

# **The Prospect of Doing Evangelical Theology:** How Can We Break the Cycle Described by Mark Noll and Tony Campolo? (An abstract)

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This paper attempts to respond to the outcry made by Mark Noll and Tony Campolo with regard to the poverty of evangelicals. Noll's well-known phrase, "The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind," and Campolo's warning against the deteriorating image of American evangelicals as just one rank above that of prostitutes, should be taken seriously by evangelical Christians as a motivation for introspection. As a remedy, this article examines the relationship between evangelical theology and other contemporary theological schools in the light of Hans Frei's five types of Christian theology. It asks if evangelical theology can find its place in today's postmodern context, and if it can respond to the postmodern challenge sufficiently and appropriately.

Evangelicals could be characterized by their belief in the following five theses: 1. Sola Scriptura; 2. universality of truth; 3. conversionism; 4. the priority of apologetics; and 5. eschatology. Our analysis suggests that on some occasion, over-emphasis on these five theses could hinder us from theological dialogue. The article provides concrete examples of failure and success. By citing the controversy over open theism as an example, we recommend that

theological issues should be settled by public intelligibility rather than by coercion. By looking at the example of William Dembski's Intelligent Design Argument, we learn that using scientific methods selectively for apologetic purposes might only further widen the chasm between Christianity and science, and that it is advisable to let understanding take precedence over apologetics. The article concludes with some suggestions as to how evangelical theology should be reconstructed in order that a meaningful dialogue may be established with contemporary theologies and the postmodern challenge.