

Systematic Theology

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INTRODUCTION

Prolegomena: “Literally means ‘things which are spoken beforehand.’ Deals with foundational issues of theology, such as theological methodology, sources, reasons for the study of theology.”

Theology: Formal study of God, including God’s work in creation.

- Derived from two Greek words: *theos* (“God”) and *logos* (“study of”).
- Theology is a field of study with a distinct vocabulary and methodology.
- In classical education, theology is considered the “Queen of the Sciences.”

Approaches to the Study of Theology

- Biblical Theology: Studies the distinct theology of specific biblical authors.
- Historical Theology: Studies the theology of the church throughout its history.
- Systematic Theology: Studies the theology of the whole Bible.
- Philosophical Theology: Studies theology based upon natural revelation.
- Apologetics: Provides a defense for the truthfulness of Christianity.
- Ethics: Application of truth to current moral issues.

Why Should We Study Systematic Theology?

Scripture References on the Importance of Theology

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do you will save both yourself and your hearers" (I Tim 4:16).

"Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming" (Eph. 4:14).

"For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (II Tim. 4:3).

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (II Tim 2:15).

C. S. Lewis: "Everyone reads, everyone hears things discussed. Consequently, if you do not listen to Theology, that will not mean that you have no ideas about God. It will mean that you have a lot of wrong ones—bad, muddled, out-of-date ideas" (*Mere Christianity*).

"A robust, biblical, God-honoring theology is one of the most transforming and empowering things anyone can gain in this life" (anonymous).

THEOLOGICAL METHOD

"In systematic theology one attempts to summarize biblical doctrine, addressing theological topics one by one in order to summarize all biblical teaching on a particular subject."

Working Assumptions

- The Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God.
- The Bible has unity (coherence) and authority.

Four Steps in the Theological Method

- Identification: Choose a topic.
- Induction: Identify the relevant Bible verses
- Interpretation: Use proper methods of interpretation.
- Explanation: Synthesize and contextualize Bible verses.

Subjectivity in Theological Studies

- Personal perspective
- Cultural perspective
- Selection of topics
- Identification of relevant Bible verses
- Interpretation of Bible verses
- Framing of questions
- Development of categories
- Filling-in theological gaps with speculation
- Explanation of doctrines

Probabilistic Conclusions

- Though the Bible is inerrant, our theology is not.
- All theology is a human construct based on various degrees of probability.

- Some theological beliefs are well attested in Scripture.
- Other theological beliefs are more speculative.
- When it comes to God, there will always be mystery (paradox).
- Thus, we should exercise humility when discussing theology.

Deuteronomy 29:29: “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever” (cf. Job 38:2-7; Isa. 40:13-14; Rom. 11:33-36).

C. H. Spurgeon: “As well might a gnat seek to drink in the ocean, as a finite creature to comprehend the Eternal God. A God whom we could understand would be no God. If we could grasp him, he could not be infinite. If we could understand him, he could not be divine.”

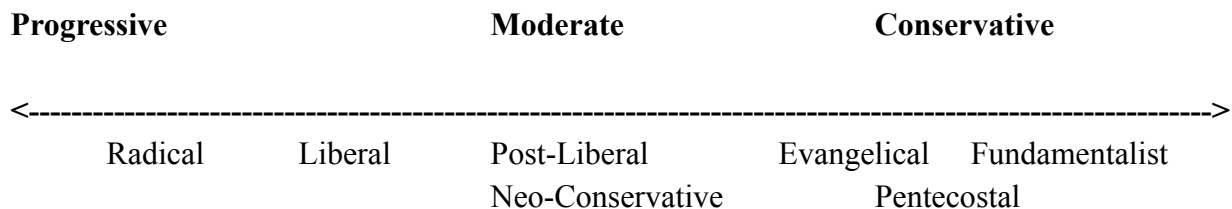
A.W. Tozer: “We often try to put God into a box. The God who fits in our boxes isn’t the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

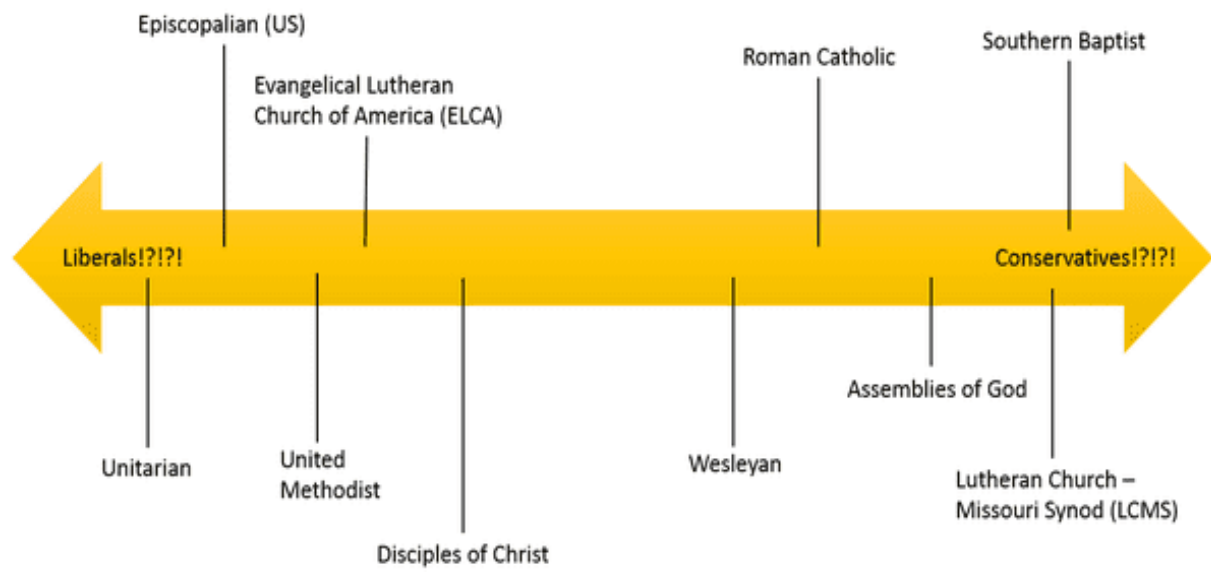
Introduction

- All theology is taught from a theological perspective.
- Nonetheless, it is possible to be fair and accurate in discussing other perspectives.
- Converge (Baptist General Conference) falls within evangelicalism.

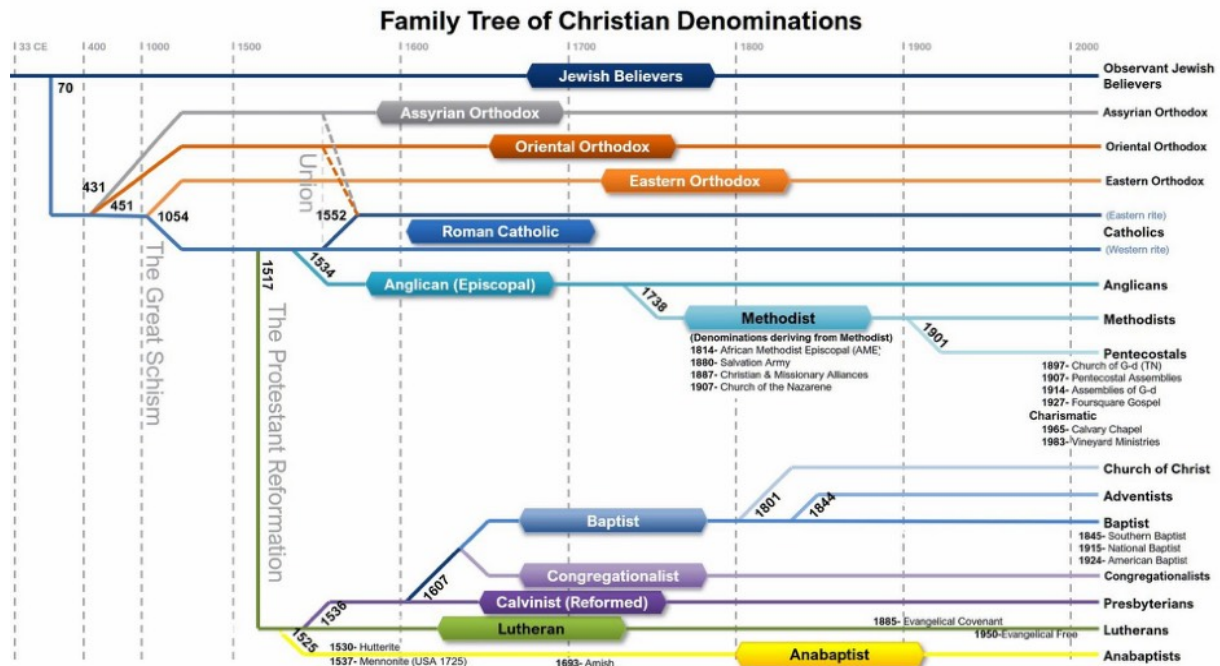
Landscape of American Christianity



American Denominations on the Theological Continuum



CHURCH HISTORY: DENOMINATIONAL BRANCHES



THE ENLIGHTENMENT (1700-1800)

Precursors to the Enlightenment

Humanistic Spirit of the Renaissance (1300-1600)

- Renewed interest in Greek and Latin classics (*ad fontes*)
- Emphasis on human worth and dignity.

Scientific Revolution (Rise of Modern Science)

- Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543)--Heliocentric Theory
- Galilei Galileo (1564-1642)--Astronomical Discoveries
- Isaac Newton (1643-1727)--Physics and Calculus

Philosophical Revolution

- Francis Bacon (1561-1626)--Inductive Scientific Method
- Rene Descartes (1596-1650)--Rationalist System of Doubt
- John Locke (1632-1704)--Empiricist Epistemology

Characteristics of the Enlightenment

- Rationalism. Reason is exalted over traditional authorities ("Age of Reason").
- Naturalism. Universe is closed system of material causation.
- Individualism. Humans are autonomous to make free choices.
- Optimism. Human progress toward utopic society is inevitable.

Impact of the Enlightenment on Christianity

- Revealed religion (Christianity) is marginalized.
- Natural religion (Deism) leads to secularization.
- God is the “absentee landlord” who explains creation and morality.
- Since the time of creation, God is no longer actively involved.
- Thus, miracles and divine revelation are impossible.
- For centuries, the church has duped the masses to gain wealth and power.
- The intelligentsia must free the unenlightened from the shackles of church dogma.

PROPONENTS OF DEISM

English Deists

- Matthew Tindal (1655-1733)
- Thomas Woolston (1669-1733)
- John Toland (1670-1722)
- Anthony Collins (1676-1729)
- George Berkeley (1685-1753)
- William Law (1686-1761)

American Deists

- Benjamin Franklin (1705-90)
- Thomas Paine (1737-1809)
- Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)
- James Madison (1751-1836)

Thomas Jefferson: “I have performed this operation for my own use, by cutting verse by verse out of the printed book, and by arranging the matter which is evidently his, and which is as distinguishable as diamonds in a dunghill,” in *The Jefferson Bible* (1820), 17.

NINETEENTH CENTURY CLASSICAL LIBERALISM

Beliefs of 19th Century Classical Liberalism (Germany)

- Bible contains legends and myths (biblical criticism).
- God is immanence and benevolence.
- Universal Fatherhood of God and universal brotherhood of mankind.
- Humans are inherently good.
- Jesus was a good teacher and moral exemplar.
- Church's mission is to continue Jesus' social ministry.

What are Your Thoughts about These Beliefs?

German Liberal Theologians

- F. C. Baur (1762-1860)
- Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)—“Father of Liberal Theology”
- David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874)
- Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889)
- Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918)
- Wilhelm Herrmann (1846-1922)
- Adolf Von Harnack (1851-1930)

Rise of Biblical Criticism

- Historical Criticism
- Old Quest for the Historical Jesus
- Source Criticism

Hermann Reimarus (1694-1768): “In a word, the apostles strayed completely from their master in their teaching and in their lives, abandoning his religion and his intention and introducing a completely new system,” in *Fragments* (1774-78), 102.

“We will now, however, step nearer and more directly to the subject in question, and examine both systems according to the sayings and doings of Jesus himself, so far as they are handed down to us. It is evident that with regard to the old system, all depends upon whether the evangelists, in their history of Jesus, left unintentionally and through sheer carelessness, a few remaining traces of the reasons which influenced them at first in attributing to their master the object of becoming a worldly deliverer of Israel” (135).

“As, then, the new doctrine of the apostles was an undoubted fabrication, they must have invented it with a preconceived motive in their mind and will. Now as the former motives of the apostles, invariably and up to the time of the fabrication, had been aimed at worldly wealth and power, it follows with all moral certainty that the possession of worldly wealth and power was also the object of the apostles in the fabrication of their new doctrine” (243).

MODERNISM IN AMERICA

Introduction to Modernism

- Some American scholars and pastors embraced Classical Liberalism.
- Adopted accommodationist model of relating Christianity to culture.
- Accepted critical assumptions and methods in approaching the Bible.
- Advocated Classical Liberal beliefs.
- Gained control of many Christian denominations and schools.
- Resulted in the emergence of postmillennialism and the Social Gospel.

H. Richard Niebuhr: “A God without wrath brought human beings without sin into a kingdom without judgment through ministrations of a Christ without a cross,” *The Kingdom of God in America* (1937), 193.

American Modernists

- Washington Gladden (1836-1918)
- Josiah Strong (1847-1916)
- Richard Ely (1854-1943)
- Walter Rausenbusch (1861-1918)—“Father of the Social Gospel”
- Shailer Mathews (1863-1941)
- Henry Sloan Coffin (1877-1941)
- Henry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1979)

Walter Rausenbusch: “On some of the more speculative doctrines, the social gospel has no contribution to make. Its interests lie on earth, within the social relations of the life that now is,” *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (1917), 31.

“Theology with remarkable unanimity has discerned that sin is essentially selfishness. This is an ethical and social definition, and is proof of the unquenchable social spirit of Christianity... The definition of sin as selfishness furnishes an excellent theological basis for a social conception of sin and salvation,” 48.

“The spiritual perfection of Jesus consists in the fact that he was so simply and completely filled with the love of God and man that he gave himself to the task of the Kingdom of God without any reservation or backsliding,” 52.

“Two aspects of the Kingdom of God demand special consideration in this connection: the Kingdom is the realm of love, and it is the commonwealth of labour... We shall not be doing our thinking in a Christian way until we agree that productive labour according to the ability of each is one of the ‘conditions of salvation,’” 54-56.

“That sin is lodged in social customs and institutions and is absorbed by the individual from his social group is so plain that any person with common sense can observe it,” 60.

“When we submit to God, we submit to the supremacy of the common good. Salvation is the voluntary socializing of the soul,” 99.

“The Kingdom of God is not confined within the limits of the Church and its activities. It embraces the whole of human life. It is the Christian transfiguration of the social order. The Church is one social institution alongside of the family, the industrial organization of society, and the State. The Kingdom of God is in all these, and realizes itself through them all,” 144-145.

“The Reign of God came to mean the organized fellowship of humanity acting under the impulse of love,” 155.

“The Kingdom of God is not a concept nor an ideal merely, but an historical force. It is a vital and organizing energy now at work in humanity. Its capacity to save the social order depends on its pervasive presence within the social organism,” 165.

“If we can trust the Bible, God is against capitalism, its methods, spirit, and results,” 184.

“Our chief interest in any millennium is the desire for a social order in which the worth and freedom of every least human being will be honoured and protected; in which the brotherhood of man will be expressed in the common possession of the economic resources of society; and in which the spiritual good of humanity will be set high above the private profit interests of all materialistic groups,” 224.

“But no man, in any human sense of justice, has deserved an eternity of hell,” 233.

Gary Dorrien: “The notion that Christianity has a mission to transform the structures of society is distinctly modern. Near the end of his life, after he belatedly made his peace with the term *social gospel*—the term seemed redundant to him—Walter Rauschenbusch insisted that the social gospel was neither alien nor novel. He protested too much, however; the social gospel was certainly novel. Premodern Christianity had a social conscience and the evangelical movements of the early modern era were rich in antiwar, antislavery, and

temperance sentiments, but the social gospel was something new in Christian history. Significantly, it was led by theological liberals; equally important, it promoted social reforms as aspects of what the social gospelers called the church's 'Christianizing' mission. The key to the social gospel was not its theological liberalism or its reform, however. What distinguished the social gospel from other forms of socially engaged Christianity was its idea of 'social salvation' and its effort to fulfill this conception," "Social Salvation: The Social Gospel as Theology and Economics," *The Social Gospel Today* (2001), ed. Christopher Evans, 111.

What are Your Thoughts on the Social Gospel?

PRECURSORS TO FUNDAMENTALISM

American Revivalism

First Great Awakening (1735-50)

- Jonathan Edwards (1703-58)
- Gilbert Tennent (1703-64)
- George Whitefield (1714-70)

Second Great Awakening (1790-1820)

- Timothy Dwight (1752-1817)
- James McGready (1763-1817)
- Barton Stone (1772-1844)
- Peter Cartwright (1785-1872)
- Charles Finney (1792-1875)

Dispensationalism

Dispensational Beliefs

- God works with humanity through different dispensations.
- The Church is not the “new Israel.”
- Premillennial and pre-tribulationism

Proponents of Dispensationalism

- John Nelson Darby (1800-82)
- C. I. Scofield (1843-1921)—*Scofield Bible* (1909)
- Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952)
- Niagara Bible Conferences (1868-1900)

Princeton Theology

Beliefs of Princeton Theology

- Verbal and plenary inspiration
- Biblical inerrancy

Proponents of Princeton Theology

- Archibald Alexander (1772-1851)

- Charles Hodge (1797-1878)
- A. A. Hodge (1823-86)
- B. B. Warfield (1851-1921)

EMERGENCE OF FUNDAMENTALISM

Significant Events in the Emergence of Fundamentalism

- 1910 Lyman Stewart published *The Fundamentals* (12 volumes)
- 1919 World's Christian Fundamentals Association (William Bell Riley)
- 1920 Term "Fundamentalist" coined by Curtis Lee Lays, a Baptist journalist
- 1922 Henry Emerson Fosdick's sermon, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?"

Five Fundamentals of the Faith (1910)

- Inerrancy of Scripture
- Virgin Birth of Jesus
- Substitutionary Atonement of Jesus' Death
- Bodily Resurrection of Jesus
- Second Coming of Jesus

Fundamentalist. A Fundamentalist is a conservative Christian who is militant in their opposition to the perceived threats of modernity, e.g., naturalism, evolution, biblical criticism, secular humanism, and psychoanalysis.

Henry Emerson Fosdick (Modernist): "It is interesting to note where the Fundamentalists are driving in their stakes to mark out the deadline of doctrine around the church, across which no one is to pass except on terms of agreement. They insist that we must all believe in the historicity of certain special miracles, preeminently the virgin birth of our Lord; that we must believe in a special theory of inspiration—that the original documents of the Scripture, which of course we no longer possess, were inerrantly dictated to men a good deal as a man might dictate to a stenographer; that we must believe in a special theory of the Atonement—that the blood of our Lord, shed in a substitutionary death, placates an alienated Deity and makes possible welcome for the returning sinner; and that we must believe in the second coming of our Lord upon the clouds of heaven to set up a millennium here, as the only way in which God can bring history to a worthy denouement" ("Shall the Fundamentalists Win?").

Leaders of Fundamentalism

- A. C. Dixon (1854-1925)
- R. A. Torrey (1856-1928)
- William Bell Riley (1861-1947)
- J. Frank Norris (1877-1952)
- J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937)

RETREAT OF FUNDAMENTALISM

Turning Point: Scopes “Monkey” Trial (1925)

- Butler Act: Tennessee law that banned the teaching of evolution in public schools
- High school teacher John Scopes intentionally broke the law and was put on trial.
- Star-studded trial: William Jennings Bryan (prosecutor) vs. Clarence Darrow (defense)
- Scopes found guilty, but fundamentalism was marginalized by the media.

Fundamentalists Begin to Practice Separatism

- Unable to transform culture, Fundamentalists withdrew from society.
- Fundamentalism became a counter-culture movement.
- Fundamentalists no longer advocated for social change ("Great Reversal").

Fundamentalists Begin to Practice Sectarianism

- Unable to change denominations, Fundamentalists withdrew from them.
- Fundamentalists created their own denominations.
- Fundamentalists established their own colleges.

What are Your Thoughts on Fundamentalism?

EVANGELICALISM

Evangelical. An Evangelical is a conservative Christian who seeks to advance traditional Christianity, while critically interacting with modern scholarship and contemporary culture.

Evangelicalism. Evangelicalism is a diverse interdenominational movement whose members are identifiable through their loose network of evangelical denominations, parachurch organizations, academic institutions, scholarly societies, and publishers.

Significant Events in the Emergence of Evangelicalism

1941 InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

1942 National Association of Evangelicals (N.A.E.)

- 1944 Youth for Christ
- 1947 Harold Ockenga coined the term "Neo-Evangelical."
Fuller Theological Seminary
Carl F.H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*.
- 1949 Evangelical Theological Society (E.T.S.)
- 1950 Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
World Vision
- 1951. World Evangelical Fellowship
Campus Crusade for Christ
- 1952 Young Life
- 1954 Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- 1956 *Christianity Today*
- 1957 Billy Graham Anathematized for Ecumenism
- 1976 "The Year of the Evangelical" (*Time*)

Leaders of Incipient Evangelicalism

- Charles Fuller (1887-1968)
- Harold Ockenga (1905-85)
- Edward Carnell (1919-67)
- Carl F. H. Henry (1913-2003)
- Everett Harrison (1902-99)
- Billy Graham (1918-2018)
- Bernard Ramm (1916-92)
- Francis Schaeffer (1912-84)

Theological Agreement between Fundamentalists and Evangelicals

- Inspiration, reliability, and authority of the Bible
- Transcendence and holiness of a personal and triune God
- Human fallenness and alienation from God
- Jesus--Incarnation, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection, and physical return
- Regeneration and adoption into God's family through personal faith in Christ

- Low church (non-liturgical)
- Evangelism and missions (Great Commission)
- Eschatology--Parousia, final judgment, and eternal states of heaven and hell

Theological Differences

Fundamentalists

Dogmatism
 Dictatorial Inspiration
 Absolute Inerrancy
 Literalism
 Rejects Biblical Criticism
 KJV-only
 Dispensational
 Pre-Millennial
 Pre-Tribulation

Evangelicals

Tolerance (within limits)
 Dynamic Inspiration
 Full Inerrancy
 Literal Interpretation
 Adapts Biblical Criticism
 NASB, NIV, ESV
 Dispensational and Covenant Theology
 A-, Pre-, Post-Millennial
 Pre-, Mid-, Post-Tribulation

Sociological Differences

Fundamentalists

Antithetical Model
 Militant (suspicious, reactionary)
 All Truth Found in Scripture
 Anti-Intellectual
 Separatist and Isolationist
 Legalism
 Independent
 Sectarian

Evangelicals

Transformationist & Conversionist Models
 Diplomatic (discerning, interactive)
 All Truth is God's Truth (integration)
 Scholarly Engagement
 Critical Participation and Social Action
 Freedom of Conscience
 Transdenominational
 Ecumenical

WHO IS AN EVANGELICAL?

Bebbington's Quadrilateral Definition of Evangelical

1. Biblicism: Bible is divinely inspired Word of God, reliable, and authoritative.
2. Crucicentrism: Jesus died on the cross to atone for human sins.
3. Conversionism: Personal decision of faith in Jesus needed to be "born again."
4. Activism: Christians have a responsibility to evangelize and to serve.

Other Common Evangelical Beliefs

- Human sinfulness
- Jesus' deity, bodily resurrection, and visible return
- Final judgment and eternal state of heaven and hell

Helpful Distinction

- Evangelical ethos—Anyone who adheres to traditional Christian beliefs.
- Evangelical movement—A distinct movement within the history of Christianity.

SURVEYS BY POLLSTERS

Pew Research (2015)

- Self-identified evangelicals (26%)
- Excluded African Americans by race and denomination
- Assumed that evangelicalism is solely a white movement

Lifeway Research in collaboration with National Association of Evangelicals (2017)

- Born-again (29%)
- Self-identified evangelicals (24%)
- Evangelical by belief using modified version of Bebbington's quadrilateral (15%)

Gallup Poll (2018). Self-identified evangelicals and born-again (41%)

Racial Demographic of Evangelicals (2024 Religious Landscape Study)

70% White
12% Hispanic
7% African American
3% Asian
6% Mixed

Conservative Politics of the Evangelicals

Political Party Affiliation: 70-80% tend to vote Republican

- They prefer a smaller government with fewer social services.

Socio-Political Priorities

- Pro-life
- Religious liberty
- Traditional marriage
- Strong national defense
- Border security
- Law and order
- Fiscal responsibility

What are Your Thoughts on Evangelicalism?

EVANGELICAL LEFT (“PROGRESSIVE EVANGELICALS”)

Introduction to the Evangelical Left

- Prior to the 1960s, few evangelicals were involved in partisan politics.
- In the late 1960s, left-leaning evangelicals began to meet.
- In 1973, they wrote “The Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern.”
- By the late 1970s, the evangelical left was divided by identity politics.
- Some progressive evangelicals now embrace homosexuality and abortion.
- Much of the evangelical left has dissolved into the religious left.
- Today, probably 10-15% of evangelicals would identify as progressive.

Emergence of the Evangelical Left

1971 *Sojourners* founded by Jim Wallis (originally *The Post American*)

1973 “The Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern”

1976 Election of Jimmy Carter (Democrat)

1978 Evangelicals for Social Action (renamed Christians for Social Action in 2020)

2007 Red Letter Christians founded by Tony Campollo and Shane Claiborne

The Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern (1973). “We acknowledge that God requires justice. But we have not proclaimed or demonstrated his justice to an unjust American society. Although the Lord calls us to defend the social and economic rights of the poor and oppressed, we have mostly remained silent. We deplore the historic involvement of the church in America with racism and the conspicuous responsibility of the evangelical community for perpetuating the personal attitudes and institutional structures that have divided the body of Christ along color lines. Further, we have failed to condemn the exploitation of racism at home and abroad by our economic system. We affirm that God abounds in mercy and that he forgives all who repent and turn from their sins. So we call our fellow evangelical Christians to demonstrate repentance in a Christian discipleship that confronts the social and political injustice of our nation. We must attack the materialism of our culture and the maldistribution of the nation’s wealth and services. We recognize that as a nation we play a crucial role in the imbalance and injustice of international trade and development. Before God and a billion hungry neighbors, we must rethink our values regarding our present standard of living and promote a more just acquisition and distribution of the world’s resources.”

Conservative Theology of the Evangelical Left

- God is triune.
- Bible is inspired and authoritative.
- Jesus was God incarnate who died to atone for human sins and rose again from the dead.
- A personal decision of faith in Jesus is necessary for salvation.

Progressive Theology of Evangelical Left

- Sin is personal and structural
- God is on the side of the poor.
- Jesus' earthly mission was primarily to liberate the poor and oppressed.
- True Christians minister to the physical needs of "the least of these."
- The church has a responsibility to advocate for social justice (prophetic voice).
- The kingdom of God is a present, social reality advanced through political activism.
- Jesus will return after a millennium of peace and prosperity (postmillennialism).

Progressive Politics of the Evangelical Left:

Political Party Affiliation: 80-90% tend to vote Democrat

- They prefer a bigger government with more social services.

Socio-Political Priorities

- Economic equality (redistribution of wealth)
- Welfare programs
- Universal healthcare
- Racial reconciliation
- Immigration advocates
- Environmentalism
- Gun control
- Abolition of capital punishment
- Mostly pacifist

Proponents of Evangelical Left

- Mark Hatfield (1922-2011)
- Jimmy Carter (1924-2024)
- Ron Sider (1939-2022)
- Jim Wallis (b. 1948)
- Sharon Gallagher
- John Alexander
- Richard Mouw (b. 1940)

- Wes Grandberg-Michaelson
- Tony Campolo (1935-2024)
- Shane Clairborne (b. 1975)
- Soong-Chan Rah

Ron Sider: “God's Word teaches a very hard, disturbing truth. Those who neglect the poor and the oppressed are really not God's people at all—no matter how frequently they practice their religious rituals nor how orthodox are their creeds and confessions,” *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity* (1977).

“Persons sin by participating in evil systems when they understand, at least to some degree, that the system displeases God but fail to act responsibly to change things,” *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (1977).

“So we work for better political and economic systems, knowing that sin precludes any earthly utopia now, but rejoicing in the assurance that the kingdom of shalom that the Messiah has already begun will one day prevail, and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord,” *Just Politics: A Guide for Christian Engagement* (2012).

“Great economic inequality inevitably produces injustice in a fallen world; therefore Christians must oppose it” *Just Politics* (2012).

“Are national boundaries sacred? Are they ordained by God? do the citizens of a rich nation have the right to use their abundant resources just for themselves? Or to keep out immigrants from poor nations who seek greater economic opportunity?” *Just Politics* (2012).

“The widespread (heretical) idea in many evangelical circles that the only important reason Jesus came was to die for our sins is one of the most glaring examples of failure to embrace the full biblical Christ. Tragically, other Christians seem to affirm the (equally heretical) idea that it is only Jesus’s teaching (especially his call to love enemies) that is finally important. If we believe with the church through two millennia that the teacher from Nazareth is God incarnate, then we must embrace the full biblical Christ” *If Jesus is Lord: Loving Our Enemies in an Age of Violence* (2019).

“White evangelicals will be known as the people who defended the guy who defended the neo-Nazis” *The Spiritual Danger of Donald Trump: 30 Evangelical Christians on Justice, Truth, and Moral Integrity* (2020).

“Sadly, the lack humility and expansive presence of pride in the words and deeds of Donald Trump make him unqualified to be president of the United States of America. He should not be given four more years to hold the highest political office in our land. Christians who ignore this not only undermine the present and future good of the nation, but also their witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ,” *The Spiritual Danger of Donald Trump* (2020).

Jim Wallis: “For a very long time, white evangelicalism has been simply wrong on the issue of race. Indeed, conservative white Christians have served as a bastion of racial segregation and a bulwark against racial justice efforts for decades, in the South and throughout the country. During the civil rights struggle, the vast majority of white evangelicals and their churches were on the wrong side—the wrong side of the truth, the Bible, and the gospel,” *America’s Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America* (2015).

“But no matter where you go as a white person in American society, no matter where you live, no matter who your friends and allies are, and no matter what you do to help overcome racism, you can never escape white privilege in America if you are white,” *America’s Original Sin* (2015).

Tony Campolo: “Most important, when we reflect on all Jesus had to say about caring for the poor and oppressed, committing ourselves to His red-letter message just might drive us to see what we can do politically to help those He called ‘the least of these’ (see Matt. 25:31-46)... First, Red Letter Christians hold to the same theological convictions that define Evangelicals. We believe in the doctrines set down in the Apostles’ Cree, which states the central beliefs the Church has held over centuries... Second, we are Christians with a very high view of Scripture. The writers of Scripture, we believe, were invaded by the Holy Spirit and were uniquely guided by God as they wrote, providing us with an infallible guide for faith and practice... Third—and this is most important—we claim that the historical Jesus can be alive and present to each and every person, and that salvation depends on yielding to Him and inviting Him to be a vital, transforming presence in our lives... What differentiates Red Letter Christians from other Christians is our passionate commitment to social justice—hence, our intense involvement in politics... Declaring that there are more than 2,000 verses of Scripture that call us to express love and justice for those who are poor and oppressed, we promote legislation that turns biblical imperatives into social policy... On the day of judgment, the Lord will not ask theological questions so much as He will ask if we fulfilled our social obligations. He will ask whether or not we fed the hungry, clothed the naked, received and cared for aliens, and brought deliverance to captive peoples (see Matt. 5:31-46)... Presently the United States allocates less than four-tenths of 1 percent (0.4%) of its federal budget to address world poverty. While much has been done by voluntary organizations, and especially by churches and other faith-based organizations, the richest people on the face of the earth ought to have a government that does better than that... I strongly believe that while churches and charities have done incredible work to alleviate the suffering of the needy, they cannot provide universal healthcare or guarantee minimum wage. These fall under the province of government” *Red Letter Christians: A Citizen’s Guide to Faith and Politics* (2008), 22-27.

Shane Claiborne: “Maybe we are a little crazy. After all, we believe in things we don’t see. The Scriptures say that faith is “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1). We believe poverty can end even though it is all around us. We believe in peace even though we hear only rumours of wars. And since we are people of expectation, we

are so convinced that another world is coming that we start living as if it were already here,” *The Irresistable Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* (2006).

“I embrace the core beliefs that have defined evangelicalism historically—things like a personal relationship with Jesus, salvation by the grace of God, a love for the Bible as God’s Word, a commitment to the local church, and so on...To be frank, my commitment to Jesus has put me at odds with evangelicalism. While I may love what evangelicalism has been in the past, I am grieved by what it has become...Evangelicals in particular have an image crisis, whether it’s deserved or not. When people hear the word *evangelical*, it conjures up an image of folks who are antigay, antifeminist, antienvironment, proguns, prowar, and pro-captial punishment. We often look very unlike our Christ...As for me, for the first time in my life, I’m not interested in fights to take evangelicalism back from the folks who stole it. *Evangelical* is not the only label that I’ve used—and maybe not even my preferred one. But it’s also not one I’ve felt the need to distance myself from—until recently,” *Still Evangelical?* edited by Mark Labbeton (2018), 153-157.

Soong-Chan Rah: “While the demographics of Christianity are changing both globally and locally, the leadership of American evangelicalism continues to be dominated by white Americans...So while the demographics of American evangelicalism are undergoing dramatic change, the theological formation and dialogue remains captive to white Christianity. What we are witnessing in the twenty-first century is the captivity of the church to the dominant Western culture and white leadership, which is in stark contrast to the demographic reality of Christianity in the twenty-first century...We need repentance from our cultural captivity and a willingness to reform our church in the next era of North American evangelicalism. For most of its history (but particularly in the last fifty years), American evangelicalism has more accurately reflected the values, culture, and ethos of Western, white American culture than the values of Scripture...The phrase ‘captivity of the church’ points to the danger of the church being defined by an influence other than the Scriptures...To speak of the white captivity of the church is an acknowledgment that white culture has dominated, shaped and captured Christianity in the United States,” *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (2009), 18-22.

Deborah Jian Lee: “I can’t point to a precise moment when I made my exit from evangelicalism, but by the end of college, I was outright rejecting the conservatism of the culture. Gradually, I stopped believing key evangelical theological tenets. I no longer accepted biblical inerrancy (the belief that the Bible is without error), and the idea that one could find salvation only through Christianity contradicted the heart of the God I knew. I cast off evangelicalism to preserve my own faith,” *Rescuing Jesus: How People of Color, Women & Queer Christians are Reclaiming Evangelicalism* (2015), 13-14.

Mark Labbeton, ed., *Still Evangelical?* (2018): “Evangelicalism in America cracked, split on the shoals of the 2016 presidential election and its aftermath, leaving many wondering whether they want to be in our out of the evangelical tribe” (1).

“The impression of many on the evangelical left is that the good news of Jesus Christ has been taken hostage by a highly charged, toxic subculture on the evangelical right that—in the name of God—expresses steely resolve to have its own way in the public square. From the evangelical right, the critique is that Christian America is a war with any and all liberalism—evangelical or otherwise—and is in serious danger of losing its conservative virtues and spiritual practices” (3-4).

“As the racial diversity and generational differences among evangelical churches on the left continues to grow, it will become more and more unpalatable to choose association with evangelicals on the right. It will free like a choice between bigotry and justice, in which case faith and social location will compel the evangelical left toward justice... Sadly, when evangelicals truncate the gospel and focus on personal and spiritual transformation, we find ourselves just where we are: reproducing the same social locations and ideology as when we were ‘dead in [our] trespasses’” (14-15).

David Gushee: Journey out of Evangelicalism

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Conclusion: What are Your Thoughts about Progressive Evangelicalism?

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