Articles and Sermons :: How the Christian Left is Twisting the Gospel

How the Christian Left is Twisting the Gospel - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2017/3/16 12:37

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Here's How the New Christian Left Is Twisting the Gospel
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Chelsen Vicari

Peek behind the curtain of some "progressive" or "hip" evangelical churches, past the savvy technology and secular music, and you will find more than just a contemporary worship service. You'll find faith leaders encouraging young evangelicals to trade in their Christian convictions for a gospel filled with compromise. They're slowly attempting to give evangelicalism an "update"â€”and the change is not for the good.

It's painful for me to admit, but we can no longer rest carefree in our evangelical identityâ€”because it is changing. No doubt you have seen the headlines declaring that evangelicalism is doomed because evangelical kids are leaving the faith. It is no secret that there is an expanding gulf between traditional Christian teachings and contemporary moral values. But the sad truth is that the ideological gulf between America's evangelical grown-ups and their kids, aka the millennials, seems to be widening too.

Somehow the blame for this chasm is being heaped on traditional churches. They are accused of having too many rules as well as being homophobic and bigoted. Yes, we've heard those false claims from popular culture in its desperate attempt to keep Christianity imprisoned within the sanctuary walls. But now popular culture is being aided by Christ-professing bedfellows whose message to "coexist," "tolerate" and "keep out of it" is more marketable to the rising generation of evangelicals.

The seasoned Christian soldiers are noticing these distortions of the gospel. But for young evangelicals, the spiritual haze is harder to wade through. Desperate for acceptance in a fallen world, many young evangelicals (and some older ones) choose not to take Christ out of the chapel, and so they are unwittingly killing the church's public witness. In this uphill cultural battle, mired by scare tactics and fear, three types of evangelical Christians are emerging:

Couch-potato Christians: These Christians adapt to the culture by staying silent on the tough culture-and-faith discussions. Typically, this group will downplay God's absolute truths by promoting the illusion that neutrality was Jesus' preferred method of evangelism.
Cafeteria-style Christians: This group picks and chooses which Scripture passages to live by, opting for the ones that best seem to jive with culture. Typically, they focus solely on the "nice" parts of the gospel while simultaneously and intentionally minimizing sin, hell, repentance and transformation.
Convictional Christians: In the face of the culture's harsh admonitions, these evangelicals refuse to be silent. Mimicking Jesus, they compassionately talk about love and grace while also sharing with their neighbors the need to recognize and turn from sin.
I know about these three types of Christians because at one time or another, I have fallen into each of these three categories. My parents will tell you that even though I was raised in church, I morphed into a full-fledged feminist, told my parents they were ignorant for not endorsing homosexuality and bought into the distorted social justice rhetoric that confuses caring for the poor with advancing socialist or big government systems and demonizing the United States for its free-market system.

I'm not ashamed to share my story because my experiences and those of my fellow bold evangelicals are a testimony of God's awesome, transforming power. Being countercultural for Christ isn't easy. What does the Great Commission say? Jesus commanded us to go, "teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20a).

Where Did We Go Wrong?

I see so many parents scratching their heads trying to figure out where they went wrong with young evangelicals. Following the instructions of Proverbs 22:6â€""Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"â€"many evangelical parents took their children to church and prayed with them every night before bed. Yet the values those children now hold dear do not reflect the traditional teachings of Jesus.

To be perfectly clear, I want to let you know up front that this isn't a parenting how-to guide that, if followed, will lead your loved ones to salvation. Instead, what I can offer you is a glimpse into the world of a 20-something who sees thousands of young evangelicals being spiritually and emotionally targeted on Christian university campuses, in college ministries and at churches nationwide by a growing liberal movement cloaked in Christianity.

Research tells us evangelicals are drifting further away from the orthodox truths their parents and grandparents held dear.

Our churches have rarelyâ€"if everâ€"faced the exodus we are seeing today. This will have a direct effect on the spiritual and moral values that will shape the nation in the coming years. That is why it is urgent that concerned Christians start acting now before the situation gets worse.

The Collision of Faith and Culture

Faith and culture will continue to collide in America. The culture wars, the growth of family, the success of missions, the prosperity of our great nationâ€"the future rests on millennial evangelicals' worldview. And that is cause for concern, because something has gone wrong with young evangelicals' theology.

The millennial generation's susceptibility to "feel-good" doctrine is playing a big part in America's moral decline. Millennials' religious practices depend largely on how the actions make us and others feel, whether the activities are biblical or not. For example, we only attend churches that leave us feeling good about our lifestyle choices, even if those choices conflict with God's clear commandments. We dismiss old hymns that focus on God's transforming salvation, love and mercy and opt for "Jesus is your boyfriend" songs. Or we contribute to nonprofits that exploit and misuse terms such as justice, oppressed and inequality because tweaking the language makes us feel more neutral, less confrontational.

Popular liberal evangelical writers and preachers tell young evangelicals that if they accept abortion and same-sex marriage, then the media, academia and Hollywood will finally accept Christians. Out of fear of being falsely dubbed "intolerant" or "uncompassionate," many young Christians are buying into theological falsehoods. Instead of standing up as a voice for the innocent unborn or marriage as God intended, millennials are forgoing the authority of Scripture and embracing a couch potato, cafeteria-style Christianity, all in the name of tolerance.

This contemporary mindset is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian whose Christian convictions put him at odds with the Nazis and cost him his life, called "cheap grace." In his book The Cost of Discipleship Bonhoeffer wrote: "Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."

Right now, cheap grace theology is proliferating around evangelical Bible colleges, seminaries and Christian ministries.

Christian Doctrine Hijacked

It is not that millennial evangelicals were not taken to church by their parents. It is that their training has been hijacked by ineffective and sometimes intentionally distorted doctrine.

As constant and pervasive as the attacks on Christianity are at public universities, it is important to remember that millennials' worldviews do not start taking shape after they move out of their parents' houses. Their understanding of Jesus' teachings and cultural convictions begins to form while they are still at home and under the influence of their local church.

What I hope and pray evangelical parents and leaders come to realize is that the church has been too trusting. In our jam-packed lifestyles, parents have treated Sunday school as they do softball or ballet classâ€"drop off the kids for an hour, then pick them up and hope they learned something.

Early on in my Sunday school teaching days, my co-teacher and I followed the curriculum pretty narrowly, the exception being that my co-teacher had an outstanding knowledge of biblical history that he imparted to the kids.

advertisement
We taught all about Jesus' birth, resurrection and saving grace. Thinking the fluffy kids ministry curriculum covered all of the necessary bases, I felt confident these kids had a firm grasp on their Christian worldview. Boy, was I wrong!

One day my co-teacher and I decided to play "True or False." We casually went down a list of worldview questions with our class, sure that our little evangelicals would nail every question correctly.

No. 1: Jesus is God. "True." Great job.

No. 2: Jesus sinned. "False." Bingo!

No. 3: Jesus is one of many ways to heaven. "True." What?!

Shocked is the only way to describe how I felt. Hadn't they been listening to us? When I asked who taught them that, on e girl said, "Coexist." Yes, these young evangelicals had been listening to their Sunday school teachers and their parent s, but they had also been listening to their public school teachers, TV celebrities and rock stars.

Youth ministers, volunteer leaders and pastors also have to start preparing these kids to deal with the very real hostility t hat faces young evangelicals.

If we never talk about abortion in church, how can we expect the rising evangelical girl to calmly explain the option of ad option to her frightened best friend who just admitted she is pregnant?

What will surprise you is how much young evangelicals actually crave honest discussions about abortion, sexuality, sexu al exploitation, feminism and radical Islam. My friend and Evangelical Action adviser Richmond Trotter has two non-neg otiable topics when addressing youth: creation and life. Having volunteered in church youth ministry since 1996, Richmo nd is not afraid to have serious discussions about what Scripture says about abortion, evolution and homosexuality. Mak e no mistake: The trend away from biblical truth is not concentrated in the hipster city limits. It is unfolding in the crevices of America's plains, hills, mountains and swamplands. All across this nation, "old-fashioned" conservative evangelicalis m is being traded in for a bright and shiny, mediocre Christianity.

If America's evangelicals disengage from the public square and fail to engage the rising generation of Christian leaders, then we risk losing our public voice, then our religious liberty, then liberty altogether.

What Happened to the Religious Right?

The last several decades witnessed tremendous evangelical influence in the United States. Leaders such as Billy Graha m, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Tim and Beverly LaHaye, Paige and Dorothy Patterson, James Dobson and James and Betty Robison made a bold impact on America's families, churches and government. Now that those few leaders are agi ng or retiring, or have died, there are very few traditional evangelical leaders left holding the torch, and even fewer candi dates to whom they can pass it.

But religious convictions in America are not on the verge of disappearance just yet. There is still hope. In the book God I s Alive and Well: The Future of Religion in America, Gallup Inc. Editor-in-Chief Frank Newport opines: "Christianity will p revail in the U.S. America will remain very much a Christian nation in the decades ahead, albeit less so than in the past because of an increase in Americans who don't have a religious identity."

Heed the Warning Signs

Evangelicals and culture warriors in the U.S. do not have to look far to discover what happens when Christian denominat ions give up on their traditional convictions and teachings. All we have to do is look at the dwindling memberships of mai nline Protestant denominations.

In order to safeguard the trajectory of young evangelicals, we must uphold the authoritative Word of God. It is imperative

that those in a position to influence millennials have transparent and honest discussions about the culture wars in which evangelical youth are already engaging. Otherwise they will be silent and accepting in the face of persecution and false doctrine.

The importance of arming the next generation of evangelicals cannot be overstated. If we continue to follow the example of mainline Protestants, evangelicalism will have a gloomy future. We must offer sorely needed leadership, but before w e can do that, we need to know exactly whom and what we are up against.

Chelsen Vicari serves as the Institute on Religion and Democracy's evangelical program director. Prior to joining the IRD , she worked for Concerned Women for America. She holds a bachelor of science in political science and history and a master's degree in international politics. Her articles on evangelicalism and public policy have appeared in TheBlaze, Th e Christian Post and RealClearReligion. She recently wrote her first book, Distortion, from which this article is excerpted.

Re: How the Christian Left is Twisting the Gospel, on: 2017/3/16 14:06

Brother, after reading the OP, it reminded me of the testimony given by Brother Wren and Brother Yun of the church in China straying from the simplicity of the gospel , Brother Wren mentioned the church had become so divided with deno minations, over petty things....people wanting to do church their way....they lost the focus of the true meaning of being a disciple of Jesus and sharing the gospel. The Lord allowed the church buildings, the hymnals, the bibles, etc...to be dest royed. Those who had strong faith were placed in prison, those who were weak abandoned the faith. After this happene d, the Lord rebuilt His church the way He wanted it, and genuine revival broke out. It came from the, "Bless your enemie s tour".

There are two short devotionals from today, they go hand in hand with the OP, it's sobering when the Lord confirms what He is saying to the body through various means. The scripture reading was

2 Peter 1:1-12
1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

1 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by w hich have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the div ine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-contr ol, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness l ove. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jes us Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed fro m his old sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will nev er stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in t he present truth.

.....todays devotions fromAW Tozer and Vance Havner as follows:

Vance Havner
Quote of the day:
In state and church too many decisions are reached by compromise â€“ steam-rollered by a consensus of rubber stamp s and yes-men. It is fast becoming the unpardonable sin to be a lone dissenter on any issue. The big idea is to present a united front at any cost. A prominent churchman has reminded us that this can be a sinister device, smothering all oppos ition and excluding passion for rightness and reform. Under the pretext of a solid front to enemies without, we are told to overlook al deserters and traitors within our own ranks, since this causes division. Unification, unanimity, and uniformity are the order of the hour, and woe unto any Micaiah who disagrees with four hundred false prophets bidding Ahab and J ehoshaphat go up against Ramoth-gilead! This will, of course, in time produce a monolithic world state and world church with the mark of the beast and plenty of trouble for any who do not wear his brand. This is the advance program of Antic

hrist.

Devotion:
Showcase and Shelves

A friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.
Luke 11:6

Many a Christian, many a church, has everything in the showcase and nothing on the shelves. The customers come in, but everything is in the window. We have nothing ins stock, no spiritual reserves, no Divine supplies, no bread from heaven.

â€œTherefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is an householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new an oldâ€• (Mt. 13:52). Change it to â€œstorekeeperâ€• and the lesson is the same. But what is we have no treasure, no goods on hand?

True, we are dispensers, not depositories, and we are to relay the bread from God to men, fresh bread, not stale. But there must be a deposit if we are to dispense. We should have a stock of Scripture, of experience, of grace, treasure in earthen vessels that we may have to give to him that needeth.

Pity the church with everything in the show window and showcase, where the hungry come and find but a shell, nothing in stock!
vancehavner.com

AW Tozer

Church Essentials
The Church as announced by Christ, seen in the book of Acts and explained by Paul is a thing of great simplicity and rare beauty.

The church as we see it today is unsymmetrical, highly complex and anything but beautiful. Indeed I think that if some angel of God were made familiar with the church as it appears in the New Testament and then sent to the earth to try to locate it, it would be extremely doubtful whether the heavenly messenger would recognize anything now existing in the field of religion as the church he was looking for. So far have we departed from the pattern shown us in the mount.

The church as the New Testament pictures it is any company of regenerate believers met in the name of Jesus Christ. Such a company is called out from the world and gathered to Christ as a flock of sheep is gathered to the shepherd. The members of this company constitute a despised minority group standing in bold moral contradiction to the world. Their witness is Christ: His person, work, office and present position at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. They carry His gospel to the world and plead "Be ye reconciled to God," then they return to their own company to worship, pray, teach and listen to the Word of the Lord as it is expounded by men of God. They also exhort, testify and exercise for the good of all such spiritual gifts as each one may possess from the Spirit.

Verse
They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.
Acts 2:42-43

Thought
Devotion to apostolic teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Awesome wonders and miraculous signs by the apostles. At personal sacrifice helping other believers in need. Praising God. But no church buildings, no extensive organization, no worship teams, no multi media, no seminars. Did the early church realize what they were missing?

Prayer

O Lord, may we rediscover Churchness in its simplicity and awe with manifestations of Your power and presence. In Jes us' name.

https://www.cmalliance.org/devotions/tozer

Peace and grace be multiplied to you in Jesus precious name.

Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2017/3/16 16:01

Sherri,Dear Sister,
I wonder,if you could,and if it would be alright with Greg,for you to put up the Website for Bro. Wren, and Bro. Yun ?
I have been listening to these men,....

If we really want to see how far the church has come AWAY from true Christianity,..the Kingdom of God,..living / Life / te achings,...then it is 'a must' for the hungry / desirous of us.

They are talking about the people in China how when they come to know Christ,and their,...encouraging life they live,...a nd I see this,..,..I call it,..true Life in Christ.

Remembering that Jesus called the 'gospel',..'this gospel of the kingdom',..
That is what I am hearing these men talk about,....the kingdom,..living in the kingdom,...kingdom way,..

Much love in desiring to stir up the Gift of The Holy Spirit that is within us,

---
elizabeth

Re: , on: 2017/3/17 23:20

Most important topic, but may I first point out that Christianity and the Gospel are not about "Left" and "Right"
Also those on the "right" can be wrong too and I wouldn't endorse all the names on that list.It is all about the CENTER a nd the focus, our Lord Jesus Christ!

Quote:"The church as the New Testament pictures it is any company of regenerate believers met in the name of Jesus Christ. Such a company is called out from the world and gathered to Christ as a flock of sheep is gathered to the shephe rd. The members of this company constitute a despised minority group standing in bold moral contradiction to the world. Their witness is Christ: His person, work, office and present position at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The y carry His gospel to the world and plead "Be ye reconciled to God,"...(AW Tozer)

Many of the recent discussions we would not even have had if we were focused on the NT teaching:

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyo ne was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles."Acts 2:42-43

Quote: "it reminded me of the testimony given by Brother Wren and Brother Yun of the church in China straying from the simplicity of the gospel..."
Will something similar happen to the church in the west?

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him. James 1:12

edited: corrected some wrong spellings