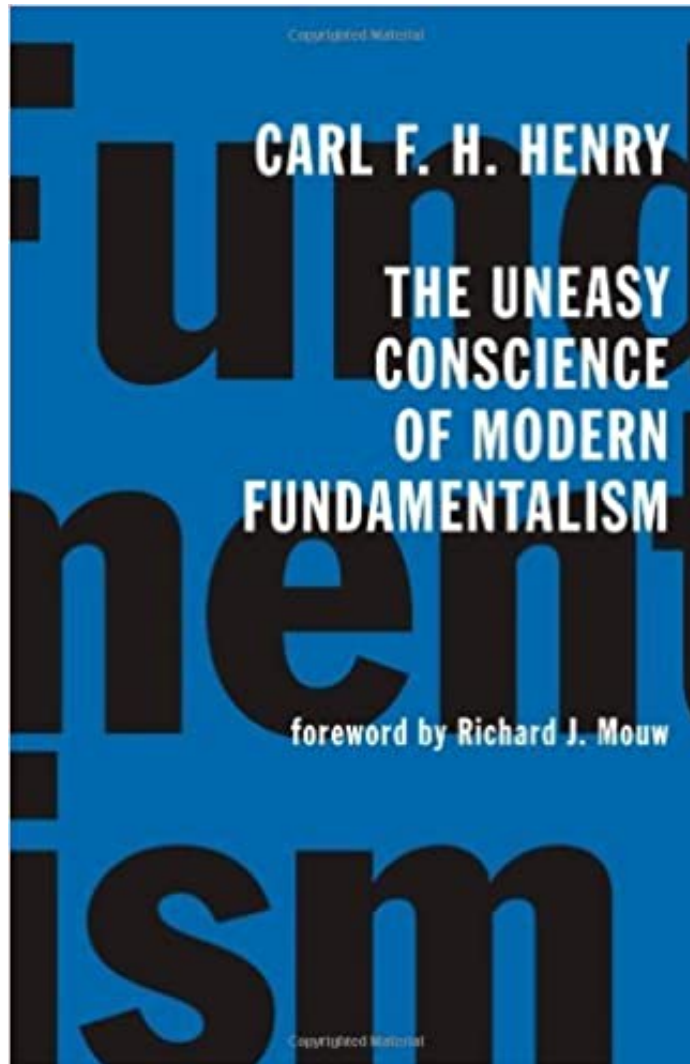


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# The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism

*by*  
Carl F. H. Henry



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## **Synopsis**

Originally published in 1947, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* has since served as the manifesto of evangelical Christians serious about bringing the fundamentals of the Christian faith to bear in contemporary culture. In this classic book Carl F. H. Henry, the father of modern fundamentalism, pioneered a path for active Christian engagement with the world -- a path as relevant today as when it was first staked out. Now available again and featuring a new foreword by Richard J. Mouw, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* offers a bracing world-and-life view that calls for boldness on the part of the evangelical community. Henry argues that a reformation is imperative within the ranks of conservative Christianity, one that will result in an ecumenical passion for souls and in the power to meaningfully address the social and intellectual needs of the world.

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The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind, Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution, On the Incarnation: Saint Athanasius (Popular Patristics Series Book 44), Christianity & Liberalism, Virtual Reality Church: Pitfalls and Possibilities (Or How to Think Biblically about Church in Your Pajamas, VR Baptisms, Jesus Avatars, and Whatever Else is Coming Next), Church History in Plain Language, Fifth Edition, Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity, Fundamentalism and American Culture

### **What people say about this book**

Ebook Tops Reader, "Old but relevant call to action. Dr. Henry calls the church to action -- or better yet, evangelical fundamentalists to social action. Henry's concerns about escapism were prophetic. His criticisms of social gospel liberalism also proved right with its continued decline. Understanding the kingdom of God as not just spiritual, not just physical, not completely now, not completely withheld till the future, all help to provide the balance necessary in our witness in the world. Because of the incarnation, that Jesus came to save -- physically and spiritually -- we can also engage the world by seeking their best good in redemption, but this redemptive message must be accompanied by actions motivated out of love for their well-being holistically. Henry's treatment is a bit dated when corresponding with the theologians of his day, but this is still a helpful little book to understand the uneasy conscience of fundamentalism in that day and how Henry sought to forge a way forward. I think Henry is under-appreciated today. He was one of the greatest public theologians of the last century."

Dr. Robert J. Vajko, "An Older Book with a Message for Evangelicals Today. Though the title of this 1947 book is outdated, the major issues are not. Henry deals with the problem of keeping the major doctrines of what was then called fundamentalism and yet making an impact on the social and even global issues of that time. This reviewer was challenged to read this book to see what the issues were in those days and how they relate to today. First, Henry chides the fundamentalists of his day since they did not "explicitly sketch the social implications of its message for the non-Christian world; it does not challenge the injustices of the totalitarianisms, the secularisms of modern education, the evils of racial hatred, the wrongs of current labor-management relations, the inadequate bases of international dealings" (39). But since Henry's time, many of these have been challenged by evangelicals in various ways. However, it is still difficult to discern between God and Caesar --the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of men in many of these issues. To articulate the relationships between these would take a longer review than is possible. However, there is a sense in which the children of this generation need to see how to have a conduct that is "in step with the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2:14) in all these areas. However, what is the church to do? Second, Henry lays a good foundation by explaining that there needs to be, as Calvin felt, "an articulate statement not only of dogmatics but of the social implications of redemption" (39). Various groups and writings have sought to deal with these issues. Someone needs to write a concise book like this on how these issues are to be faced by the evangelical movement—a child of the fundamentalist movement. To sum up, this book is a stimulant to thought in this area and could be seminal in our present context. Where

is the Carl Henry taking up the issues as he did?"

Luke Gorsett, "The foundation layer for modern day Gospel Coalition. Carl Henry was a super intellectual evangelical. One who balanced deep scholarship with a practical and empathetic leaning towards the lost wrapped up in secularists and ungodly culture. What is the best way to address social evils, injustice, poverty? Is it to leave off the gospel? No. Henry argues that evangelicals must bring the gospel to bear in every sphere of life. He recommends formulating dense Christian community that crosses denominational lines to unite under the gospel in the power of Word and Spirit to address the culture. Not through politics but through preaching, healthy churches and faithful witness."

William E. Turner Jr., "Redeeming Society with the Gospel. The late Carl Henry sets forth the case that there is a great divorce within Evangelicalism. He argues that evangelical Christianity has become separated from any form of social reform. Christianity has failed to deal with the pressing issues, which face the world today. Doctrine has become divorced from ethics and orthodoxy (right teaching) has become divorced from orthopraxy (right living). While redemption in Christ is the only answer to this world's problems Henry argues that Christianity has ceased its preaching of this message to the culture. Christianity has given up its humanitarianism. Sadly, since the church has given up its social endeavors, non-evangelical efforts have taken over. Therefore the saving message of the cross of Christ is replaced with sub-Christian methods of reform. The effort to save society continues but without a redemptive foundation all such efforts are bound to failure. Without the gospel social reform may feed a few empty stomachs but will fail to provide the living water of Christ, which is the world's only hope. Henry offers a solution by properly understanding kingdom preaching. The kingdom must be preached both as a present reality (kingdom now) and as a future reality (kingdom then). There is an already, not-yet dimension to the kingdom of God and this needs to be applied to kingdom ethics. We must live out the kingdom now with expectant hope of the kingdom then. This dimension of the kingdom needs to be restudied toward the end of being applied to the social and ethical challenges for this present age. It is also the doctrinal integrity of evangelical Christianity, which must confront the world. To give up the gospel for social reform is to cease to be Christian, but to give up social reform is to give up the gospel. Henry argues that it is the very metaphysics of Christianity, which provide the underpinnings for Biblical ethics. The Christian needs to have a biblical worldview to confront the needs and evils of the world. It is only the Christian worldview founded upon the cross of Christ, which provides the proper redemptive framework, which is the only hope for a world in travail. The balance of social concern and gospel preaching is rarely achieved, but Henry offers a helpful way forward by arguing that the very means of social reform is through gospel preaching. Through the proclamation of the redeeming gospel of Jesus Christ the world will be changed. The gospel properly understood seeks to change not just individual sinners, but the world, which groans under its present bondage. He correctly recognizes that the present world problems are not primarily economic, political, or societal, but spiritual. Nonetheless the evangelical Christian is to apply the spiritual-redemptive message of the gospel to the economic, political, and societal woes of today. While one may not fully agree with everything Henry says (I certainly did not), his underlining thesis is true: the gospel must be proclaimed and applied to the present cultural crisis, which our world faces. In applying the gospel of Christ to the world need the evangelical Christian remarries the truth of Christ with the humanitarianism of Christ. This today is most necessary."

The book by Carl F. H. Henry has a rating of 5 out of 4.4. 35 people have provided feedback.

## **Book Information**

Language: English

File size: 630 KB

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced typesetting: Not Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Print length: 112 pages

Lending: Not Enabled

Simultaneous device usage: Unlimited

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