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# Fresno Pacific University: An E/evangelical University?

QUENTIN P. KINNISON

On December 19, 2015, National Public Radio ran a story provocatively titled, “Are you an Evangelical? Are You Sure?” The reporters documented the many difficulties in identifying the meaning of “Evangelical” and how different groups sought to define both the term and the people who are identified (willingly and unwillingly) with that term. Depending on which definition is used, the range of people in the U.S. identifying or identified as E/evangelical fell somewhere between six and thirty-five percent, a twenty-nine percentage-point difference.<sup>1</sup> The story highlights how political associations affect the differences in understanding as the term has become more associated with a particular political affiliation as opposed to a particular religious connotation.

Raised Southern Baptist, licensed to the gospel ministry and educated by Southern Baptists, and having earned a Ph.D. from Fuller Theological Seminary, I am familiar with the religious notion of evangelical. I also recall a conversation in the late 1990s with an old-time Southern Baptist church secretary that to be Southern Baptist was to be a Democrat; to be a Southern Baptist who was or who voted Republican was to risk eternal damnation (she was mostly kidding).<sup>2</sup> My conversation and the NPR story both demonstrate the complexity in understanding what is meant by E/evangelical. The meaning of E/evangelical as a politically distinctive term (Evangelical) rather than as a religiously distinctive term (“evangelical”) complicates that identity.

## From “evangelical” to “Evangelical”

E/evangelicalism as a movement experienced in the United States is a relative newcomer to the ecclesiological scene, originating by some accounts in the mid-1700s.<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that the term “evangelical” was not used prior nor that it is an exclusively British-American expression of faith. An important example for Fresno Pacific University is that of Menno Simons who stated in his 1539 defense “Why I Do Not Cease Teaching and Writing”: “For true *evangelical faith* is of such nature that it cannot lie dormant, but manifests itself in all righteousness and works of love....”<sup>4</sup>

Many use “evangelical” in the broadest sense of the term as described by the National Association of Evangelicals: “The term ‘evangelical’ comes from the Greek word *euangelion*, meaning the ‘good news’ or the ‘gospel.’ Thus, the evangelical faith focuses on the ‘good news’ of salvation brought to sinners by Jesus.”<sup>5</sup> Arguably in those terms, all who follow Christ are “evangelical.” But the use of the term “E/evangelical” to describe a particular movement within the larger Christian faith has developed into two types of meanings: 1) evangelical: a historical representation of a kind of Protestantism defined by certain “patterns of convictions and attitudes;”<sup>6</sup> and 2) Evangelical: a more contemporary representation of a theo-political movement that takes shape in the mid-to-late twentieth century.

The first meaning (“evangelical”) describes a trans-denominational Protestant movement that originates in Britain during the 1730s.<sup>7</sup> David Bebbington marks this movement by four qualities: conversionism (“the belief that lives need to be changed” usually marked by repentance and confession of faith), activism (“the expression of the gospel in effort” as evangelism and/or social care of human needs), biblicism (“a particular regard for the Bible” in its entirety without privileging one text above another), and crucicentrism (“a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross” as the means to God’s work of salvation when applied to a convert).<sup>8</sup> Not all expressions of these four qualities are reflected uniformly in the evangelical movement. For instance, early evangelical expressions of activism were rooted in a belief that the “preaching” of the gospel was done in word and deed. However, a kind of unnatural split occurs in the 1800s with some emphasizing the preaching of the gospel as evangelism (revivalism and “winning souls for Christ”) and others emphasizing the care of human need (a “Social Gospel”).<sup>9</sup> Many in the “soul-winning” group are shaped further by the fundamentalist movements of the late 1800s and the early to mid-1900s and fears of “godless Communism” in the 1950’s and 60s, while many in the “social need” group are both influential in and influenced by social movements such as woman’s suffrage, the Great Depression, civil rights, and the war on poverty. While both groups found engagement with secular spheres important (especially the political), particular fears about lost religious vitality and the perception of increased secularization led many of those associated with “soul winning” evangelicalism to look for means to engage political solutions in order to preserve a “Christian” America.<sup>10</sup>

This split along with a distinct political polarization occurring in the U.S. in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, led to the rise of what might now be described as the theo-political Evangelicals. The evangelical/Evangelical split is arguably exacerbated in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.<sup>11</sup> However, it may be that this split is more of a splintering as the USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture identifies E/evangelicalism as existing in five distinct varieties: Trump-vangelicals, Neo-Fundamentalists, iVangelicals, Kingdom Christians, and Peace and Justice evangelicals.<sup>12</sup> What this short, and grossly incomplete, survey of E/evangelicalism demonstrates is that any conversation about Fresno Pacific University as an E/evangelical university on its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary comes with significant need to clarify what kind of E/evangelical school Fresno Pacific might have been or may want to be.

### **Between Two Poles: Mennonite Brethren and E/evangelical Faith**

Fresno Pacific University's particular variety of E/evangelical expression is shaped by its location as an institution of the Mennonite Brethren denomination (MB). The Mennonite Brethren identify closely with the Anabaptist Mennonite faith by heritage and stated practice.<sup>13</sup> These practices include the importance of peacemaking in the loving of enemy and neighbor, providing for the physical well-being of those in need, and a life of egalitarian interdependence in community, along with emphases on spiritual transformation and the importance of the Bible.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, "MB's were open to influences from the larger evangelical church, especially Baptists who encouraged world missions and helped the young MB church develop its congregational polity. This openness to other evangelical churches continued in North America in the twentieth century and still characterizes MB's today."<sup>15</sup> This assessment is echoed by Richard Kyle who states that religious forces such as "the Baptists, dispensationalism, and fundamentalism...pull the Mennonite Brethren closer to the mainstream of American evangelicalism..."<sup>16</sup> Kyle further notes that proximity to other E/evangelical groups, such as Baptists, and the process of Americanization fostered an embrace of E/evangelical markers and a greater denominational coherence.<sup>17</sup> This led to formal associations with E/evangelical organizations (such as the National Association of Evangelicals) while still attempting to maintain a distinctly Mennonite Brethren identity.<sup>18</sup> John B. Toews illustrates the tension

this creates when he describes the Mennonite Brethren in the United States as, “pulled between an emphasis on individual salvation with its concern for the personal devotional life and the concern for the life of social service, social action, and social justice.”<sup>19</sup> Here we see the dichotomy of Menno Simons’ definition of evangelicalism and the emerging American definition of evangelicalism clashing in the life of a faith community in the process of becoming an American denomination. These forces shaped the life of Pacific Bible Institute, Fresno Pacific College, and now Fresno Pacific University.

### **The Precursor: Days of Formation from Pacific Bible Institute to Fresno Pacific College**

By the 1900s, the modernist controversies of the late nineteenth century had bloomed into a full-blown debate. Ralph Enlow describes the development of Bible institutes as “fueled by a variety of cultural and ecclesiastical currents expressing response to theological drift, spiritual malaise, and secularizing influence” specifically citing European scholasticism, enlightenment rationalism, higher criticism, and the development of *a priori* rejection of miracles and Darwinism.<sup>20</sup> Guenther would affirm some of these as motivating factors for some Mennonite Brethren, adding that the additional pressure of being a migrant people in a new land added an important ethnic element.<sup>21</sup> While these may be true, there developed other factors that more clearly define the origin of the Pacific Bible Institute (PBI).

Joel A. Wiebe states, “There were those who believed firmly that Mennonite Brethren doctrine was being diluted by leaders being trained at other institutions.”<sup>22</sup> Wiebe specifically names the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (Biola), Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS) (because they emphasized dispensationalism and eternal security of the believer), and what would eventually become Azusa Pacific University (APU) (because of its emphasis on the charismatic).<sup>23</sup> Paul Toews insists that the impulse to build a distinctly MB school was largely rooted in the desire to provide specifically MB denominational training to its young people and church leaders without modernist influence while recognizing the unique ethnic nature of this need.<sup>24</sup> As Toews comments:

The impulse to build a school was rooted in the need to insure (sic) that MB young people would receive appropriate denominational understandings. Denominational schools...shelter people from the corrosive impact of alien

ways.... During the 1920s and 1930s, as the fundamentalist-modernist debate polarized American Protestantism, Mennonite Brethren instinctively leaned into the conservative camp. As an immigrant group still feeling like outsiders, they might have been put off by the Americanness of fundamentalism, yet in a world of simple dichotomies they stood with the fundamentalists. Other Mennonite Brethren found new freedom in the Pentecostal-Holiness movement that contrasted with their own restrained and codified piety.<sup>25</sup>

However, the desire to establish a denominational school was without clarity as to what kind of distinct MB influence such a program of education might have when PBI opened in 1944. Toews contends that this lack of clarity and the over-similarity with other Bible institutes failed to capture the support of West Coast MBs.<sup>26</sup> The importance of defining a new program of education with broader educational goals and a more distinctive MB identity (as compared to evangelical/fundamentalist schools mentioned above) became the impetuous for the transition to Fresno Pacific College a decade later.<sup>27</sup>

As an evangelical institution, PBI has both similarities and dissimilarities to most other intentionally-evangelical schools that developed in and around this same time period. Certainly, there are distinct similarities such as a fear of “theological drift and weakening resolve against liberal tendencies.”<sup>28</sup> As Toews notes that at PBI, “the substance of what was acceptable reflected the strictures of American fundamentalism.”<sup>29</sup> But this was not at the expense of other core Anabaptist beliefs that distinguished the MBs from those who founded Biola, DTS, APU, and other such distinctively evangelical institutions.<sup>30</sup>

### **Birth of a College: Fresno Pacific College and “the Idea”**

While PBI was founded in response to perceptions that MBs needed a denominational training center for the service of MB churches as a particular kind of MB response to the theological liberalism of the modernist controversies, it is also recognized by Toews and others as retaining a core or nucleus of Anabaptist-Mennonite faith understanding.<sup>31</sup> In the vein of this understanding, a distinctly Anabaptist emphasis would shape the transition of PBI to Fresno Pacific College. This emphasis on Anabaptist ideation culminates in what would become the Fresno Pacific College Idea.<sup>32</sup>

The transition from Bible institute to a liberal arts college with its more formalized program of education for vocational training was met with an equally

profound theological emphasis. It is notable that the rise of Fresno Pacific College (FPC) as an Anabaptist-Mennonite school does not dismiss the tension between the Anabaptist and evangelical tendencies of the MBs. In other words, the Idea is not a divergence from the past, but a reorientation of the theological foundation more squarely within the more distant heritage of the Mennonite Brethren. Toews points out that the Idea at its inception maintained a certain congruence with the institution's heritage and with philosophy statements of other Christian colleges: "The definition of the college as Christian borrowed the language of many institutions – the college 'accepts as the ultimate authority for life God's self-disclosure of himself to man in Jesus Christ and the record of Scripture..., believes in the unity of all knowledge under God, [and] sees no ultimate contradiction between the truth of revelation and scholarly investigation.'"<sup>33</sup> Likewise, the language used to describe the liberal arts was also Christianized according to other Christian college understandings.<sup>34</sup>

The philosophical shift represented in the Idea becomes what Reimer describes as the "interpretive center of the institution" which is drawn from the "particularistic theological tradition of the college," specifically the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage.<sup>35</sup> However, this Anabaptist tradition was held in one hand (The FPU Idea) while the evangelical tradition was held in another: The Confession of Faith. As a Mennonite Brethren institution, the denomination's Confession of Faith has functioned as the Confession of Faith of the school. And it is in this Confession of Faith that one finds familiar evangelical language.

Much has been written about the tumultuous changes in E/evangelicalism that result in the coupling of theological and political conservatism during the 1970's and 80s. The turmoil of the 1960s and political disruption of the early 70s led many denominations to reify their theological positions. Therefore, the MBs review and revision the Confession of Faith at the turn of the 1970s fits the milieu. Many of those who identified as "conservative" in E/evangelical denominations again grew concerned with what they identified as theological liberalism coupled with political activism.<sup>36</sup> In many E/evangelical denominations, the "retaking" of educational institutions and denominational organizations became a priority along with the reassertion of "traditional" denominational understandings through the revision of their doctrinal statements or confessions of faith.

From the earliest PBI “Abridged Statement of Faith” to the “Statement of Doctrinal Policy” in the first Pacific College catalogs, there are few changes in the language.<sup>37</sup> Beginning with affirmation of the Bible, Trinity, and such, through to the assertion of the imminent bodily return of Christ, the statements hold to a pattern likely to be found in most evangelical churches and schools. First, there seems to be an intention to avoid the language and doctrinal issues that might be seen as distinctly Anabaptist. Particularly, there is no reference to the peace tradition or to an egalitarian community in these early statements, even though these were part of the MB Confession. These omissions could be interpreted as an attempt to avoid sectarianism. Second, by the early 1970s, the introductory language for the college’s statement of faith (or statement of “Theological Orientation”) includes the sentence that: “Pacific is *evangelical* in its theological orientation” (italics added).<sup>38</sup> This language would be included in the catalog until 1996 at which point the assertion of the school as a college “sponsored by the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren...;” “deeply and intentionally rooted in the Anabaptist Mennonite movement...;” and “committed to Anabaptist and evangelical ideals” were added.<sup>39</sup>

The Fresno Pacific College presented here demonstrates that while there remains a consistent evangelical orientation, that orientation is framed within the Anabaptist-evangelical orientation of the MBs. The period of transition from PBI to Fresno Pacific College demonstrates that commitments to both ideals are able to coexist, despite potential external pressures to move in a more Evangelical direction. It also demonstrates that the Anabaptist ideal offers an orientation that makes this co-existence operable, despite such tensions.

### **A Marketplace University: Fresno Pacific University in an Evangelical World**

The shift in the theological/political identity of E/evangelicals that brings us to fracturing mentioned in the introductory paragraphs above takes place over the course of decades of formation in the FPC to FPU life history. The conservative/fundamentalist “revolutions” beginning in denominations across the US in the mid to late 1970s spurs the rise of political action groups such as the Christian Coalition and the Moral Majority. By the mid-1990s, this theopolitical power propels the Republicans to control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The conflation of political and theological power is



realized in ways that results in Evangelicals being viewed as a distinctively political force. In politically conservative contexts, this Evangelicalism becomes a significant social reality with which to be reckoned. Such is the Central Valley of California, described by some as the Bible Belt of California.

In this shifting context, Fresno Pacific College became Fresno Pacific University (FPU) in 1997. This change is described by some as a result of the school's growth. Under the Edmund Janzen presidency, FPC adopted a plan to "broaden the base."<sup>40</sup> This plan focused on a more intentional inclusion of non-Mennonite Brethren on the faculty and staff of the college. Coupled with this inclusion was the recognition of a greater appeal to students outside the MB denomination.<sup>41</sup> This broadening of the base and the later addition of professional degree programs (especially in degree completion) helped to fuel an expansion of the college to its multi-campus configuration and alignment of schools and structures.

As the University embraced greater inclusion and larger ecumenical participation, the number of faculty, staff and administrators who were members of MB churches became considerably smaller. In many ways the watershed moment in FPC/FPU history is the hire of Dr. Richard Kriegbaum as the first non-MB president of the College. Since that time (excluding the second Kriegbaum presidency) the college/university has appointed five presidents (Carden, Haak, Ewert, Menjares, and Jones) of which only one (Ewert) was MB and two (Ewert and Jones) had/have ties to Mennonite-Anabaptist communities. Another brief example can be seen in the 2008 addition of six deans (four over the schools, and two co-curricular) none of which came from within the Mennonite-Anabaptist community. Similarly, the Senior Administrative team in 2008 had only one person associated with the historic Mennonite-Anabaptist community. This is not to say these individuals did not have understanding of, appreciation for, or affinity with Anabaptist ideals, but that unlike in previous eras where a common understanding of these ideals could be assumed by nature of denominational affiliation, such assurances were unwarranted.

On the surface, this change in the number of MB-related administration, faculty, and staff is of little note, as the FPU Idea was and is a philosophy statement that draws many to FPU (see Marshall Johnston's Ecumenical article). Norman Rempel's note to faculty, is helpful:

Be sure that you identify with the college mission. Nothing is more likely to breed long-term problems than a poor match between the faculty member and the stated mission of the institution. Those who have invested a great deal to make the institution what it is when you arrive have a right to expect that you will make every effort to carry on the vision which gave impetus for the college's very existence. Coming to the institution with a hidden agenda is both dishonest and likely to lead to frustration.<sup>42</sup>

The Idea interpreted through an Anabaptist lens looks differently to many than interpreted through an Evangelical lens or a Mainline lens. The lack of socializing rituals or mechanisms for new staff, faculty, and administrators often means that the Idea takes the particular bent of those who read it rather than shaping the reader's understanding of the place.<sup>43</sup> Rempel points to this difficulty when he remarks:

Although the college seeks to be forward looking ...what is important to keep from the founding vision is also continually under discussion. Recently, at an all-day faculty retreat, questions were raised: What in the Mennonite Brethren "story" is important to retain, to continue to emphasize? To what extent should new faculty be expected to understand and articulate those emphases at the time of hire? How can faculty who do not share personal roots in the denomination be expected to carry on a legacy which is not their own? Does it matter? And, if it is determined that it doesn't matter all that much, will not the college lose its collective soul?<sup>44</sup>

Growing tensions in the US around tribalism,<sup>45</sup> specifically focused on perceived degrees of "liberalism" versus "conservatism" have exacerbated the identity question for schools like Fresno Pacific University that are explicitly Christian and extraordinarily market-sensitive. For example, developments in the 2016 California Legislature led FPU's Administration to align with California E/evangelical schools (Biola, Azusa Pacific, Point Loma, etc.) in opposing a bill to de-fund schools with anti-discrimination exemptions based on sexual orientation/identity, except in narrowly defined instance of religious freedom.<sup>46</sup> Fallout for the stance ranged from praise to disdain. Without addressing the issue or FPU's response, this collaboration associated FPU with the theo-po-

litical “Evangelical” community, a move with potentially long-lasting implications. This stance is interesting particularly as E/evangelical denominations such as the Southern Baptist Convention are decidedly moving away from the culture wars.<sup>47</sup>

### **Eternally Converging Streams or the Danger of Conflated Streams**

Living between poles is difficult and the tendency is to give into the force of one. The danger is to be pulled apart; elements of the institution becoming one thing (Evangelical) while others are another (evangelical in an Anabaptist sense of the word). This has been the recent life of FPU where (to varying degrees) staff, faculty, and administration approach the theological center of the institution differently.

In Canyonlands National Park, Utah, the Green River and the Colorado River converge. At the point of convergence, the distinct mossy, light green waters of the Green River flow alongside the deep red waters of the Colorado. For a moment, these two flows touch, but are not conflated, magnifying the individual beauty each bring to the convergence. Sadly, as the water flows downstream, the streams conflate with the Colorado red overwhelming the Green and both lose the brilliance they once held individually.

What this overview of FPU’s evangelical history demonstrates is that PBI, FPC and now Fresno Pacific University have been shaped by two distinct streams: one a historic Mennonite-Anabaptist stream, the other a modern and developing E/evangelical stream. In this writer’s opinion, over the last two and half decades, the convergence of these two streams has become more of a conflation, with a greater emphasis on an Evangelical stream at the expense of the Anabaptist stream. This is largely a reflection that in the cultural context of an Evangelically-dominant environment, Evangelicalism is easier to translate than is Anabaptism. However, the cost of taking the easy route is that the brilliance of FPU and its Idea are lost. There are also practical challenges and opportunities to consider.

In their book *Differentiate or Decline*, Andrews, Roller, and Migliore argue compellingly that the future hope for Christian institutions of higher education lies not in similarity to all other like schools, but in differentiating distinctives that draw on the uniqueness and particularity of each school.<sup>48</sup> In a world of E/evangelical schools and universities, particularly in California and the west, the

distinctive nature of an Anabaptist school with evangelical flavors is unique. Such uniqueness prepares FPU well for the future of recruitment. Increasingly, upcoming generations demonstrate their belief in Christ through the importance of service and action as the preferred way to sharing in the Gospel.

### **A Proposal**

To be clear, Anabaptism and evangelicalism are compatible; Evangelicalism and Anabaptism are not. Therefore, I propose a path forward: choosing to be explicitly and distinctively Anabaptist, Fresno Pacific University can be its best evangelical self.<sup>49</sup> Harkening back to Menno Simons' definition of what it means to be "evangelical"—not in political power and influence, but in bearing witness of the Good News of Jesus that shines as light in acts of service and in words of faithfulness, even when faced with persecution—Abe Friesen suggests for Mennonite Brethren that:

It is high time that Mennonite Brethren develop a solid, comprehensive and Anabaptist theology. And if the justification for not doing so is a concern that Anabaptism was not "evangelical" or "evangelistic," it is clear that the early Anabaptists were more evangelical than those who called themselves *die Evangelische Kirche* at the time of the Reformation and those who call themselves evangelicals today.<sup>50</sup>

This is an opportune charge for FPU as well. Being definitively Anabaptist is FPU's path to being the best evangelical school of its kind, and one the Central Valley desperately needs.

### **NOTES:**

- <sup>1</sup> Danielle Kurtzelben, "Are You an Evangelical? Are You Sure?" National Public Radio, December 19, 2015: <https://www.npr.org/2015/12/19/458058251/are-you-an-evangelical-are-you-sure> (accessed October 17, 2018).
- <sup>2</sup> She was an elderly, deep-south transplant to Arizona who refused to accept the party shift of most Southern Baptists that resulted from the Goldwater-Nixon-Reagan Southern Strategy and the association with the Religious Right. For the record, I am an independent, unaffiliated voter who has registered with both parties but no longer registers with either party.
- <sup>3</sup> John Walsh, "'Methodism' and the Origins of English-Speaking Evangelicalism," in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, The British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, edited by Mark A. Noll, David A. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 19.
- <sup>4</sup> Menno Simons, "Why I Do Not Cease Teaching and Writing," *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, translated by Leonard Verduin, edited by J. C. Wenger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald

Press), 307 (emphasis added). The full version is as follows: “For true *evangelical faith* is of such nature that it cannot lie dormant, but manifests itself in all righteousness and works of love; it dies unto the flesh and blood; it destroys all forbidden lusts and desires; it seeks and serves and fears God; it clothes the naked; it feeds the hungry; it comforts the sorrowful; it shelters the destitute; it aids and consoles the sad; it returns good for evil; it serves those that harm it; it prays for those that persecute it; teaches, admonishes, and reproves with the Word of the Lord; it seeks that which is lost; it binds up that which is wounded; it heals that which is diseased and it saves that which is sound; it has become all things to all people. The persecution, suffering, and anguish which befall it for the sake of the truth of the Lord are to it a glorious joy and consolation.”

- <sup>5</sup> National Association of Evangelicals, “What is an Evangelical?”: <https://www.nae.net/what-is-an-evangelical/> (accessed, October 24, 2018). Missing is how the in-breaking Kingdom of God is also good news because it has tangible outcomes as Jesus declares it be for the poor, for the release of captives, for the recovery of sight for the blind, to set free the oppressed because his work is the coming of Jubilee (Luke 4:16-19) which was also certainly in sight for Menno Simons and his followers.
- <sup>6</sup> Mark A. Noll, David A. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, “Introduction,” in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, The British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, edited by Mark A. Noll, David A. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6.
- <sup>7</sup> David. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 1. Bebbington’s “quadrilateral” of evangelical belief is not the only option, but certainly the most prevalent. See *Ibid.*, 3-4.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3; 5-17.
- <sup>9</sup> This split has consequences for later generations as a dichotomy between what has been identified as “social Gospel” and “fundamentalism.” Of course, gradations exist between these poles, but these two positions have shaped the current E/evangelical landscape profoundly.
- <sup>10</sup> For instance, see: Christian Defense Fund, *One Nation under God: America’s Christian Heritage* (Springfield, VA: Christian Defense Fund, 1997); D. James Kennedy with Jerry Newcombe, *What if America Where a Christian Nation Again* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003). For a counter-perspective: Gregory A. Boyd, *The Myth of a Christian Nation: How Political Power is Destroying the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).
- <sup>11</sup> For more on theo-political Evangelicalism, see: Ruth Murray Brown, *For a “Christian America” : A History of the Religious Right* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2002); John Fea, *Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018); William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway, 1997); Mark Noll, *One Nation Under God? Christian Faith and Political Action in America* (San Francisco: Harper&Row, 1988); Mark Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, editors, *At The Grassroots 2016: The Christian Right in American Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman Littlefield, 2018); Clyde Wilcox and Carin Robinson, *Onward Christian Soldiers: The Religious Right in American Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Daniel K. Williams, *God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- <sup>12</sup> Center for Religion and Civic Culture, “The Varieties of American Evangelicalism” (November 1, 2018): <https://crcc.usc.edu/report/the-varieties-of-american-evangelicalism/?fbclid=IwAR38>

EteekhlvsclSe\_x-luzMqXildOyXDPUKqZiuJ2xwBVDn9l4gUDZuIfs (accessed November 2, 2018).

- <sup>13</sup> United States Mennonite Brethren, “Who are the Mennonite Brethren,” (2017): <https://usmb.org/beliefs/> (accessed November 2, 2018).
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid. This is also reflected in the Mennonite Brethren collaboration and participation with the Mennonite Central Committee which serves as a kind of unifying agency for Anabaptist-Mennonite communities worldwide.
- <sup>15</sup> United States Mennonite Brethren, “What We Believe,” (2017); <https://usmb.org/what-we-believe/> (accessed November 2, 2018).
- <sup>16</sup> Richard G. Kyle, *From Sect to Denomination: Church Types and Their Implications for Mennonite Brethren History* (Hillsboro, KS: Center for Anabaptist Studies, 1985), 117. Bruce L. Guenther affirms this perspective, in Bruce L. Guenther, “Origin of the Bible School Movement in Western Canada: Toward an Ethnic Interpretation,” *Historical Papers: Canadian Society of Church History* (1993), 147. Guenther also highlights a tension within MBs regarding the influence of the E/evangelicals on the MBs.
- <sup>17</sup> Kyle, *From Sect to Denomination*, 117-18.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., 118-20.
- <sup>19</sup> John B. Toews, “Mennonite Brethren Identity and Theological Diversity, in *Pilgrims and Strangers: Essays in Mennonite Brethren History*, in the Perspectives on Mennonite Life and Thought series, no. 1 (Fresno, CA: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1977), 146.
- <sup>20</sup> Ralph Enlow, “The History of the Bible College Movement,” The Association for Biblical Higher Education (July 13, 2015): <https://www.abhe.org/the-history-of-the-bible-college-movement/> (accessed January 21, 2019).
- <sup>21</sup> Guenther, “Origin of the Bible School Movement.”
- <sup>22</sup> Joel A. Wiebe, *Remembering... Reaching: A Mission of Service; A Fifty Year History of Fresno Pacific College* (Fresno, CA: Fresno Pacific College, 1994), 25.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Paul Toews, “Religious Idealism and Academic Vocation at Fresno Pacific College,” in *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Success in the Twenty-First Century*, Richard T. Hughes and William BI; Adrian, editors (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 224-25.
- <sup>25</sup> Paul Toews, “Introduction,” *Mennonite Idealism and Higher Education* (Fresno, CA: The Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1995), xi.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., xii.
- <sup>27</sup> Note: PBI changes to Pacific Bible Institute and Christian College in 1956, then to Pacific College, and finally Fresno Pacific College in 1964. Wiebe, *Remembering*, 66, 89. The transition is underway in 1956.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 26.
- <sup>29</sup> Toews, “Religious Idealism,” 226.
- <sup>30</sup> Toews implies that the openness to welcoming others outside the denomination is one example of the Anabaptist impulse still at work in the PBI formation. Ibid., 225-26.

- <sup>31</sup> See also, Dalton Reimer, “The Origins of the Fresno Pacific College Idea,” in *Mennonite Idealism and Higher Education* (Fresno, CA: The Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1995), 26-27.
- <sup>32</sup> Regarding the Idea’s germination, see Reimer, “Origins of the Fresno Pacific College Idea,” 24-39.
- <sup>33</sup> Toews, “Religious Idealism,” 230.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid. For comparison, see Wheaton College’s statement on the Liberal Arts. Philip Ryken, “The Intrinsic Value of Liberal Learning,” (2019): <https://www.wheaton.edu/academics/the-liberal-arts-at-wheaton-college/> (accessed January 22, 2019).
- <sup>35</sup> Reimer, “Origins of the Fresno Pacific Idea,” 35.
- <sup>36</sup> While each group was responding to perception of the pressures unique to its context, it is notable that for many this concern arose at the same time as movements related to Civil Rights and Women’s Rights (specifically the attempt to pass the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution) which causes some to speculate that both desegregation and the changing role of women in society led to a backlash movement that would become the theo-political Religious Right. Sensing the changing tide, these “conservative” movements reasserted themselves, insisting that the nature of biblical authority was under attack and thus permitted these unwelcomed social changes.
- <sup>37</sup> For instance, the PBI catalog of 1945-1946 and the Pacific College catalog of 1964-65, use very similar (though not quite identical) language used.
- <sup>38</sup> Pacific College, “Theological Orientation of the College,” *Pacific College Catalog 1971-1972*, (Fresno, CA: Pacific College, 1971), 12-13. Earlier catalogs use the phrase, “evangelical and conservative.” Pacific College, “Theological Orientation of the College,” *Catalog 1968-69*, (Fresno, CA: Pacific College, 1968), 15, italics added.
- <sup>39</sup> Fresno Pacific College, “Theological Orientation of the College,” *Fresno Pacific College 1996-1997 Catalog*, (Fresno, CA: Fresno Pacific College, 1996), 4.
- <sup>40</sup> Edmund Janzen, “Broadening the Base: My Vision for F.P.C.,” in Edmund Janzen Presidential Papers of Fresno Pacific College, (Fresno, CA: Fresno Pacific College, August 1983)
- <sup>41</sup> Non-MB students were welcomed from the beginning of the PBI days.
- <sup>42</sup> Norman Rempel, “Expectations for New Faculty at Fresno Pacific College: A Religiously Oriented Institution,” in *The Art and Politics of College Teaching: A Practical Guide for the Beginning College Professor*, Karl D. Hostetler, editor (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 74.
- <sup>43</sup> This might be seen in such situation as: rifts between faculty and administration over issue of governance; questions of how to define “restorative discipline” in relationship to student behavior issues; or student movements in opposition to the historic Anabaptist peace tradition.
- <sup>44</sup> Rempel, “Expectations,” 69.
- <sup>45</sup> See: Amy Chua and Jed Rubenfeld, “The Threat of Tribalism,” *The Atlantic* (October 2018): <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/10/the-threat-of-tribalism/568342/> (accessed January 31, 2019).
- <sup>46</sup> Fresno Pacific Response: <https://blogs.fresno.edu/connections/2016/06/08/time-for-action/>; Biola Response: <http://now.biola.edu/news/article/2016/jun/08/preserve-faith-based-higher-education/>; Christianity Today Report: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2016/august/california-drops-controversial-bill-to-regulate-religious.html>.

- <sup>47</sup> See Jonathan Merritt, “Southern Baptists Call Off the Culture Wars,” in *The Atlantic* (June 16, 2018): <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/06/southern-baptists-call-off-the-culture-war/563000/> (accessed February 26, 2019).
- <sup>48</sup> Brett Andrews, Robert H. Roller, and R. Henry Migliore, *Differentiate or Decline: Competitive Advantage and Strategy for Private Higher Education* (San Bernardino, CA: CreateSpace Independent, 2017).
- <sup>49</sup> Such a choice might require the kind of conference on understanding Anabaptism held by the Board of Trustees in the 1970s during the formation of the Idea.
- <sup>50</sup> Abraham Friesen, “Mennonite Brethren Beginnings: Background and Influences,” in *Renewing Identity and Mission: Mennonite Brethren Reflections after 150 Years*, editors, Abe J. Dueck, Bruce L. Guenther, and Doug Heidebrecht (Goessel, KS: Kindred Productions, 2011), 99-100.



