



Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in Britain Project

British

Evangelicals are not Fundamentalists

'Fundamentalism' is a controversial term, widely used in popular as well as academic discourse, and it is common for evangelical Christians to be lumped into the Fundamentalist camp. The controversy over whether it is accurate to label evangelicals in this way is longstanding. Funded by the [Religion and Society Programme](#), Professor David Bebbington brought together experts from various fields to debate and settle the issue in relation to the British scene. Their conclusion? In Britain at least, Fundamentalism has always been a fringe movement, and has become largely distinct from the much wider current of evangelicalism with which it is often confused.

Bebbington's project worked in partnership with the Evangelical Alliance, and brought together historians, sociologists, theologians, and members of Evangelical churches and colleges. In order to answer the question, 'to what extent have Evangelicals in Britain been fundamentalist?', they convened in two workshops and two conferences between 2008 and 2009. Papers ranged widely, and discussed intellectual, social, emotional, organizational and institutional dimensions of evangelicalism and Fundamentalism from the 18th through to the 21st century.

The project concluded that Fundamentalism has existed in Britain, as in America, since the early 20th century, but always on a small scale – in contrast to the situation in the USA. It can be distinguished from evangelicalism intellectually, by its [...] hostility to Biblical criticism, and socially and emotionally, by its belligerence, hostility to social action, and separatism (Fundamentalists consider truth more important than unity or social change). Like evangelicalism, Fundamentalism is not anti-modern, but unlike evangelicalism it does not embrace a wide spectrum of views, and has not been influenced by the charismatic movement. The fact that British evangelicals themselves disavow the label Fundamentalist should also be taken seriously. So in Britain, Fundamentalism remains, as it always has been, a fringe movement with little wider influence – in contrast to the US situation where Fundamentalism is much more salient.

The network has led to the creation of a popular website which had already attracted 230,000 hits just two months after the end of the project. Many of the papers presented are being published, and a book is to appear from Oxford University Press. The network also laid the groundwork for two further conferences, one on the Welsh preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones in 2010, and one in 2011 on Anglican Evangelicals during the twentieth century.

Find out more...

- Visit the project's very popular website, maintained by the Evangelical Alliance, where you can read summaries of the network's events and download papers presented: <http://www.eauk.org/efb/>
- Read network participant Ian Randall's journal article 'Outgrowing Combative Boundary-Setting: Billy Graham, Evangelism and Fundamentalism' based on his paper and published in the *Evangelical Review of*

Theology, April 2010: <http://www.britannica.com/bps/additionalcontent/18/50335106/Outgrowing-Combative-BoundarySetting-Billy-Graham-Evangelism-and-Fundamentalism>

- Look up Jason. S. Sexton's paper 'Stanley Grenz's Relatedness and Relevancy to British Evangelicalism' from his presentation published in the May 2010 edition of the *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*: <http://www.s-e-t-s.org.uk/bulletin/archive/2010/05/21/281-spring-2010>

You might also be interested in...

- A large scale project about contemporary Christianity and the University Experience in the UK also funded by the Religion and Society (one of its co-investigators, Rob Warner, was a network participant): <http://www.cueproject.org.uk/>
- Reading and listening to podcasts about Religion and Society funded research on 18th and 19th century English Christian Dissent: http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/research_findings/featured_findings/anxiety_about_religious_academies_is_nothing_new
- Research funded by the Programme led by Peter Hopkins investigating young Evangelical Christians' experiences of volunteering in Latin America: http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/uploads/docs/2011_01/1294656994_Hopkins_Phase_2_Small_Grant_Block.pdf

Project Details

Award Title

Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in Britain

Team

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University

University of Stirling

Research Partners

The Evangelical Alliance



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



Advisory Group: Prof Callum Brown (Dundee), Prof Douglas Davies (Durham) and Prof Alan Torrance (St Andrews)

Award Type

Phase 1 Network

Key terms

evangelicalism, fundamentalism, David Bebbington, Evangelical Alliance, Martyn Lloyd-Jones