

The New Christian Left Is Twisting the Gospel: Here's How

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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"—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 identity—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 obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).

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 22:6—"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"—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....

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