

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

ership, writes Quebedeaux, consultant to the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.

From the late 19th century, evangelicals have believed in the "total inerrancy" of Scripture. But the 1960s saw a doctrine of "limited inerrancy" developing, which asserts Scriptural infallibility on matters of faith and conduct, but not of history and the cosmos (including biology and geology).

Among previously conservative or apolitical evangelicals there has been a growth in social awareness, culminating in the 1973 Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern, which amounted to "a confession of evangelical complicity in the racism, sexism, militarism, and economic injustice of the wider U.S. society." The "leftward trend" among younger evangelicals now embraces sub-groups from the Catholic left and Christian remnants of the counter-culture "Jesus Movement" to black evangelicals and "charismatics." The women's movement has made substantial gains within all these sub-groups, says Quebedeaux. The Evangelical Women's Caucus, a fellowship of evangelical feminists, is growing steadily.

Evangelical conservatives and the mass of some 40 million "mainstream evangelicals" remain mostly Republican (outside the South) and preoccupied with prohibitions against smoking, drinking, dancing, and the like. But younger evangelicals have almost universally rejected these taboos, although they remain "conservative" in regarding premarital and extramarital intercourse and homosexual practice as totally unacceptable.

Mainstream evangelicals and mainline Protestants are showing ever-increasing signs of ecumenical cooperation, and a new generation of evangelical leaders is emerging. One of them, says Quebedeaux, is David Allan Hubbard, president of Fuller Seminary and a Conservative Baptist minister, who combines "preaching ability, charm and political savvy." As president of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, the accreditation body for all North American theological seminaries, he is well situated to help develop a better relationship between evangelicals and mainline Protestants.

*Striving for
Social Justice*

"The Boston Church and Desegregation"
by Frank J. Harris, S.J., in *America*
(Sept. 11, 1976), 106 W. 56th St., New
York, N.Y. 10019.

When the Boston School Committee declared itself unable to desegregate the city's public schools, the U.S. District Court on May 10, 1975, imposed a plan of its own. A majority of parents, teachers, and students in America's most Catholic metropolis were furious.

Not without some prodding, writes Harris, who is a staff member of Boston's Citywide Coordinating Council, the court's principal monitoring agency, the Catholic Church took important steps to change the climate of hatred and fear—and changed itself in the process.

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The U.S. Civil Rights Commission was critical of church leadership during the 1974-75 school year, finding it "not as effective as it could have been in identifying and supporting moral issues confronting Boston during Phase 1 desegregation." By the start of the following academic year, the stated position of the Church was clear; Cardinal Humberto Medeiros urged Bostonians to "actively, earnestly and courageously strive to insure justice, quality education and human dignity."

Written regulations forbidding the use of Catholic schools as havens from desegregation were issued to all pastors and principals. Auxiliary Bishop Joseph J. Ruocco wrote all the city's priests urging that they appeal personally to opinion-makers in the community and seek out young people to explain that the alternative to acceptance was "futile and self-perpetuating violence." Bishop Ruocco spent hours encouraging priests and nuns to deepen their involvement, and, in response, they spent thousands of hours in projects ranging from riding school buses to sponsoring informational gatherings.

The Boston experience, says Harris, shows that many Catholics have still not accepted the social teachings of the Church. Some priests disagreed with the court order and thus felt relieved of any further obligation to promote racial justice. Yet there were people who were seeking leadership in a troubled time and who now look to the Church for continued direction and support.

Religion-As-Illusion

"Jesus in the Now: The New Revivalism" by Scott Edwards, in *The Humanist* (Sept.-Oct. 1976), 923 Kensington Ave., Buffalo, N.Y. 14215.

There is a strong spirit of revival stirring in America—one with links to the past but also imbued with elements which make it unlike all the revival movements that have gone before.

Edwards, a political scientist at California State University, Hayward, finds three things to note about the "New Revivalism": its essential harmony with the liberal ethos of our society; its adoption of mass communications and the moral outlook that goes with this technology; and its embrace of charismatic beliefs and practices.

The new revivalism is at peace with "the hazy liberalism that largely governs popular feelings in America about social and political matters." Its theology remains fundamentalist, but this does not prevent evangelist Oral Roberts from embracing modernism to the extent of offering TV specials with all the modes and rhythms of mass entertainment. Evangelism and popular culture have become so fused as to be indistinguishable, says Edwards.

In its use of electronic mass communications, the new revivalism has accepted a moral atmosphere which is congenial to pictures and sounds but not to language. Words like "praise the Lord" and "let Jesus into your life" have no meaning when displayed against a tele-