

New Evangelicalism Is Dangerous

IN EVERY GENERATION of the church there are those who profess the name of Christ but who do not want to bear the reproach of the cross. They hate to be scorned by the wise of the world or by those who have supposedly discovered more effective ways to gain the crowds. They are more concerned with making the gospel “respectable” than declaring the whole counsel of God. They have made a complicated system of gears so as to “gear” the gospel to the youth, to the athlete, to the cultured, etc. New evangelical strategy is deceptively dangerous because it appeals to the flesh in the name of the Spirit. Its programs are designed for impressive display rather than for seeking above all to be faithful to God’s absolute truth.

A few symptoms of the new evangelical disease are:

- Placing love above sound doctrine as a basis for Christian fellowship.

[In reality, there can be no true demonstration of love without sound doctrine. Anything done in “love” will always be in agreement with clear Bible truth. 1 Jn. 5:2-3; Jn. 14:21-23; Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Jn. 4-11].

- Re-thinking or “keeping an open mind” regarding the fundamentals of the faith, including the inerrancy and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

[The Bible’s authoritative statements concerning the Word of God and the Son of God are matters of God’s revelation, not man’s investigation. The “foundation,” the faith, is God’s completed Revelation. Jude 3; Eph. 2:19-3:5; 2 Tim. 2:15].

- Practicing “infiltration” rather than biblical “separation” from compromised churches, ministries and apostate denominations.

[It is always God’s will for the faithful believer to withdraw from any fellowship that has departed from sound doctrine and practice. 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1].

- Twisting the Scriptures in an effort to accommodate so-called “scientific” discovery and theory, including every form of evolution.

[A literal, historical understanding of Scripture concerning a six-day creation cannot be reconciled to any evolutionary theory—one must either believe God or the evolutionist. Gen. 1; Jn. 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 1:20].

- Seeking to develop lines of thought and arguments

that would “Christianize” pagan ideas and systems founded upon unbelief (glorification of psychology, psychiatry, astrology, etc.).

[Nothing is better for man than the absolute truth of God’s Word. The Bible can meet mankind’s every need. 2 Pet. 1:2-4; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jn. 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13].

- Preaching a “positive-only message” to the saved and unsaved alike, often expressed by the statement, “God called me to win souls, not criticize other Christian leaders.”

[God calls every believer to be a faithful witness to the gospel of Christ, but He also commands every believer to stand on the Word and exercise spiritual discernment in contending for truth and encouraging others to faithfulness. Matt. 28:19-20; Jude 3-4; Heb. 5:12-14; Acts 20:24-31].

- Seeking more fellowship with compromisers and liberals than with Bible-believing fundamentalists.

[The rejection of biblical separation assists the Devil, for it confuses the battle lines and silences scriptural reproof. Eph. 5:11; 1 Cor. 15:33].

- Making the church an instrument of social change

by programs of humanitarian concern rather than emphasizing the believer's responsibility to the Great Commission and the eternal welfare of man.

[Cooperation with apostates and groups embracing errant doctrinal positions usually begins with united welfare, worship or evangelistic programs. God has instructed the believer to identify and to separate from all unbiblical ministries. [2 Tim. 2: 15-21; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Jn. 10-11].

New evangelicalism is dangerous since it is unscriptural and dampens faithfulness to God and His Word. Bible-believing Christians must guard against it. Our obligation to obey what God's Word says concerning these issues cannot be modified simply because respected Christian leaders today embrace and promote new evangelicalism's dangerous strategies. Do not be deceived by them.

Pertinent definitions of relevant terms relating to new evangelicalism taken from the F.E.A. publication:

"23 Terms to Know in the 21st Century!"

New Evangelicalism — A theological position that attempts to bridge the gap between biblical fundamentalism (or traditional evangelicalism) and religious liberalism and neo-orthodoxy in an effort to gain intellectual and cultural respectability. Harold Ockenga, who coined

the term “new evangelicalism” in 1948, said this new movement emphasizes infiltration rather than separation from error, the advancement of the social gospel and a willingness to re-examine certain biblical teachings embraced by fundamentalists (such as, the nature of Scripture, the origin of man, the universality of the flood, etc.). The March 1956 issue of *Christian Life* elaborated upon the tenets of new evangelicalism in the article “Is Evangelical Theology Changing?” The article noted the characteristics of the new evangelicalism: (1) a friendly attitude toward science, (2) a willingness to re-examine beliefs concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, (3) a more tolerant attitude toward varying views on eschatology, (4) a shift away from so-called extreme dispensationalism, (5) an increased emphasis on scholarship, (6) a more definite recognition of social responsibility, (7) a re-opening of the subject of biblical inspiration and (8) a growing willingness of evangelical theologians to converse with liberal theologians. Today, new evangelicalism is often manifested as a mood or attitude of disdain toward biblical fundamentalism as well as a ministerial philosophy that encourages ecumenical cooperation and emphasizes “love” at the expense of sound doctrine.

Accommodation (Theological Compromise)—The act of forfeiting doctrinal truth and unity in doctrine for the sake of a “higher” cause or purpose. Accommodation is a hallmark of new evangelicalism. When a believer joins in ministry endeavor with an unbeliever or even with another believer who stands in violation of obedience to God’s Word, he is guilty of accommodation.

Biblical Fundamentalism—A movement of men and ministries who, recognizing God’s Word as completely authoritative in every area of which it speaks, are dedicated to theological orthodoxy and an attitude of disdain for unbelief as well as theological, ecclesial or ministerial compromise. Such an attitude manifests itself by militant defense of the faith once delivered (as recorded in its completeness in God’s Word, the Bible) and subsequent separation from those who entertain unbelief or compromise. Biblical fundamentalism is always marked by (1) ecclesiastical separation from unbelievers or those who seek common ministerial cause with unbelievers or even brethren who propagate false doctrine and (2) defense of absolute truth as revealed in God’s Word.

Biblical Separation (Ecclesiastical Separation)—The biblical doctrine rooted in the holiness (“set-apartness”) of God and His call for His children to be holy as well. Biblical separation entails refusal to be associated or identified with unbelief, false doctrine, compromise or worldliness in any aspect of life and ministry.

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