking theologically about an alternative to intolerant extreme antipluralism. And Evangelicals need to do a lot of work on that as well.

I wrote a book a couple of years ago on civility, and I was actually inspired by a wonderful comment that Martin Marty makes in one of his works, where he says that in American society today civil people often don't have very strong convictions, and people with strong convictions aren't very civil, and what we need is convicted civility. Now there's an important challenge. How do we work for a pluralistic society for the common good without sacrificing our convictions? And I think there are important theological resources to explore there.

Catholicism has a number of options open to it. You get Mother Theresa's Franciscan view, that what you see when you look at the other person is Jesus. She tells a story in one of her books, where a nun, a young woman comes to join her order in Calcutta and immediately wants to go out and serve the lepers. And Mother Theresa says no, for the first six months, you need to contemplate the Blessed Sacrament and study the gospels, so that through this contemplation – she said we're a contemplative order, we're not an activist order – through this contemplation, you get to know Jesus so intimately that you can then go out on the streets and recognize him "in his dreadful disguise."

And that sense of the presence of Christ in the Other, even in the non-Christian Other, has been a powerful theme in roughly Franciscan-type Catholic spirituality, which is where I would link Mother Theresa and, to some degree, the Catholic Worker Movement. Father Hehir last year talked more about – has a more general view of an incarnationist approach. In my own Evangelical Calvinist tradition, I think a powerful resource is

simply creation, the fact that every human being is created in the imago dei, in the image of God, and that we to acknowledge the divine image in the other person.

So I think we need to explore theological resources for developing a working account of the common good, and Biblically there's a lot we can draw on there. I've been going back and forth to China a couple of times this year, and it's very interesting that – I'll say this parenthetically – the Three-Self Church in China, the registered Protestant churches in China, are very fundamentalistic. They bear all of the marks of the kind of fundamentalism that Carl Henry was describing in his 1947 book *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, except for the additional fact that even if they had been very publicly minded, they would –

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– and left at the time of the Revolution or just before the Revolution. You walk into a church of 4,000 people, and as you walk in they're singing, "softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling." They're singing the old fundamentalist altar call hymns. "Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life." And they've been nurtured by that separatist, highly individualistic spirituality. But the amazing thing is that right now, such new things are happening in China that you have a – in many places in China, you do have a free market. In that very town there are three McDonald's. You can buy Haagen Daz in that town. So there's a new market system. There's new economic freedom and economic choice. And many of us believe that following on that economic choice there will be new patterns of political freedom and political choice.

But there's also a developing pattern of moral freedom in China, where people who took for granted certain traditional family structures, certain traditional sexual mores, now also are being confronted with choices between different lifestyles and different value systems, different attitudes toward work. One of the hottest books in China among non-Christian intellectuals right now is Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* because they're trying to understand the theological and philosophical underpinnings of the market system.

And the fact is that the Church in China, certainly the Protestant churches, have a powerful opportunity to exercise cultural influence in a way that in North America we've virtually lost the real possibility of having a pervasive influence on the moral culture of North America. But the possibility is still there in China. But once again they've got a theology of marginalization that gives them no understanding of how they might have a role in that.

And I gave some lectures over there, and I said things I thought were just obvious, and people grab on to this, the seminary students and pastors. For example, take Jeremiah 29. Here you have the people of God in the Old Testament being placed in Babylon, which is both in reality and symbolically a wicked city. And they've had all of their own institutions. They've had their own Jewish, Judeo culture in which their understanding of the will of God has been shaped by – has shaped the institutions and patterns of life. And suddenly they're extracted from that. They're placed in exile in Babylon. And they say, how in the world can we continue to sing the Lord's song in a strange land? How do we obey the will of God in this pagan, wicked cultural setting?

And then Jeremiah comes to them and says there's a new deal. Here's the new word. "Build houses and live in them." Jeremiah 29. "Plant vineyards and eat the fruit thereof." "Marry off your sons and daughters and multiply in the land." And then this: "And seek the welfare of the city in which I have placed you in exile, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." "Seek the shalom of the city in which I have placed you in exile, for in its shalom you will find your shalom." That's a powerful word for the Chinese Church. That's a powerful word for Christians in North America today. What does it mean for us to seek the shalom of the United States with the conviction that in its shalom we will experience our shalom? And I believe that theme, that is given Jewish definition in Jeremiah, carries over into the New Testament. You take 1st Peter

2, where he said, “Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles, to maintain good conduct among the Gentiles so that when they see your good works they will glorify God on the day of visitation.” And that we’re to “honor all human beings.” 1st Peter 2.

So there are Biblical resources for developing that notion of a common good, that we will realize our own good with reference to the common good. We will realize our own shalom as we seek the shalom of the city in which God has placed us. And I want to say that’s a theological point, but I think we need to develop a spirituality of – a concomitant spirituality of empathy that’s based on a theology of the common good, a corresponding spirituality of empathy.

A spirituality of empathy is pointed to wonderfully in that last, and I think, one of the greatest documents of Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, and Bryan quoted this last year. Maybe every year you should have somebody here who quotes *Gaudium et Spes*. As you know, it means joy and hope. And the opening words of that great document of Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World: “The joy and the hope, the grief and the anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and the hope, the grief and the anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human should fail to find an echo in our own hearts.” And there’s a spirituality of empathy there. And we need to find ways in which the grief and the anguish, the joy and the hope of afflicted people becomes the grief and the anguish, the joy and the hope that echoes in our own hearts because we have that sense of solidarity.

Let me tell you about a *gaudium et spes* empathy-producing experience that I had several years ago. I had seen an advertisement for an AIDS mass at a church that was known for its support for the homosexual community, and I decided to attend, primarily because I take a very conservative position on issues of sexual morality. I believe that’s required, certainly by my understanding of the scriptures. But I thought it would be good for me to observe an AIDS mass. And my hope was to arrive shortly before the service was to begin and to slip into a back pew where I could observe the event. But when I got there, I realized there were only a few seats left and I either had to leave or I had to be ushered to a place in the middle, down the center aisle in the middle of the worshiping congregation, which was a huge group.

I was very much aware of being surrounded by people whose sexual lifestyles were in conflict with my own understanding of the morality prescribed in the Bible, but when the service began with one of my favorite hymns, I was quickly drawn into the worship experience. But I wasn’t prepared for the emotional and spiritual impact of two events in the liturgy. The first was a unison reading of some verses from Psalm 139.

*For it was You who formed me in my inward parts, You knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works. And I know, that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*

I found that very moving. The second element were the prayers of the people. The leader asked the individuals simply to speak out the names of friends and loved ones who had died of AIDS. And the response was almost thunderous. It went on for minutes. Hank, Joan, Arnie, Philip, Fred, Ashley, name after name, accompanied by a chorus of sobs. And nothing that happened that evening caused me to change my theological or ethical views about homosexual practice, but the encounter did have a profound impact on me. It brought home to my consciousness in a powerful way the sense that I was surrounded by fellow human beings who are fashioned in the divine image and who have experienced the heartrending sorrow in the deep places of their lives.

My experience was not unlike ones described by St. Theresa of Lisieux in her wonderful, spiritual journal, *The Autobiography of St. Theresa of Lisieux*. You probably all read that around here, but it’s revolutionary

in the Protestant world. A cloistered nun who managed to generate much spiritual wisdom in her much too short life, she died before the age of 30. And she seemed to work especially hard at generating empathy for others, but she also knew that she had to call regularly on Jesus for help. So here she describes the effort as it applied to an especially disagreeable member of her religious community. I quote:

*One of the nuns managed to irritate me whatever she did or said. The devil was mixed up in it for it was certainly he who made me see so many disagreeable traits in her. As I did not want to give way to my natural dislike of her, I told myself that charity should not only be a matter of feeling, but should show itself in deeds. So I set myself to do for this sister just what I should have done for someone that I loved most dearly. Every time I met her I prayed for her, and offered God all her virtues and her merits.*

And then this wonderful line:

*I was sure that this would greatly delight Jesus for every artist likes to have his works praised, and the Divine Artist of souls is pleased when we do not halt outside the exterior of the sanctuary where He has chosen to dwell, but when we go inside and admire its beauty.*

What she's doing there is saying that gaining empathy for other people is something like art appreciation. I find that very helpful. And I also find it helpful because it's not easy. I'm married to an art historian, and our son says that means that his father has sat on the steps of some of the great art institutes of the world. But for some people it comes easily, but for others, it takes work.

The writer of the Epistles to the Hebrews says we have to "strive to live at peace with all human beings." But we have to do so because it cultivates the kind of holiness without which we shall not see God. We have to strive. And working for the common good is a striving. It's not easy. It's not easy to cultivate convicted civility. But we have to do it. And just as we have to work to, say, appreciate something by Louise Nevelson, or even a Picasso for some of us, we have to work at that. We also have to work at appreciating the work of the Divine Artist who has formed people in the secret places and has shaped them in the very image of God, of God's own image. I like that. Involvement in public life as an exercise in art appreciation. I commend that image to you.

Well, I want to conclude by explaining that I have been emphasizing the need for corrective measures on the part of Evangelicals. And I've said these two: that we need to develop a theology of the common good, and we also need to develop a corresponding spirituality of empathy, where we find ways in which we can appreciate the work of the Divine Artist and see the other person as a creation, as a divine creation, as a divine work of art. I find that a very helpful guideline. Not always easy, but it's worth working at.

But I also want to acknowledge that there are good things already there in the Evangelical movement. Long before I ever heard about a preferential option for the poor, long before I ever heard of Mother Teresa or St. Francis of Assisi, I was taken as a kid by church groups to rescue missions in the inner city. And in those rescue missions I saw fundamentalist Christians who, night after night, knelt with the same drunks, put their arms around them and prayed with them, and fed them, and clothed them, and forgave them when they violated their promises that they wouldn't do the kinds of things they're doing again. There was a solidarity with the poor that I experienced there. And I celebrate that in my life. On a larger scale, the work of the Salvation Army, the wonderful work that World Vision is doing around the world, are good examples of Evangelical art appreciation that I celebrate.

But I think, more generally, there is a teaching ministry that needs to take place. We do need to work at theological and spiritual maturity for our involvement in public life, although I want to say it probably won't happen in the same way as it happens in Roman Catholicism or in mainline Protestantism. Evangelicals –

I've been asked a lot about this lately, reporters will call me, and one here tonight, that we've had a good conversation about some of these things – “why aren't Evangelicals speaking out about the war? We hear from Roman Catholics. We hear from Methodists and Presbyterians. How come Evangelicals aren't speaking out about it?” Well, I think there are some bad reasons why we aren't, but there are also some good, understandable reasons.

I think we tend to be skeptical about high level official Church pronouncements. We say we don't even know who would make them. We have a magisterium, but we don't elect our magisterium. A lot of our magisterium we don't even know what church they belong to. Who knows – a lot of people don't know that Chuck Colson goes to a Presbyterian church, or that Billy Graham is a Baptist, or that Jerry Falwell is a Baptist, or Carl Henry, or that the editor of Christianity Today is an Episcopalian. Denominational affiliation doesn't mean a lot for Evangelicals. It doesn't function in the same way, and so, when you have a group of denominational leaders or the head of the National Council of Churches issuing a statement, that's not the kind of thing that we get excited about.

If Phil Yancey were to make a statement about the war, we might take that seriously, but official documents we're somewhat skeptical about. And we're dissatisfied with selective uses of Biblical passages and themes. If you really take the whole Bible seriously, whatever your view is on this particular war, when somebody comes out and says, the Bible calls this – Jesus said we should be peacemakers, so we shouldn't be in Iraq. That's much too simple, because if you really believe that Jesus is the Son of the God who in the Old Testament told people to go to war, you've at least got to weave that together somehow. You've got to put all that together. And so if you really take the whole Bible seriously, if you take Romans 13, “the powers that be are ordained of God, and they've been given the sword to punish those who do evil and to reward those who do good,” those are important texts if you take it all very seriously.

We haven't done a good job of weaving those texts together into a coherent theology, but the Evangelical instinct – there's a lot more in the Bible that you have to take into account than a lot of people who issue rather simple-minded pronouncements about we've got to be peacemakers and that settles the issue, that you can never pull the trigger of a gun in serving your government, for example. That kind of simple thing isn't very impressive. Now, I think there are also some less laudable reasons, and part of it is that we don't really have a coherent perspective to speak out of.

But for the most part, I think you're going to find that Evangelicals will work more on the local level. I should quit soon. But, Ron Thiemann, my good friend at Harvard, in his fine book on public theology, says that local congregations should function as, what he calls, schools of public virtue, communities that seek to form the kind of character necessary for public life. And I think for Evangelicals, a lot of it will take place there. It will take place in Sunday School classes and singles discussions groups, and conversations after sermons, and that that may be where our magisterium functions. And it will be largely invisible to the people, but we would hope that it would manifest itself in an Evangelical community that seeks the welfare of the city in which the Lord God has placed it, so that in its welfare, we will find our welfare. And that may be the most important task that Evangelicals can engage in by way of being a prophetic presence in public life. Thank you. (applause)

[TRANSCRIPT OF Q&A PERIOD FOLLOWS.]

## QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

WOLFE: Prepared to take some questions?

MOUW: Oh, I'd love to.

WOLFE: Do you want to call on people?.

MOUW: Yes, back there.

HOGHEY: My name's John Hogey. I am –

MOUW: Hi, John.

HOGHEY: – (inaudible) flipped through this to the best of my (inaudible) Fuller in '99. I am a pastor of a little church in northern New Hampshire, and I've got a problem. The problem is this. The liberals and the Christian community up there and the liberal Evangelicals are on one side. Conservative Evangelicals and the Fundamentalists are on another side. And they won't talk to each other. As a matter of fact, this is very serious. It is serious for American society, politically, as well as religiously.

For example, in general, the liberals and liberal – I want to say Evangelicals – are pro-Palestinian and anti-Bush. The conservative Evangelicals and the Fundamentalists are pro-Bush and very pro-Israel. Now these two people will not talk. These two groups will not talk to each other. It's probably not too strong to say they even hate each other. Could you speak to (overlapping conversations; inaudible) And I'm trying to talk to both of them. They will not talk to each other.

MOUW: Well, I think – I'm glad you're there. And it may be that there's a real ministry in that situation for someone who takes it as a call to try to get the two sides talking together. And it might be interesting to try to find some common basis. As some of you know, about 60 of us signed a letter to President Bush last summer calling for a more even-handed policy in the Middle East. And I got in – I ended up being a spokesperson for the group, and got quoted a lot on it, and so I got a lot of angry Evangelical mail on that. I tried to answer every angry thing that I got. And in a couple of cases, it seemed to do some good, that people at least were happy to hear a response to their angry denunciations.

But at the Ethics and Public Policy Center last November, we got a group together from both sides, an Evangelical group of about 30 people, people who had taken stands on both sides of that, and we really had a good discussion. And that's a little easier to do, though, when a major think tank in Washington calls people together who are in the business of engaging in dialogue. But how do you do that on the local level? Is there any way that you could – in a way this is almost a pastoral issue. Is there some way that you could get two people from each side and just buy them lunch and talk to them?

HOGHEY: They refuse to talk to each other. They absolutely (inaudible). It's almost that they hate each other (inaudible)

MOUW: And you see the issue there is, is a theological issue. And it's an important theological issue. I happen to be pro-Israel, while at the same time wanting to argue that anyone who is pro-Israel – for example, Amos said God will never bless Israel unless Israel does justice to her neighbors.

So that if – the verse that we get a lot is the Genesis verse that God spoke to Abraham, and I got a lot of this. “God said to Abraham, I will bless those – I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you.” And then people would say you are cursed – they would say that to me – because you have cursed Israel. And my response is I want to bless Israel, but it seems to me that the Old Testament prophets make it very clear that if you really want God to bless Israel, you’ve got to urge Israel to do justice, and to walk humbly, to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God, and that that has implications for the way she treats Palestinians.

And so there is a theological issue there, but it’s a very difficult one to articulate. It’s a very difficult. It’s, in many ways, one of the most hot button issues in the Evangelical world, because there is an instinctive sense of solidarity with Israel that I think if Israel understood all the reasons for it, they wouldn’t particularly want that kind of solidarity. But there’s an instinctive solidarity that’s built on a lot of Bible prophecy kinds of things, as well as, I think, a very simple-minded understanding of some of those texts. But I don’t know what to do about that. That’s a tough one. But it’s an important issue. Yeah?

\_\_\_\_: I made a statement about (inaudible) the war –

MOUW: Hey, great. Good.

\_\_\_\_: That was (inaudible). But I do have a question maybe to give us a critical distance on the right questions to pose. From the recent movie, *Gods and Generals*, when it was released, you (inaudible) Fuller, this is a very interesting call to attend to the (inaudible) to look at the (inaudible) problem from the standpoint of serving (inaudible). A very dedicated person who (inaudible). Now, that’s unacceptable. And I think – I never heard a resolution on it. I did see the movie, but I think it does give us a critical distance on (inaudible) sharpening the question that you posed, to the extent that the question that comes around (inaudible) Christians as it relates to the political and historical (inaudible) upon themselves. It’s something – I think we have to, if we’re going to make sense of this at all. We have to see it as somehow transcending that historical (inaudible).

That’s just a suggestion on my part, and (inaudible). The problem I – myself was personally involved in political struggles (inaudible) Massachusetts, and I hated the (inaudible). (inaudible) and accused of being uncivil. I criticized people and I’m (inaudible) than I am. So as a personal – I had some personal (inaudible) input for me towards a resolution (inaudible). So how do you speak to the question of how men (inaudible) more involved (inaudible)? Doesn’t it take a (inaudible) and seeing the struggle (inaudible)?

MOUW: Thanks. Yeah. You know I do a monthly *belief.net* column called “The Evangelical Mind,” and my editor there asked me to address the question, about a month and a half ago, of how do we address people who are praying on both sides – a Christian world in which people are praying on both sides of the Iraq issue, for example? And I was speaking to a group up in Seattle, and I mentioned the *Gods and Generals* thing, because we were asked by Warner Bros. to prepare a study guide for that to be used in churches, and they printed, I think, 80,000 or something like that. And we’ve got a lot to learn about doing that.

But I think the point that you’re making is an excellent one, and that is that the present situation, where you have Christians lined up on different sides of the Iraq issue, and often hating each other and angry with each other, that that is not unlike the situation depicted in the Civil War situation where Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee were very devout, and actually

Stonewall Jackson quite theologically sophisticated. He was in the Dabney (sp?) tradition of Southern Presbyterianism and had quite a theological rationale for his views. And my own sense was that this was a good thing to do, to respond to Warner Brothers' invitation on that, because it would be helpful in this situation for church groups to go and see the movie, and then to discuss that very phenomenon with a little bit, as you say, critical distance from the present situation. And I think we need to find ways of – and I think a film like that – too bad the film ended up getting such bad reviews, and people said it was boring and it was too preachy and all the rest. But it was precisely in its preachiness that it served this particular purpose, because there was a lot of good theological discourse that took place in it. But I think it is a good way to get people talking about it.

But anyway, I was saying this in Seattle, and this couple walked up to me, and I used this to open my belief.net piece on dueling prayers. And they came up and they said, we sure wish that you could be around here for a while because we need theological marriage counseling. And she said he's in favor of going to war against Iraq, and he wants them to invade right away and get it over with fast, and I think we should work through the United Nations and hopefully avoid a military conflict, and try to settle it through diplomatic means and putting pressure on the Iraqi government. And we pray on both sides of the issue every day. And the interesting phenomenon there is it's like – it's not like when a couple disagrees on who to vote for for mayor, because then you can cancel each other's vote out. But you can't cancel each other's prayer out. So I thought about what would I say to that couple, and, in a way, they were a microcosm of the problem. And if I were to do some theological marriage counseling what would I say to that couple about their dueling prayers?

And I really think praying the Psalms is very important. This is what I love when I go to Benedictine monasteries and the like where they do that. We sing a lot of songs, but we sing mainly praise stuff, and we don't do the laments and some of the self-criticism in the Psalms. But I like Psalm 139, for example, where – I have what I call an “oops” interpretation of Psalm 139, where the psalmist at one point says, “Oh, Lord, I hate your enemies with a perfect hatred. You and I are on the same side and you can count on me.” And then I think he says, “oops,” and then he says, “Lord, search me and know me and try me, and test my thoughts. See if there be any wicked way in me.” And that's really the way to pray.

And so there's something wrong with a too strict identification of our own foreign policy proposals and the will of God. I think the critical distance, both in looking at distant historic situations that have parallels, but also critical distance, trying to create a critical distance between our understanding of our own motives, an understanding of our own perceptions, and an understanding of the will of God.

But, you see, I really think that a lot of that takes time. I think it's a long-range teaching ministry of the Church, and a lot of it has to do with trust issues, and the ability to create empathy, and listen to other people to see the point of dialogue. We just had a big event at Fuller last week that I organized, a two and a half day conference of Evangelicals and Mormons dialoguing together. And people think, well, what are you doing that kind of thing for? And the basic thing is not to bear false witness. I think we often attribute things to people that they themselves don't really believe, and that's a sin to do that.

And so recognizing that these are sinful situations, but that they can only be addressed pastorally and try to get at some of the underlying motives there, some of the underlying hopes and fears that are at work, is a pastoral task and it will take time. I don't know. Yes, Father?

Q: You mentioned that George Marsden, and one of the pieces that you spoke of inaudible). The university (inaudible) cushioned (inaudible) in 19th Century Boston. But one of the explanations in there was that they got caught up in (inaudible) generic Christian American religious (inaudible) there to unite the country and heal the sectarian (inaudible), especially in a country (inaudible), and that that was the undoing of the strength of the sectarian (inaudible) possible. And I wonder if (inaudible) reflective of people (inaudible) responsibility (inaudible). Is there a major that, pursuing that (inaudible) mainstream (inaudible)?

MOUW: Well, keep telling that to Alan Wolfe, because he thinks I – we're too exclusive in our hiring policies at Fuller. No, that's a very important point, and it's something I struggle with, that – the idea that – it's almost – the danger there is that by working at convicted civility, you will end up with unconvicted civility. And to keep those two things in mind, that right now, the dominant move of Evangelicalism is conviction without much civility, without much of a strong pursuit of the common good, where we really take the Other and the Other's difference seriously. But on the other hand, we don't want to go in the other direction where we create a generic sense of what's good, so that the common good isn't a generic good, in some sense. And how do we work at that?

And all I can say is that I think it's possible, and I believe that it's a mandate to work at it, but this is one reason why, even in talking here tonight, I will make a point of saying I really am very conservative in my views on sexual morality. That the kind of respect for the Other that I want is not meant to encourage a diluted morality or a relativism, which I really think is what those institutions in the 19th and the early 20th Century were doing when they wanted to avoid a sectarian spirit. So it's a grand and, I think, quite new experiment, but you folks have done it. This is where I think we really need to talk more together. I really think dialogue between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals is a very important thing, because we're not going to learn much from liberal Protestants on this, for a lot of reasons.

But I think we have a lot to learn from Roman Catholics who, out of a somewhat different tradition, and drawing on somewhat different philosophical and theological resources, nonetheless have had to work hard – and I think Father John Courtney Murray is a wonderful example of this – have had to work hard at maintaining the unique convictions of the Roman Catholic tradition while at the same time wanting to say error has rights. And the wonderful thing about error has rights is that there really is error, that we're not saying oh, everybody has a right to his or her own opinion in some kind of wishy-washy way, but that there are people who really do have horrible views.

David Hollenbach, Father David Hollenbach's book has a chapter title, it goes something like, "Not Everything Can be Solved by the Common Good." There are these residual issues that simply can't be covered. This is why we have to strive to live at peace with all human beings. And that the striving is a very difficult thing. And we may lose it. And if we lose it, then maybe somebody will come along and create a new sectarian spirit that will be needed. I don't know. But I think right now that the important challenge is to work for the common good. Yeah?

Q: (inaudible). My name is Bill McGinness (sp?), I'm the Class of 1944 at Boston College. I just read recently an article by a man named Charles Matthews, who wrote on reconsidering the role of the main line Protestant Church (inaudible) in public life. One of the comments he makes, he thinks that churches, like all of us do, have a role to play, but one of the statements that he makes is that the churches should become players and not just referees in society, refereeing how to (inaudible).

MOUW: It scares me, because I do worry a lot about the Church as a collective voice. My fear in Matthews, and I know that essay and I know him and he does fascinating stuff, but my fear in all of that is that it's yet another way of trying to re-establish the voice of Protestant elites who really are, themselves, disconnected from their constituencies. And that before mainline Protestants go too far in the direction of trying to reaffirm their role – the glorious days of Reinhold Niebuhr when he had a hotline from Union Seminary to the State Department. Before we try to revive that golden age, I think the leaders of the mainline churches have a lot of work to do to re-establish some kind of rapport with the local church, because I think their own people, often, don't think that they're speaking for them, and I think that's a real danger in mainline Protestantism. And I don't think the answer then – this is why I'm skeptical about groups of Evangelical leaders making statements. I think we're much better working on the local church on that, although I will still shoot off my mouth on occasion on big issues. Thank you.

WOLFE: Well, Richard Mouw, thank you so much for your scholarship. Thank you so much for your basic and fundamental human decency. And thank you most of all for your common sense and thoughtful ideas that are so much at the heart of the things that we in America are wrestling with these days. When I think of the atmosphere that existed in this country when the Fuller Theological Seminary was founded in 1947, and particularly the distrust and mutual hostility between Catholics and conservative Protestants in those days, and compare that with the kind of talk you gave tonight and the kind of reception you received here at Boston College, it makes me feel that we've just gone a tremendous distance in 50 or 60 years in this country, and only foreshadows, or is it – what was the other one? Fore – the two prophetic traditions? It was forethought and forth-thought. But this shows forethought – or is it forth-thought, for another 50 or 60 years of continued understanding of each other's traditions. Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts with us tonight. And next year's lecturer in this series will be announced as soon as we decide who it's going to be. Thank you all.

*[END OF TAPE]*