

TITLE: CURRENT TRENDS IN FUNDAMENTALISM AND EVANGELICALISM IN REGARDS TO MEN AND WOMEN'S ROLES

Message #11

Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

THE CURRENT TRENDS IN FUNDAMENTALISM/EVANGELICALISM

- The fundamentalists wrestle with these issues in the pew, but not in the pulpit. Fundamentalism is not divided on the role of women in the church.
- However, there are three different groups in evangelicalism.
 - 1) The Complementarians (1-point and 2-point)
 - 2) The Egalitarians
 - 3) The undecided or uncommitted
- Why are the evangelicals divided on this issue and not the fundamentalists? What are our movement's demons?

THE EVANGELICAL COMPLEMENTARIANS – TWO POINTS

- These groups hold that men and women are equal but have different roles (1) in the home and (2) in the church
- 1. The Southern Baptist Convention (16 million members)
- 2. The Missouri Synod Lutheran (2.6 million)
- 3. The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA – 316,000 membership)
- 4. Westminster Seminary, Reformed Seminary, Covenant Seminary, Dallas Theological Seminary, Masters Seminary, most SBC seminaries. Moody Bible Institute, Multnomah, Moody Bible Institute, etc.

ADDITIONAL TWO-POINT EVANGELICAL EGALITARIANS

- Christian and Missionary Alliance
- Evangelical Free Church of America
- Mennonite Brethren (North America)
- Orthodox Presbyterian Church
- Sovereign Grace Ministries

EVANGELICAL COMPLEMENTARIANS

– ONE POINT

- These groups hold that men and women are equal but have different roles (1) in the home.
- These groups either defer to the local church to make the determination as to roles of men or women or remain neutral or quiet on this point.
- This is the official stance of Focus on the Family, Promise Keepers and Campus Crusade, etc.
- The one-point complementarians are one point away from being egalitarians.

EVANGELICAL FEMINISM – EGALITARIANISM

- These groups hold that men and women are equal and that there should be no differences of roles in the home and church determined by gender.
- They believe such roles should be determined by gifts, abilities, preferences, call of God, etc.
- There are four different categories of egalitarians
 1. The liberal denominations
 2. The culturally sensitive egalitarians
 3. The experience-oriented egalitarians
 4. The leader-influenced egalitarians

THE LIBERAL DENOMINATIONS

- Egalitarianism is the dominant view of all the theologically liberal denominations. Their issue now is not ordaining women to the ministry, but ordaining homosexuals and lesbians to the ministry.
- Not all egalitarians are liberal in their theology and not all members of liberal churches are liberal.
- The process to liberal views on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood:
 1. Begins first with the erosion of two-point complementarianism – the denial of the Biblical roles of men and women in the church
 2. Then the erosion of one-point complementarianism – the denial of the Biblical roles of men and women in the home
 3. Then the denial of the core truths of the Bible which the evangelical feminist proclaims
- Egalitarianism is a new path to liberalism.

EXAMPLES OF LIBERAL DENOMINATIONS

- United Church of Christ – very proud that they were the first to ordain a women to ministry, Antoinette Brown in 1853.
- American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.
- Conservative Baptist Association of America
- Episcopal Church – September 16, 1976 approved the ordination of women for bishops, priests, and deacons.
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) was a merger of churches that already were ordaining women to the ministry by 1970.
- Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA) – in 2005 celebrated their 75th anniversary of women as elders.

CULTURALLY SENSITIVE EGALITARIANS

- This group emphasizes relating effectively to our culture.
- They want to have a positive influence on the culture.
- Their approach is more pragmatic. If it works and produces results use it.
- Their emphasis is more on results, methodology, being seeker-sensitive, than to the process that produces accurate understanding and hence correct application of the sacred text.
- Such groups are Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois, Fuller Seminary, Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia

EXPERIENCE-ORIENTED EGALITARIANS

- These groups stress experience and the subjective call of God. Rather than to subordinate their experience to Scripture, they subordinate the Scripture to their experience.
- Their experience or call from God is of primary importance, at least in practice.
- Groups that fall into this category are the Assembly of God and other Pentecostal ministries, the Association of Vineyard Churches (after the death of their founder, John Wimber), the Wesleyan Church, the Nazarene Church, and the Free Methodist Church, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, etc.

LEADER-INFLUENCED EGALITARIANS

- Some groups have adopted an egalitarian position not because of perceived cultural advantages or because of some subjective calling of God, but because their leaders holds to egalitarian views.
- Inter-Varsity Fellowship in the USA adopted this position under their former president, Steve Haynor.
- There is the para-church group called Christians for Biblical Equality. Their goal is to promote the egalitarian position.

LIST OF SOME EGALITARIAN MINISTRIES

- Church of the Nazarene
- Wesleyan Church
- Evangelical Covenant Church of America – at its 1976 Annual Meeting the ECC approved the ordination of women.
- Christian Reformed Church
- Reformed Church in America – by 1979 women were accepted for ordination

UNDECIDED OR UNCOMMITTED

- A number of evangelicals have not come to a clear conclusion on the issue of the roles of the male and the female in the realms of the home and church.
- Some organizations have decided to allow both views to be held within their organization and to not formulate an official position. Often such organizations, staff, faculty, etc. are divided on the issue.
- Groups who have not articulated a position would include Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, Gordon-Conwell Seminary, Wheaton College, Bethel College and Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE A POLICY OR DEFER TO THE CHURCHES

- Calvary Chapel
 - African Methodist Episcopal
 - African Methodist Episcopal Zion
 - Christian Churches and Churches of Christ
 - Evangelical Presbyterian Church – defers to churches
 - Navigators
 - Young Life
 - Youth for Christ
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- Evangelical Mennonite – some of their churches have women pastors. They had a five-year moratorium placed on this subject.

Male Chauvinism has been the Major Problem throughout Church History

- For most cultures in history the most serious deviation from Biblical standards has not been feminism, but harsh and oppressive male chauvinism.
- Many religions (i.e. Islam, Mormonism) tragically oppress women and fail to treat them as equals as the image of God.

One of the Greatest Dangers of the Egalitarian Position is their hermeneutics

- Today, there is much scholarship available on all the passages and words misinterpreted and applied by the Egalitarians. This scholarship does not support their views.
- Advancement in word studies on Greek the words for “head” and “to be in subject” affirm the traditional understanding of these words.
- The Egalitarian’s position is not credible under examination. They often read too much into Scripture. They deliberately change the meaning of words to meanings that have never existed for the use of the word. They hide behind statements that all the English translations are wrong, or that the standard Greek dictionaries and lexicons are wrong. They make statements about history and the ancient world that were not true.

ULTIMATELY, THE EGALITARIAN REJECTS THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

- Often, the Egalitarian's hermeneutic is that whatever does not fit their philosophical system in the Bible must be either explained away or denied.
- When confronted with the truths of the Word of God on Biblical manhood and womanhood they reject them.
- This rejection of portions of the Word of God opens the door toward liberalism (the theology of unbelief).
- Often, they will attack the complementarians and accuse them of being “unloving, divisive.” They like to pit one “scholar” with another “scholar” to discount the biblical position.
- They will often suppress information where they will not allow all sides of the argument be presented.

THE ALLIES OF EGALITARIANISM

- The secular culture opposes strongly the authority of the Word of God and the Biblical roles of men and women.
- The media opposes the Biblical roles of men and women.
- The entertainment industry despises the Bible and its teachings on male and female roles.
- The public school system and the secular colleges and universities are teaching egalitarianism.
- Christians who are passive or cowardly who believe but do not voice their Biblical position of complementarians.

THE RESULTS OF EGALITARIANISM

- An identity crisis in men and women, and especially seen in the lives of their children.
- Men and women are confused to what it means to be a man or a woman.
- The identity crisis will lead to people afraid to get married, to anger and violence that will stem from internal frustration.
- This position opens the door to apostasy in the church and to homosexuality in the social world.
- Will result in the effeminization of the church.
- Will lead to the break down of the family.
- Ultimately, the authority of Scripture to govern our lives is at stake.

WHY THE TURN IN CHURCH HISTORY?

□ WHY THE SHIFT IN POLICY IN THE 1970'S?

Prior to 1970, the majority of Christian ministries in church history held to the complementarian position.

In the last forty years, the majority of Christian organizations have adopted an egalitarian position.

□ WHAT HAPPENED IN OUR CULTURE AND OUR CHURCHES?

□ Factors:

1. The Sixties
2. Competition between the denominations.
3. The bi-centennial celebrating our independence – 1976.