

Dr. Carl Ferdinand Howard Henry (1913 - 2003).

Dr. Carl F. Henry was a brilliant thinker, an educator, and an editor. He was the best known and most widely read of evangelical theologians, and left an indelible imprint on the evangelical movement of the past half century. He defined and called evangelicals to a worldview shaped by the Scriptures and reflected in every area of our lives. He has lectured at institutions around the world and received six honorary doctorates. *Time magazine* recognized him as "the leading theologian of the nation's growing evangelical flank." He died on December 7, 2003, at age of ninety.

Henry, born in New York City to German immigrants, worked as a journalist, and became an editor of the *Smithtown Star* at nineteen. After his conversion in 1933 he attend Wheaton College, graduating in 1938. Perhaps the most important contribution Wheaton made to Henry's life was his mentor, Dr. Gordon Clark, a Presbyterian who influenced Henry toward the rationality of the Christian faith. While continuing with a master's degree at Wheaton, he simultaneously undertook doctoral studies at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, earning the Th.D. from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1942, one year after his ordination to the Baptist ministry. In 1949 he received his Ph.D. from Boston University. He was professor of theology and philosophy of religion at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. In 1947, he moved to Pasadena, California, as a professor of theology and Christian philosophy at the newly opened Fuller Theological Seminary. In 1956, Dr. Billy Graham lured Henry away from Fuller to become an editor of a new magazine, *Christianity Today*. The magazine prospered under Henry's leadership and catapulted him to prominence within evangelicalism and beyond. He left the editorship in 1968. After that he pursued further studies at Cambridge University in England. He established the Institute for Advanced Christian Studies (his dream of an Oxford-level Christian University never materialized). Thereafter he was a professor at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and a visiting professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His burning desire was to obey the Lord's Great Commission. His vision for missions led him to accept the chairmanship of the Congress on Evangelism (1966). He was lecturer-at-large for World Vision International and Prison Fellowship Ministries. Besides his many other obligations, he also was president of the Evangelical Theological Society (1968-1969); and president of the American Theological Society (1979-1980).

Henry wrote a great number of profound theological works. His substantive books offered clear direction to the evangelical community. He prodded evangelical leaders to make their message relevant to the needs of the day. Henry called them to a new engagement with American society and a new concern for theological reflection. He believed that Western culture was drifting into a non-Christian philosophical base and that fundamental Christianity was needed to address the social context. His volumes included *Remaking the Modern Mind* in 1946, which argued that evangelicalism should engage the life of the mind as well as the larger culture. Henry exerted an extraordinarily positive influence toward the recovery of evangelical politics *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, published in 1948, called evangelicals to a "new evangelicalism," a move beyond separatism and anti-intellectualism in order to develop a worldview that included the social and political realms.

Continuing his interest in the West's cultural drift, he authored *The Christian Mindset in Secular Society* (1984) and *Christian Countermoves in a Decadent Culture* (1986). In 1986 he wrote *Confessions of a Theologian: An Autobiography*. He also turned his efforts to the publication of the massive six-volume *God, Revelation, and Authority* (1976-83). Although referred to as a systematic theology, it is to be noted that these volumes deal primarily with only three doctrines: Revelation, God, and religious authority. However, Henry's concern with systematic theology has been present throughout his academic career.

Henry was an able defender of the inerrancy of Scripture. Until the end of his life, he ably argued that evangelical orthodoxy must vigorously pursue social justice as a universal due that transcends any partisan or self-serving agenda. The evangelical community will miss his carefully articulated and biblically formed commentaries on the theological trends and the great issues of our times. His greatest legacy is his insistence on integrating faith and learning, and then doing something about it to change the world.

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