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978-0-521-60974-6 - The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology

Edited by Timothy Larsen and Daniel J. Treier

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TIMOTHY LARSEN is Professor of Theology at Wheaton College, Illinois. He is author of *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England* (2006) and editor of the *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* (2003).

DANIEL J. TREIER is Associate Professor of Theology at Wheaton College, Illinois. He is author of *Virtue and the Voice of God: Toward Theology as Wisdom* (2006) and associate editor of the *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (2005).

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521609746

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First published 2007

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-60974-6 Paperback

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*For Mark A. Noll
Scholar, mentor, and friend*

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Acknowledgments

Evangelical theology centers on grace, and so it is especially fitting for us to acknowledge the divine gifts that have made this book possible. “What do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Cor. 4:7) Indeed.

We dedicate the project to Mark Noll, the renowned evangelical historian who – just prior to this writing – has announced his departure from Wheaton College and will represent evangelical Protestants at the University of Notre Dame. Mark’s teaching and encouragement have initiated and sustained Tim Larsen’s career from his undergraduate days onward. Mark’s famous book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* had direct and deeply personal bearing on Dan Treier’s calling to theological scholarship. Both of us rejoiced at the opportunity to be Mark’s colleagues, and we have reveled in the continual support and guidance he offers. The public knows of his outstanding scholarship, as evidenced for example in the magnum opus *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*, a standard for stewardship of intellectual gifts that neither of us can hope to attain. We also can attest, however, what you might only know by reading between the lines: Mark Noll is an unfailingly humble person of deep conviction, global awareness, and gentle good cheer; he is also a very capable theologian on the side.

Many other colleagues at Wheaton are unfailingly supportive as well. Among our fellow theologians in particular, we especially thank Steve Spencer for advice and friendship that made this book better. Barry Jones, soon to depart from our student ranks, generously provided text editing, research, and bibliographical preparation at the same time he was finalizing his Ph.D. thesis. Michael Allen kindly helped to prepare the indexes. Our dean, Jill Peláez Baumgaertner, has also been generous in helping us to find the time for this work.

Originally, two additional contributors were part of this project. We regret not having represented in this volume another evangelical voice from the Church of England, Canon Dr. Christina Baxter CBE, Principal,

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St. John's College, Nottingham. But we understand that, when it becomes necessary to choose, her ecclesiastical, administrative, and ministry commitments should rightly take priority. We were also honored that Stanley J. Grenz, Pioneer McDonald Professor of Theology, Carey Theological College, Vancouver, and a preeminent evangelical theologian, had consented to write for this volume. We mourn his death on 12 March 2005 and can only pray that God will raise up other theologians of such caliber in our midst.

It remains to acknowledge our families, who raised us in the heritage of evangelical Christian faith and who sustain us with constant support. Our wives, Jane Larsen and Amy Black Treier, believe in our scholarly pursuits and love us in spite of how much energy we spend on projects such as this. Both are testimonies to God's grace in our lives.

NOTE ON REFERENCES

Unless otherwise stated, the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) is normally the Bible translation used.

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THE ESSA CROSS

Towards the end of the last century Gert Swart was commissioned to make a cross for the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa (ESSA), a multicultural seminary drawing students from many countries in Africa. ESSA's campus, a small but significant example of urban renewal, is situated in the South African city of Pietermaritzburg, the capital of KwaZulu-Natal.

The complex symbolism of the cross was carefully selected to convey several messages including the suffering of many South Africans in the turbulent, violent years before the birth of our democracy, the suffering of countless others in what must be one of the bloodiest centuries in the history of the world, and, crucially, one of redemption, reconciliation, and hope.

Gert used images of his hands, each with a finger on the trigger of a gun directed at the Lamb to contextualize the cross – in a province known as the “killing fields of Natal” in the 80s – and as a comment on the complicity of each one of us in the brutal execution of Christ on the cross.

As people gathered to dedicate the cross on 11 September 2001 news was filtering through of the audacious and devastating attacks on the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon. So it was that while the USA reeled, a small assembly intimately acquainted with terror and tragedy exuberantly celebrated the arrival of the ESSA Cross, a beacon of hope on a dark day in a dark world.

Gert and Istine Swart