

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) ecclesial 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.

Religious Liberalism (Modernism) — A religious movement that elevates human reason (as manifested in rationalism, science, humanism and empiricism) above divine revelation in an attempt to make the Christian faith compatible with modern culture. Religious liberalism originally stemmed from the theological and philosophical bases of the Age of Reason, or the Enlightenment Period. The two pillars on which religious liberalism rests are the higher criticism and the Darwinian theory of evolution. Religious liberalism, or modernism, denies the supernatural and emphasizes the supposed inherent goodness and progress of mankind.

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 which encourages ecumenical cooperation and emphasizes "love" at the expense of sound doctrine.

Neo-orthodoxy — A theological position that seeks to correct the excessive rationalism inherent in religious liberalism but which, in reality, reaches the same theological conclusions (i.e., no absolute, divine authority inherent in the Bible; man sits in judgment of God's Word rather than God's Word judging man). Neo-orthodoxy is theological existentialism, that is, the belief that spiritual answers to life's questions lie in the areas of non-reason. The meaning to life, and the meaning of God's Word, stems from personal experience. Neo-orthodoxy uses the same theological terms as orthodox Christianity, but

such terms are void of orthodox content. Neo-orthodoxy has been described as “liberalism with a new dress and a somewhat softer voice.”

Postmodernism — The natural end of modernism (religious liberalism). Postmodernism is a recent philosophical and theological development that denies the reality of transcendent, objective truth by claiming that all notions of truth are socially constructed. Truth is not a transcendent reality but a social creation of human intellect and language. Therefore, all beliefs are equally true and valid, and any claim to absolute, objective truth is rejected since such a claim necessarily negates the “trueness” of any competing beliefs. As one writer stated, “Everything can mean anything, so everything means nothing.” Key tenets of postmodernism include moral, theological and linguistic relativism, religious pluralism and tolerance.

Religious Pluralism — A response to the religious diversity inherent in 21st century Western culture which entails a belief that one’s own beliefs about God are self-sufficient but not universally applicable. In other words, it is the belief that “God is greater than any one view of God.” Therefore, salvation, divine revelation, etc. are manifest and applicable to all people in diverse ways.

Inclusivism — A response to the religious diversity inherent in 21st century Western culture which entails a belief that, although one’s own doctrinal persuasions or beliefs about God are self-sufficient, all theological, denominational or religious beliefs are to be included under the same broad umbrella of spiritual or religious recognition. Agreement on doctrine is inconsequential for religious dialogue or endeavor.

Exclusivism — Also called “particularism”; a response to the religious diversity inherent in 21st century Western culture which entails a belief that truth is objective and exclusive to a particular claim. For example, the Biblical fundamentalist embraces exclusivism because he believes the Word of God is entirely true in all matters of which it speaks. Therefore, any other truth claims that conflict with the teaching of God’s Word are, in fact, error (untruth).

Universalism — The heretical belief that all mankind will, ultimately, obtain final and complete salvation regardless of their acceptance or rejection of the Gospel. Universalism, therefore, is incompatible with evangelism, for the goal of evangelism is to present the Gospel to mankind in order to give men and women the opportunity to escape eternal punishment through faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Consequently, most who embrace the heresy of universalism deny the reality of a literal hell as it conflicts with a belief in universal redemption.

Dispensationalism — A system of theology characterized by 1) a literal (plain), historical-grammatical, consistent interpretation of Scripture which, thus understood, 2) recognizes a distinction between Israel and the Church in God’s plan and 3) recognizes the reality that God purposes to glorify Himself in all His dealings with mankind, regardless of the age or dispensation in which man lives. In every dispensation, salvation is obtained by faith alone in God’s revelation to man. The content of faith may vary from

dispensation to dispensation depending on God's revelation to man at that point in time concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ, yet faith is always the means of salvation.

Charismatic Movement — An interdenominational and ecumenical movement of individuals and ministries dedicated to propagating the heresy that God manifests Himself and speaks to mankind today apart from His Word—specifically through visions, tongues (unintelligible gibberish), physical healings, dreams and prophecies. Because those who embrace Charismatic teachings and practices are prominent in all professing Christian denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church, the basis of Charismatic unity lies in 1) the experiences of individuals rather than Bible doctrine and 2) a belief that God still manifests Himself today to mankind through the aforementioned means. The Charismatic Movement is currently a major impetus to the worldwide ecumenical movement, including unity with the Roman Catholic Church.

Pragmatism — Within the context of Christian ministry, pragmatism entails the implementation of any practice or program into ministry that appears to produce the desired results, regardless of whether or not such practices or programs coincide with Biblical principles of ministry. Pragmatism embraces the philosophy that “the end justifies the means.” Therefore, those who espouse a pragmatic philosophy of ministry use methods and programs such as cooperative evangelism, worldly gimmicks, rock or “contemporary Christian” music and the like in their churches and ministries because such practices and programs appear to draw larger crowds to church, win people to Christ, etc.

Ecumenical Movement — A movement of men, churches, parachurch organizations and church councils that strives to unite all churches that claim to be “Christian,” whether Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal or Evangelical. While the ecumenical movement originally sought to unite only professing Christian churches, today a strong emphasis is placed upon the unification of all religions—Christian and non-Christian. Initially, the ecumenical movement intended to forge a visible organizational or institutional unity of all churches. However, the emphasis of the ecumenical movement is now upon a “unity by consensus” or “unity in diversity” model, that is, a unity in which those of all religious persuasions are now urged to retain their own religious or denominational identities while uniting around a common cause or belief. In the United States, key proponents of the ecumenical movement include the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the Charismatic Movement and evangelical movements such as the Promise Keepers Movement, Evangelicals and Catholics Together and any other individuals, churches or parachurch organizations that seek to minimize Biblical doctrine (truth) in an effort to find common cause with those who preach a false gospel.

Ecumenical Evangelism (Cooperative Evangelism) — A pragmatic evangelistic philosophy that promotes the unification of all professing believers in ministerial and evangelistic endeavor, regardless of theological persuasion or doctrinal belief (even pertaining to the doctrine of salvation), in order to reach unbelievers for Christ. Those

who embrace ecumenical evangelism reject the Scriptural injunction to separate from those who preach a false Gospel and who embrace false doctrine. Therefore, ecumenical evangelism entails unity with liberals, Roman Catholics, Charismatics and any who claim to “call Jesus ‘Lord.’” Leading evangelical proponents of ecumenical evangelism include Billy Graham, Franklin Graham and Luis Palau.

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

Church Growth Movement — A movement of men and ministries dedicated to using secular marketing strategies and corporate business models to “market” the church to believers and unbelievers alike in an effort to grow churches. Prominent leaders of the church growth, or “megachurch,” movement include Rick Warren of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, and Bill Hybles of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. Church growth proponents encourage pastors to survey the needs and desires of unbelievers in their local community and to model their churches according to the perceived needs and desires of the unchurched rather than according to the dictates of God’s Word, which provides a model for ministry consistent with the true needs of mankind.

Tolerance — Originally, a term used to describe one’s right to possess or enunciate his own beliefs and opinions; the general acknowledgment and allowance of various beliefs or opinions within a community (social, religious, etc.). Today, however, the term denotes a required acceptance and approval of all belief systems rather than merely an acknowledgment of one’s right to possess or enunciate his own beliefs. As a result, the current insistence on tolerance within the religious community means truth is relative and, thus, non-existent since truth claims among religions and even Christian denominations conflict with one another.

Humanism (Secular Humanism) — A non-theistic religion which embraces a naturalistic worldview and emphasizes the importance and potential of the human individual. Secular humanists rely on human reason, experience and observation in order to formulate ethical and moral beliefs and to create meaning in life. They reject the notion of a God, Creator or Divine Being as having any part in the affairs of mankind or the creation of the world. Thus, they despise any religion that claims to possess objective, absolute truth. The goal of secular humanism entails a global agenda—the formation of a one-world economic, political and religious system founded upon the religious and philosophical principles of atheistic secular humanism.

Cultural Mandate (Cultural Commission) — The erroneous belief (distantly related to the social gospel) that God has commanded believers not only to evangelize unbelievers and disciple believers (the Great Commission—Matt. 28:19-20) but also to redeem society and culture by either building a new culture or renewing the present culture. The Cultural

Mandate is usually embraced by evangelicals of the Reformed or Reconstructionist persuasion. Prominent proponents of the Cultural Mandate include Charles Colson and D. James Kennedy (Protestants) and Peter Kreeft (Roman Catholic). According to those who embrace the belief in the Cultural Mandate, the Cultural Commission is inseparable from the Great Commission.

Interfaith Relations — The attempt to forge a spirit of unity with those of non-Christian religions through dialogue and eventual consensus on certain issues. Today, those professing Christians involved in dialogue with pagan religions for the purpose of fostering interfaith relationships are expected to recognize a degree of truth in the pagan religion and to find common ground, despite the fact that such religions are totally opposed to the Truth as revealed in the Word of God and the Person of Jesus Christ.

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.

Militancy — A mental attitude of disdain for any teaching or belief that conflicts with God’s Word, especially if such teaching or belief is disguised as Biblical “Christianity.” In this sense, militancy does not entail personal violence or animosity, physical force or mean-spiritedness. Militancy entails a lack of tolerance for false teaching and a love for that which honors and glorifies God. Therefore, a militant defender of the Truth will refuse to entertain any form of doctrinal deviation or compromise in church or ministry endeavor.

— Matt Costella

Foundation: A Magazine of Biblical Fundamentalism