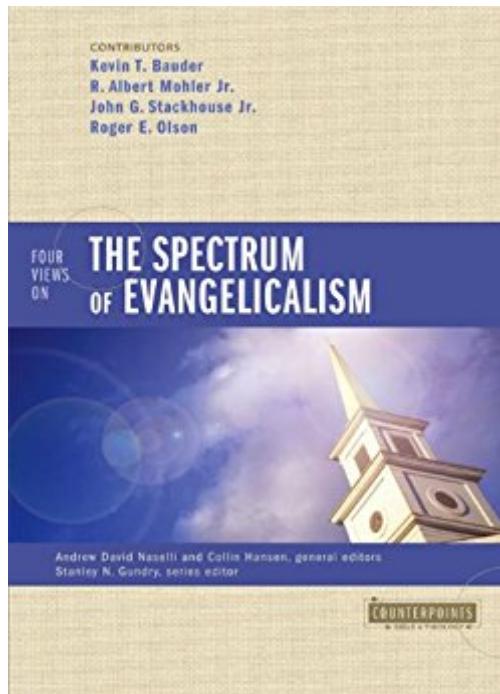


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# Four Views On The Spectrum Of Evangelicalism (Counterpoints: Bible And Theology)



## **Synopsis**

Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism compares and contrasts four distinct positions on the current fundamentalist-evangelical spectrum in light of the history of American fundamentalism and evangelicalism. The contributors each state their case for one of four views on the spectrum of evangelicalism: -Kevin T. Bauder: Fundamentalism -R. Albert Mohler Jr.: Conservative/confessional evangelicalism -John G. Stackhouse Jr.: Generic evangelicalism -Roger E. Olson: Postconservative evangelicalism Each author explains his position, which is critiqued by the other three authors. The interactive and fair-minded nature of the Counterpoints format allows the reader to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each view and draw informed, personal conclusions. The Counterpoints series provides a forum for comparison and critique of different views on issues important to Christians. Counterpoints books address two categories: Church Life and Bible & Theology. Complete your library with other books in the Counterpoints series.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

There is no other book like this book. Everyone knows that substantial differences exist under the evangelical label. These differences have been written about for years. Even Systematic Theologians (e.g., Erickson and Geisler) have taken a stab at explaining them, albeit not to the satisfaction of the groups being described. People have fought over these differences and divided over these differences, but no one has allowed each major proponent present his case for his own view. This work, in the mind of this reviewer, is nothing less than groundbreaking. It is groundbreaking for a number of reasons. First, it selects from a broad range of viewpoints. Most works thus far may have focused on the conservative evangelical and generic evangelical debate, but few have had the audacity to include the fringe viewpoints of the fundamentalists and post-conservatives. Second, it selects excellent representatives for each viewpoint. Each proponent has studied extensively, written substantially, and is respected by the other writers for this. Each proponent is able to make a reasonable (as opposed to a caricatured) defense of his position. This fact speaks well to the effort of the editors in selecting the writers judiciously. Third, the clarity of the writing and the quality of the dialogue has already sparked ongoing and helpful discussion between the groups. In the end, it seems that this work may be seminal in a better understanding of the landscape of evangelicalism. A thorough analysis of all the views would be quite difficult to do in a simple book review, but an attempt will be made to summarize each view and note the points of contention that are raised with each writer. As well the reviewer will some offer personal critiques of the arguments of all the writers.

I love the format of the "Views" books in that they allow the reader to wrestle with and think about crucial issues that oftentimes divide Christians. Instead of having the bias of one author - you get to see an offensive and defensive articulation of each view and weigh the evidence based on the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence given by each author. This new offering in the "Views" series particularly addresses important aspects that unite and divide "evangelicals." An evangelical is someone who holds to the "good news" as declared from the Scriptures. However, what is the good news? What are the uniting factors of the good news? And what are the boundaries required in disseminating the message, and uniting around the good news in order to penetrate society with the gospel? The reason this book and the issues are so important is that what is at stake in all of this discussion is the heart of the gospel, and if there is no agreement on the gospel than unity is ultimately a vain pursuit, and the power of the gospel is squelched in isolated enclaves, rather than in a unified front. In this book the panel of experts specifically focus on three areas in evaluating the spectrum of evangelicalism: 1) They evaluate their views on Christian cooperation with respect to

Evangelicals and Catholics in evaluating the Evangelicals and Catholics Together movement led by Charles Colson and the late John Neuhaus, which began in the 1990's. Also, they address the more recent Manhattan Declaration in order to bring more clarity to cooperation among social and theological concerns.

For decades Evangelicalism has been in a constant flux and there is no sign of it slowing down. The nature of this flux centers on Evangelicalism's very identity. But the nature of Evangelicalism itself hinges on defining two important terms or ideas: "What is the evangel?" and "Who is an evangelical?" As if answering these questions were not controversial enough, throw into the mix the fact that everyone wants to have the answer(s) but not everyone agrees. Thus, within broader evangelicalism there is significant confusion and lack of unity about who is an (e)vangelical and what is (E)vangelicalism. This is a debate, and sometimes war, that has waged for decades and will continue for years to come. It is a commonly held belief, applied to many arenas, that he who defines the terms wins the debate. Since Evangelicalism is so divided and spread out the question naturally arises, "Who gets to define these two terms/ideas?" Is any one definition correct? Can any definition be wrong? Can anyone be an evangelical? What does it take to be considered unevangelical? In an effort to present and possibly come to more of a unified consensus on the definition of these terms Andy Naselli and Collin Hansen have edited the new book *Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism*. This book brings together the views of four leading voices within Evangelicalism today. The contributors and their respective positions are as follows: Kevin Bauder - Fundamentalism; Al Mohler - Conservative/Confessional Evangelicalism; John Stackhouse Jr.

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