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# BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF EVANGELICALS

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leading evangelical theological seminaries in the world until 1978, when he was named 'Dean Emeritus'.

Beginning in 1978, Kantzer served for five years as editor-in-chief of *Christianity Today*, and in 1984 he was named senior editor and dean of the research institute of *Christianity Today*. From 1982 to 1983 he served as president of Trinity College and helped to rescue it from collapse by persuading it to re-affiliate with the Evangelical Free Church. After 1983, he served as chancellor of the college. From 1984 to 1991 Kantzer taught at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and he served as director of the PhD programme from 1986 to 1990.

Kantzer held four honorary doctorates (from Ashland Theological Seminary, Gordon College, John Brown University and Wheaton College) and served a term as president of the Evangelical Theological Society, in the leadership of which he played a significant role for many years. Kantzer was also a major figure in the work of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy during the 1970s and 1980s. He edited several books, including *Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilbur Smith* (1978), *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology: Papers From the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Society*, with Stanley Gundry (1979) and *Applying the Scriptures: Papers From the ICBI Summit III* (1987). In addition to his many editorials in *Christianity Today*, he also wrote many popular articles and contributed to a number of edited volumes.

Kantzer sacrificed the opportunity to engage in scholarly research and writing himself in order to give leadership to the evangelical movement in various ways at different times. It is interesting to note that while building Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, he put in place one of the most generous sabbatical programmes offered by any seminary, thus allowing others to do what he had found himself unable to do because of the time pressures of administration.

Despite his unwavering advocacy of the doctrine of inerrancy as the hallmark of consistent evangelicalism, Kantzer exerted his considerable diplomatic skills and keen mind in an attempt to hold the evangelical coalition together. A word that readily comes to mind in thinking of Kantzer's work is

■ **KANTZER, Kenneth S.** (1917–2002), theological educator, administrator and editor of *Christianity Today*, was a key figure in the resurgence of Protestant evangelicalism in the United States during the second half of the twentieth century as a professor, editor, college and seminary administrator and senior statesman of the evangelical movement.

Kantzer was born in Detroit on 29 March 1917, and graduated as BA from Ashland College in 1938. Ruth Forbes, who became his wife on 21 September 1939, helped to lead him to Christ. He made a profession of faith for the first time in 1935, at her commencement, a Wheaton College baccalaureate service. After earning an MA at Ohio State University in 1939, he attended Faith Seminary in Philadelphia and graduated with an MDiv in 1942 and an STM in 1943.

Kantzer was ordained as a minister in the Evangelical Free Church in 1948. Having taught at The King's College while studying at Faith, he then taught Hebrew at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary for two years while pastor of a church in Rockport. From 1946 to 1963 Kantzer taught and was chair of the department of Bible, Philosophy and Religious Education at Wheaton College. He completed a PhD in Philosophy and Religion from Harvard University in 1950 (his dissertation focused on the knowledge of God in the thought of John \*Calvin) and undertook post-doctoral studies in Europe, at both Gottingen and Basel, in 1954.

In 1963, Kantzer became the academic dean of the new Trinity Evangelical Divinity College, which at that time had fewer than forty students. He gave up the opportunity to take a sabbatical and write a book on Barth's theology in order to take on the challenge of building a leading theological institution. He made a major contribution to the development of the divinity school into one of the

'irenic'. As editor of *Christianity Today*, he attempted to combine doctrinal orthodoxy with a keen sense of the priority of mission and warm-hearted, practical ministry.

Kantzer died on 20 June 2002 in Victoria, British Columbia.

#### **Bibliography**

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