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EDITORS' PREFACE

To a very considerable degree, this volume can only properly be viewed as an example of the serendipitous, that is, 'the discovery of things not sought'. Every contributor to this book has been aware to some degree that since its initial publication, David Bebbington's *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989) has engendered warm discussion between those more fully and those less fully convinced of this author's contention for evangelicalism's substantially novel emergence in the 1730s. But most of the contributors initially lived and worked in settings in which they were unaware of any others who shared their own reservations about the proposal that evangelicalism began in the Whitefield and Wesley era.

One of the editors, for example, had already in 1996 read a paper on the question of evangelicalism's reputed origin in the age of the Enlightenment.¹ Yet it is likely that no other contributor to this volume knew of this at the time. In 2001, the other editor read a conference paper on the inadvisability of accepting a theory of evangelicalism's eighteenth-century origin—and he,

1. Michael Haykin's paper 'Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment' was first given at the Eighth International Baptist Conference, held at Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Ontario, 21–24 Oct. 1996. It subsequently appeared under this title in Andrew M. Fountain (ed.), *Loving the God of Truth: Preparing the Church for the Twenty-first Century* (Toronto: Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College, 1996), pp. 47–68.

so far as he knew, was then turning over unplowed sod.² At this point, the pace quickened. Several of the contributors to this volume were present at the reading of the latter paper in 2001 and were led to commence their own related investigations, while yet another in the UK was already at work on a Tyndale House paper when an electronic version of the 2001 paper came into his hands.³ By 2003, an idea had emerged that there was warrant for a revisiting of the question of evangelicalism's origins through a book of essays devoted to the subject.

This idea, when broached to David Bebbington, brought the characteristically gracious offer of the information that a number of historians had indicated to him that they too were among the unconvinced about the alleged eighteenth-century origin of evangelicalism. These were shortly recruited for the budding project. By then, it was time to stand back and ask what lacunae still existed in the survey of Protestant regions, leaders and doctrines we now proposed to undertake. Once more, we discovered what we had barely sought. We soon located esteemed writers ready and able to address aspects of our quest, which, had they been left uninvestigated, would surely have raised the question of the reason for this neglect. By November 2005, a good portion of these essays were ready to be read in a special working group of the Evangelical Theological Society meeting at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. At this point most of the contributors were meeting face to face for the first time! Still other essays, commissioned late in the process, have been supplied subsequently.

Thanks are due to our publisher for both the endorsement of the project and the patience shown in waiting for the submission of all materials, to David Bebbington (a historian so industrious that he alone has kept nineteen of us engaged in researching his thought) and to the Lilly Foundation, which through its grants to the Kaleo Center of Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia, has materially assisted this project at some most vital points.

Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart

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2. Kenneth J. Stewart's paper 'Does Evangelicalism Pre-date the 18th Century? An Examination of the David Bebbington Thesis' was read in the Nov. 2001 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and later published in substantially revised form in the *Evangelical Quarterly* 67.2 (2005), pp. 135–153.
 3. Garry J. Williams, 'Was Evangelicalism Created by the Enlightenment?', *Tyndale Bulletin* 53.2 (2002), pp. 283–312. This essay appears reprinted in this current volume, ch. 15, under the new title 'Enlightenment Epistemology and Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Doctrines of Assurance'.