# THE FLAWS OF FUNDAMENTALISM IN AN URBAN WORLD

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*Introduction*

Since returning to the Kansas City Missouri (USA) area five years ago, after 27 years of personal pilgrimage, I find myself located in the geographical center of an intriguing religious history. The more I examine the context with my students, the more I recognize the rich spiritual landscape that we inherit here. Johnson County was founded around a Methodist Mission. The Azusa Street Movement had substantial Pentecostal origins in our region just under a hundred years ago. Sadly, the split between the black and white churches and between the holiness and Pentecostal strains, have direct connections to events around Kansas City. Various denominational headquarters are located here, including the International Church of the Nazarene, the Community of Christ, the Church of God Holiness, and the Unity movement. The annual conference of the Church of God in Christ, the second largest black denomination of 8.1 million adherents, holds its annual conference here with 25,000 participants every June. International organizations such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions are headquartered locally. Kansas City, two decades ago, was famous or infamous for its "Kansas City prophets," depending on one's point of view. The largest Methodist Church in the nation and the fastest growing one, the Church of the Resurrection, operates out of Overland Park, KS. Perhaps others can add some more features to this complex religious profile. Frequently I take students on local seminar immersions where we further peel back the religious overlay of this fertile world, discovering anew both old and new "signs of the Kingdom."

As a minister in the Church of the Nazarene, I sense some of the parallels that we, as a denomination, share with the Community of Christ. The namesake of the Institute---the Bresee Institute for Metro Ministries---that I direct, like Joseph Smith, was born in Upstate New York, in the early 19$^{th}$ century. Phineas F. Bresee, soon became a Methodist minister. He relocated to Iowa and eventually to Los Angeles where he founded, in 1895, the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene (having experienced the cold shoulder of rejection from Methodist hierarchy), now recognized as the "Mother Church" of the denomination, now with 1.4 million members world wide. In 1908, the denomination formerly amalgamated over 200 congregations throughout the country in Pilot Point, Texas. Later, Kansas City, MO was selected as denominational headquarters in large part because of its central geographical location.

The Church was founded primarily by disaffected Christians who felt that Methodism had betrayed its founders' vision of "holiness of heart and life" and commitment to ministry to the poor. The Community of Christ, likewise, was a religious movement "on the go" moving westward, experiencing persecution from the religious "powers that be." It divorced itself from the larger body, with a claim to return to primitive theological mandates.

Four years ago, I was invited to participate with the Community of Christ in examining training and ideas for urban ministry. I discovered then that we share at least two other features in common. First, our demographical and ethnic backgrounds work against us in a world increasingly diverse. In North America, we are seen primarily as a "White denomination" despite the fact that about 12% of our congregations are of different ethnicity than Euro-American. On the other hand, we are aided by the fact of our aggressive missionary policy that now has planted the Nazarene flag in almost 150 countries, with the assurance that as missions comes close to home, there is a steady browning of our membership.

However, a major problem continues especially among our urban Blacks and Native American ministries, in that we remain well behind the demographic curve in representative growth, with our White majority reputation furthering compounding the difficulty. In addition, our historical growth spurt postdated the urbanization of many cities especially in the Eastern U.S., and, where we might have had an earlier toehold in urban areas, by the 1950's, we, for the most part, joined other religious groups in the White flight from inner cities

My sense is that within the Community of Christ, there has been a similar phenomenon, the desire to reach all people, but the skew towards the historic Euro-American membership base. Furthermore, because both institutions have origins buried in their American geographical base, they face the dilemma that, despite their worldwide outlook, their churches are perceived as North American with international "outposts" around the world, despite claims to the contrary. International they may be, in terms of investment, demographics and membership make-up, but in terms of governance and decision-making, the residue of power, money, and influence still originates from the bowels of the United States.

Another similarity that I see is that both groups appear to be in theological migration. The Community of Christ has undergone a name change, leadership selection processes, a crisis of identity (especially to disavow any relationship with the Mormons), and, dare I say, a theological metamorphosis.

The Church of the Nazarene predated both the Pentecostal Movement and modern-day fundamentalism, holding its theological anchor to a combination of primitive Wesleyan-Arminian dogma and most Methodist polity. Yet today it finds itself beset by latter day influences from both Pentecostalism and 20th century Fundamentalism which fixated on set dogmas, in some cases similar to, and others, alien to our denominational roots. Because contemporary discussion often revolves around Fundamentalism, and because my particular passion is to impact in urban evangelism, it remains important to connect theology with context, in part, because we both see the importance of mission to our cities and yet struggle with paradigms often alienating ourselves from them.

Let me offer this disclaimer—the perceptions presented here are only mine. Others of my theological persuasion may disagree with my observations. But allow me to address it for what I see. I will also not reiterate the details of the Fundamentalist or Evangelical movement as you have probably repeatedly heard these factoids throughout the day.

Fundamentalism is not just a theological movement which identifies verbal inerrancy with its commitment to the virgin birth of Christ, his death, resurrection and the atonement for sins and the personal nature of Satan, but also generally sustains a short-time frame for the creation of earth, believers' adult water baptism, the imminent rapture of Jesus Christ and a premillenial calendar of eschatological events, often done the "dispensational" way.  It is also a cultural movement that advocates local control of ministries, and autocratic leadership that often emerges into pastoral pulpits of great influence and control, with the specific task to re-Christianize the nation and affirm its divine destiny. Any understanding of biological evolution is anathema because it discounts God in human process. Though there were different manifestions and nuances within Fundamentalism over the past years, in general, these particular items were the non-negotiables. Those who countenanced dialogue or compromise or built relationships beyond these walls, were seen as succumbing to principle.

Personally, I resonate with some of their positions and reject others. But the realization that there is a modern-day wholesale grafting of Fundamentalist ideas into my own Church on the tails of those pseudo-converts and a prioritizing of certain dogma over others, troubles me precisely because I see it as in impediment for reaching the urban masses with a balanced, healthy sense of the Gospel. Let me suggest three areas where Fundamentalist paradigms (among several that I could posit) threaten to derail or erode our ministry to the city.  These are: 1. Variant histories and allegiances in the city; 2. The nature of evil in the city; 3. The role of chaos in the city.

*Variant histories and Allegiances in the City*

Our urban areas are kaleidoscopes of human diversity. Once missions was to take the church to the world. Now the world has landed on our doorstep. We now understand that our urban environments are street level United Nations. Yes, we still gravitate to our neighborhood segmentations of Black, Latino, Vietnamese, Little Manila, Chinatown, and White gated communities, etc. But our political and governmental entities do not have that luxury in that they must draw from each of these all at once to establish public policy that is inclusive, that affirms diversity and recognizes the genetic, nationalistic and cultural streams that composite us.

This agenda runs headlong into conflict with any Fundamentalist rendering of history that calls us to "whitewash" the past into single national origins with the dose of divine destiny rolled into it. We are told that we were once a "God-fearing" nation. If we mean by that, that America lived in a relative fear of the risks of life, i.e. frontier living, tribal skirmishes, civil disorder, revolution, civil war, disease and street violence (i.e. the "Gangs of New York"), then it necessarily needed to be tempered by a

sense that God had a purpose in all of this. How this corresponds with modern-day ease, diminished risk, the personal pampered Jesus, and large suburban churches, to me is a far stretch from the rugged ethos of early American life.

With the waves of immigrants, now no longer drawn from Northern Europe, but rather from the Sudan, Cambodia, Pakistan and Iraq and a hundred other nations, we cannot compel these "strangers in our midst" to immediately "buy into" a uniform historical model of national origins as promulgated by the Fundamentalists. These have come in such numbers that critical masses now generate their own histories. Dearborn, Michigan spawns a living history centered in Teheran, more relevant than in Jamestown, Los Angeles tracks its history to Mexico City; likewise Chicago to Warsaw, and so forth. Our precious city, Kansas City, falls right off of their cognitive maps as does Providence, R.I., once the icon of religious liberty, or Dallas as bastion of Fundamentalism

We can try to hammer a "unihistory" into their heads for the sake of cultural homogenization or support of "our hallowed values," or we can listen and be extremely troubled by the implications of language and events alien to anything we have known. Likewise, we can listen to our Black brothers and sisters and learn of the injustices and abuse of past and present oppression that has made them see white Christianity as a defective or false religion, as any religion is that will perpetuate racism and economic favoritism to the advantage of the oppressors. I say this as a teacher of a seminary class entitled, "Ministering with and Among Blacks", whose Black teaching colleague has indicted us in this very way.

The hammering, I believe is an impotent enterprise. First, it is false history, contorted by those who have always stood to benefit from a singular reading of that pseudo-history. Yet, I do not dare discount the power of myth to assembly and unite people, at least for a time. Among our Black friends, the myth has carefully unraveled as they seek their own version of history. No wonder they view Fundamentalism askance. And those of you in the Restoration tradition have good reason to be skeptical of the utopian mainstream rendering of American history, given the suffering nature of your own experience.

The remaining alternative is to continue to be troubled by the task of grafting together an odd arrangement of group histories. That commitment demands caring for people as people and not as religious composites or commodities. It means listening to stories which, in turn, means developing relationships which require us moving out of our comfort zones, preconceived paradigms and stereotypes. We may not like the conclusions that we might have to face.

I'm told that all plots, stories and fiction can be reduced to one of two story lines. The first is, "Once upon a time, we went on a journey." The second is: "A stranger came into our midst." One, or a combination of both are the basis of every story. Human change cannot come about unless there is the tension of changing venues or changing relationships. My problem with the suburbs is that, under idealized American mythology, a person can "arrive" at some prefigured destination or anticipated purpose in life. For many, that ideal is found in the big home in the suburbs complete with all conveniences at the snap of the finger. Because this investment is great, the last thing one wants, is the "stranger" who might intrude into our cacooned world, to threaten our kingdom. Once we enter, we are relegated to that mode, the plot of life ceases, dreams, ambition, and the journey itself, die, the stranger disappears and life, "abundant life," is "fini". My observation is that suburban kids die of boredom, while their parents drown in false titillation to spice up their days.

Of course, the story of the Gospel is deciphered into these two divisions. The Old Testament proclaims the story of an epic journey while the New Testament describes the singular stranger who enters into their midst.

Thus, I believe that the only remaining alternative is to allow ourselves to be troubled and confounded by engagement with people who come with novel histories, and allow them to inform us. We ought to allow our differences to serve as a litmus test of our love, in the same way that one might court a potential spouse—that person's history becomes precious to us, and part of that which we love. I know. I am married cross-culturally to a lady from Guyana, in South America who is of East Indian descent. I believe that I have worked through most of these cultural issues, and have learned to love curried foods, dahl, and festive culture. The one culture I find the most ironic and perplexing is the "scientific" one, as she is a molecular biologist professor and researcher at UMKC, constantly pinning me down on the theological paradigms. I used to tell people that she studies cultures in a test tube

while I study cultures on a globe. However, that no longer applies as she travels the world just as avidly as I do.  Today, she is again abroad, in Paris.

The Fundamentalists are leery of such encounters. They have a "message to tell to the nations" sufficiently compacted and dogmatic that the conversations are usually one-sided, with ultimate truths carved with a precision that leaves the urbanite little room to wiggle. The problem, I find, is that these truths are mostly selective and self-serving. Many of the doctrinal dogmas offered are essentially important, but touched on only briefly in Scripture. The virgin birth is hardly mentioned, though implied. Verbal inerrancy is suggested, but certainly never developed. Pre-millenialism involves selective interpretations of Scripture. The Rapture is mentioned in passing. "Believers baptism" is debatable. The Genesis' creation account is rarely rehearsed in latter Scriptures.

What astounds me is that, for all the "verbal inerrancy" promoted, much of Scripture is ignored. There are far more statements about God's tilt towards the poor, and the dangers of wealth, than all of these fundamental passages combined. The role of reconciliation and peace-making is a much larger topic than assumed, or ignored. The collective sense of sin and communal responses to evil are prominent, but almost never mentioned by Fundamentalists. Sexual sins stir eloquent censure but sins of attitudes and arrogance are rarely mentioned within the movement.

Ironically, the Fundamentalists are seeing the backwash of their own theology and sociology in the rise of prescriptive religion, manifest in both Pentecostalism (which they abhor) and "Name it, claim it" versions.  This perspective turns believers into magicians rather than worshippers, manipulating God for personal gain and profit, rather than surrendering to God and his purposes. What is described as "Faith" propositions becomes activistic human-generated politics, church growth principles, televangelism, and legalisms. Ironically some of these manifestations are growing precipitously within the urban subcultures.

My fear, then, is that Fundamentalism, by culture and perspective is ill-adapted to minister effectively in the immigrant and minority cores of the city. And wherever it is expressed, the Fundamentalists themselves are embarrassed to claim paternity—which leads me to my second point.

*The Nature of Evil in the City*

Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism have seen evil as primarily a personal matter. In the 1960's, there was a general consensus that the status quo of the institutions that framed America, were broken, and needed fixing. After the Second World War, the United States sensed an expanded role for "saving the world." As soldiers returned home, families were reunited or fashioned, and the boomer generation of young people entered our demographic profile. Many of the great missionary enterprises such as Wycliffe and World Vision, Billy Graham, and "Youth with a Mission" were formed to reach the world that had been so molested by war, and desiring of grace.  Yet by the 60's, there was a manifest discontent with our own needs at home. Poverty and racial tensions were growing. The euphoria of victory abroad was effaced by the sense of malaise at home. What was the problem?

In general, the principle of "Evil" was located in the institutions, the educational system, legal system, state governments, and communism. The Supreme Court became more active, rectifying or expelling laws that perpetuated injustice. Forty years hence, we have done a role reversal in the Evangelical Church. Evil again is defined as personal, while the institutions are beyond critique. There is almost the blind confidence that our current government, guided by a believer who prays to God, is convening a government which is God-ordained, and so our contemporary problems must be individually based. This is made even more poignant within the belief that a Christian nation has been crudely attacked by pagans and therefore should be defended at all costs. Fundamentalists and many Evangelicals are at the forefront of this paradigm. It gives a temporary "bump" to Christian zeal. However, I believe that, over time, this orientation will be counterproductive and contentious in our responsibilities to minister to the city.

There is a hackneyed phrase in Christianity whose original meaning and context, I've never been able to identify: "The World, the Flesh and the Devil."Its genius lies in its identifying the sources of evil as understood by Scripture.  The "World", that is man-made institutions, refers to systemic evil---"principalities and powers"—buried in the nature of institutions. Frankly, most institutions begin with positive purposes to do good for at least a sector of society. However, over time, these organizations become corroded, corrupt, and self-serving and can become at some level "evil." They abuse people, misappropriate resources; stifle creativity unless they have some renewal principle within at work.

Sadly, I don't believe that the Church is exempt from such dynamics. Although the Fundamentalists see themselves as a renewal movement within broader Christianity and society as a whole, they do so on skewed premises, having the "form" without the "transform."

A compelling institutional study of "Systemic Evil" can be found in many of our urban environments. Like the human body which operates as a single organism energized and held together by its biological systems, the urban "organism" is knit together by a dozen or more urban "systems": educational, welfare, political, economic, transportation, health services, etc. If one of these systems becomes sick, ideally, the other systems ought to rush in to repair and heal. However, more often than not, the malaise of one system, debilitates the neighboring systems, distressing the quality of life all around. Ironically, it is our liberal brothers and sisters who are most apt to address the issue of systemic evil. They are children of the 60's, using the ballot box, the soap box, confrontation, demonstrations, symbolic gestures, and disruptions to name evils and offer just alternatives, in accordance with their utopian vision of the world. Currently, their voices are muted, though the pendulum inevitably will swing back again.

On the other hand, the "Flesh" connotes "Personal Evil"—individual choices one makes to right and repair one's destiny. Of course, Fundamentalists and Evangelicals will always say that God, in Christ, has taken the initiative, and that, at best, we are merely respondants to divine initiative. The theological divide between Calvinistic determinism and Arminian "free will-ers" is great. But, to the credit of Calvinists (many of whom are Fundamentalists) who relegate such honored sovereignty to God, discounting the human role, ironically they are some of the most active and engaged people around.

The "Flesh" according to Fundamentalists and Evangelicals connotes personal decisions to accept Christ as Lord and Savior, to undergo discipleship, to clean up ethical responses to life, to offer relief and care to those in trouble. In a curiously circumspect way, they live in contradictions, pro-life in anti-abortion positions while supporting capital punishment; redeeming the world while ignoring the environment, for example. Their implicit conclusion is two-fold: first, human troubles are the immediate result of sin and so, for the most part, if I have troubles, I am probably its cause. Second, the relief program has not yet been extended to me. According to them, God "has no hands but our hands," and so there is the personal urgency for missions to reach the lost. Many Evangelicals are second guessing some of the rigidity of this cause and effect lock on sin and consequences.. Fundamentalists are less likely to do so.

The "Devil" of course is best understood by the Pentecostals, as the active "roaring lion seeking who he may devour." There is an immediacy and personality of evil that transcends the visible world, straight from the source itself. I call this "Cosmological Evil," manifest in Satanic oppression, possession, impression, whatever. He is seeking territory and human temples to invade, conquer, and destroy. For this reason, the Pentecostals, ante up exercises of exorcism, prayer and fasting, and Joshua marches to expel him and his influence from lands and people. Their danger, of course, is seeing Satan behind every bush.

Ironically, the Bible references these sources in various and sundry ways highlighted neatly in succinct form in Ephesians 2:1-2: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sin [Personal Evil], in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world [Systemic Evil] and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air {Cosmological Evil], the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins [Personal Evil]. This verse adopts the same sequence that I see in Scripture. In the fall of Adam, the decisions were consummately personal. Later in both Israel and in the fiery judgments of the prophets, the systemic identity of evil was heightened. Lastly, there is a slow progressive revelation of the Demonic, coming to the fore in the exorcist miracles of Christ and the Apocalyptic Revelation.

My problem with Fundamentalism (and many Evangelicals) is their habit that ignores systemic evil. They consistently praise capitalism, democracy and God-ordained government with little sense of discrimination, alluding to Romans 13 as their proof passage. Rarely do they reference the abusive kings of Israel and Judah, or the Revelation 13 "beast" who personifies evil government.

Within the city, they campaign vigorously to "fix" evil or, failing that, to obliterate it. They identify evil in terms of personal evangelism to redeem people from what they consider deleterious lives (defined contextually by culture or government): homelessness, alcoholism, pre-marital sex, illiteracy, crime, etc. When they light on to the systemic issues, they war against abortion, homosexuality,

pornography and illegal immigration. Rarely do they mention racism, red-lining, or economic inequities. When they take on institutional issues, their initiatives become suspect, in that they seem to be so self-serving. Abortion and criminality are inordinately "minority" issues, with the weight of the law and guilt disfavoring these populations, rather than the race and ethnicity of fundamentalist advocates.

Yet, I have a growing concern that a primary preoccupation of the Gospel for Fundamentalists is their obsession to stamp out evil. If one is distanced from "evil," then the crusading vigor may indiscriminately stamp out life itself. Christianity is not at its base a morality crusade. It is good news that first identifies with the sinner, asks poignant life-unfolding questions, and then offers a way out and a way up, based on sensitivity and Spirit-direction. Short of this, we become a police posse or an extermination squad. Furthermore, by fixating on evil, we tend to become like the evil we try to eliminate, i.e. we "kill them all to save them." We diminish people to nothing more than the extensions of their "problem" that we, ourselves, have defined. Like the census bureau, we categorize people as "unwed mothers," "illegitimate children," gays and lesbians, aliens, "sinners," "retarded"---terms we caustically use to reduce people to identifiable problems that we can manipulate to our satisfaction.

The Gospel transcends this. It offers the Church community as its therapeutic, transformative agent where one is evaluated not for his/her deficiencies but for one's capabilities, potentiality in contributing to the whole of life. There is a vibrant movement centered in Chicago and energized by John McKnight and John Kretzmann that addresses the limitation of "needs-based" services as opposed to its alternative of "asset-based" communities. It is for this reason, that McKnight once wrote an article entitled, "Why Servanthood is Bad!", condemning much of the activity of the Church for failure to move beyond services rendered. His key verse: "I call you no longer servants. . .but friends." (Jn 15:15). As an aside, I compliment the Community of Christ for your focus on the nature of community.

Fundamentalism, then, gets stuck trying to "save" people by erasing their problems without understanding the intricacies of their contexts. Though all the powers of restoration and healing may be brought into play, the Gospel dares point beyond the problems that have destroyed human dignity and meaning, towards the Good News that elevates the spirit and appropriates the gifts granted to each person.

Or just as adverse, Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism have historically responded to the city by avoiding it and by "bad-mouthing" it, i.e. "avoiding any appearance of evil." They have immunized their communities by locating "50 miles from any known sin" as one report once facetiously declared. Then they complain when what remains in the city is co-opted by the very evils that they said they wanted to avoid. Ironically, despite Harvey Cox's 60's prediction of a secular city, we find that city festers religious life, but often not in the terms and the shape that Fundamentalists comfortably recognize.

I am helped by a story from Martin Luther King, Jr. He narrates that, in the Greek myths, Ulysses is journeying by boat across the Aegean Sea when the sirens, those seductive evil women start to sing songs intended to entice the sailors off course into wrecks on the coastal shoals. Ulysses, recognizing the temptation, demands that each of his sailors stuffs wax in their ears and chain themselves to the mast, so as not to be drawn away by evil. On the other hand, Orpheus, following the same itinerary and confronting the same seduction, picks up a lute and plays music so much more beautiful that his sailors are not tempted. I would add an addition. Maybe we ought to sail near the shoals, put down some life rafts, row to the sirens, and sing songs that engage and seduce them. But then I'm an impractical idealist.

### The Role of Chaos in the City

To the outsider, urban environments seems to present aspects of relative disorder—just look at traffic patterns after a snowstorm, see downtown Detroit on the night of Hallowe'en, watch the Crips and Bloods do street battle in Los Angeles, look at the makeshift quality of people's lives in the desperate corners of the city.

There is within Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism an implicit assumption that "order" is one of the essential byproducts of the Gospel---moral order, institutional order, financial order, and theological order. Calvinism is seen as "systematic" theology while Wesley is disparaged for offering only

"practical" theology, lacking the internal coherency of its rival. The danger is that we systematize God in conform to our own image of Him, reducing Him into our neat theological boxes. Over time, the order becomes the compelling appeal of our faith, and God, in his paradox, irony, and his seemingly contradictory nature, gets lost inside.

If God is morphed into no more than an ordering principle, then "disorder" becomes our lens on "evil." Anything that presents itself as disorder, salivates us into action that requires us to change it. I have two problems with this: first, those who live disengaged with the masses of urban peoples, will perceive all discomfort as being disorder because of their failure to recognize the intrinsic order that undergirds city life. Sadly, urban renewal advocates once lived in the city. Now they live in communities often distanced from the city, but rendering judgments fat on theory but starved on personal experience. Furthermore, our efficient networks of highways that criss-cross the city often deliver us to destinations without exposure therein.

Second, even if there is a haphazardness in the city, it does not necessarily connote evil. Indeed, the more that I delve into the nature of the Gospel, the more I recognize the "disordering" character of God, who "breaks down" as much as he "builds up"; who destroys as much as he creates. Indeed, the whole redemptive story is an affront to human categorizations of "order;" a world founded on a Word; God who belittles himself; sin which wreaks salvation in the Cross; the "least" becoming the greatest, and "grace" itself which follows no logical cause and effect relationship. As to the city, Jeremiah spins us into the illogical dilemma that we are to seek peace, offer prayer and invest, but find no hope therein (Jer. 29).

Yes, there is evidence to indicate that some disorder is Satanically derived. Other disorder appears neutral as a condition of the natural "order" of life. But some evidences of disorder may owe their genesis to the superimposition of God through miracles and manifestations, intended for higher redemptive purposes. To say it otherwise, the goal of the Gospel is not order, but redemption, not limited to humans but to all things, including the cosmos itself. God is unbound in using both order and disorder to form, fashion, and jog this ultimate purpose into realization. The Fundamentalists, in the worst case, may ignore the redemptive possibilities in disorder, ruing and bemoaning its existence and attributing to Satan that which God himself, either has allowed or initiated, to bring his final purposes to fruition.

One danger of establishing "order" as a Gospel straw man is that it requires "control" that may beget or rationalize "violence." In its extreme, we have seen this in the bombing of abortion clinics, in plots of the KKK, and in the rising Nazi movement which finds an unintended intellectual support from the Fundamentalist attitude on order.

For these reasons and others, I find Fundamentalism and, sometimes, Evangelicalism (of which I am a partisan), frustrated in connecting their form of Gospel to the City. I wish it were otherwise. I appreciate their zeal; I admire their Scholasticism; I honor their devotion to certain ethical behaviors. But until attitudes are modified and some theological paradigms adjusted, I am afraid that we will find that this witness is marginalized, disengaged, or shunted towards an impotent message to the City or disfigured in a way that will not be recognized by those who desired so much to save it.

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