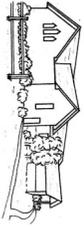


**NORTHWOODS  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**



**4723 GRIFFITH AVENUE  
CHEYENNE, WY 82009**

**WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. JOHN 4:24**

**For our exhortation did not come from error  
or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. 1 Th 2:3**

# THE NORTHWOODS NEWS

## ERROR

By

Rich Cesal

**Here is a definition for error: an act or condition of ignorant or imprudent deviation from a code of behavior. And for this discussion, the code of behavior is what is given to us as God's word in His holy scriptures. The question is how much error is needed for a person or institution to not be truly genuinely Christian? In other words if a person refuses to believe Scripture, when does he fall into the admonition by Christ, "I never knew you." (Mat 7:23). Or if an institution does not believe Scripture, can it be considered Christian?**

A large part of Mat 7 is Christ teaching about what it takes to be a Christian. Perhaps all the teaching can be summed up in Mat 7:16, "Therefore by their fruits you will know them."

In Laramie, we had a pastor who instructed us to be fruit pickers according to Mat 7:16. This was in response to the current, at that time, evangelical church emphasis on not being judgmental.

Jesus is saying you will be able to tell the true Christian by his actions. In the evangelical church, you will find a certain jargon which is prominent in the speech of the members. They talk the talk and talk the walk but there is an absence of heart felt obedience and a repentant attitude. There is a disbelief in the clear teaching of Scripture due mostly in part because they do not know Scripture, all of Scripture. Old as well as New Testament.

If a person is in disobedience to the Word of God, can that person be considered a Christian? Of course all sin is in fact a disobedience to

God's Word and certainly there is forgiveness. But if a person refuses to accept the Truth, is there not a point where the person is irreconcilable?

The Scriptures were given so that the Truth would be known. Shouldn't a denomination use the Scriptures to state that in which they believe? How can the immense and thorough teaching of the Scriptures be reduced to a short paragraph or a few short sentences. Is this even remotely possible?

I differ with most of my believing friends that those who hold to erroneous beliefs are not Christians. Jesus made it quite clear that even people who did great things in His name were not people of His fold.

This is the whole object of Jesus' teaching in Mat 7. Even those who appear to be good Christians and do good things are not necessarily so. What is in the heart will eventually come to the surface and you will know them by their fruits (Mat 7:16). Actions are everything. Someone who has the gospel in his heart is going to be a person who demonstrates that belief in the way they live their life. This is especially true when raising children. If you teach your children the way of the cross, you must be careful to not indoctrinate them. Indoctrination buys nothing. Do they not eventually lose their belief in Santa Claus? And if they observe your lack of fruit they will see through your teaching.

According to the definition given above, error is the ignorant or imprudent deviation from what is true. When people read the scriptures and make the choice to not believe what they read, they bring condemnation on themselves. There may not be immediate justice but of course when death comes there will be the ultimate justice, eternal separation from God.

How many times have you heard "I don't believe that" or "my God isn't like that" as a response to having been exposed to biblical truth. But of course what a person believes does not have any effect in any way on the truth. The pulpits of the evangelical church are replete with teaching errors. Some of these errors are self-inflicted. The prohibition against dancing, playing cards, movies, and alcohol cannot be found in the Bible.

We attended a church for years which banned movies. That was interpreted by the people to keep them from going to see a movie in a movie theater. But they saw nothing wrong in going to the movie rental and renting and watching at home the R-rated movies. When it came to playing cards, the prohibition against card playing meant it was OK to play Rook in the basement of the church.

In the November (2015) Table Talk Magazine, R. C. Sproul ends

his study of the book of Romans with discussions on Romans 15. Paul's main point is that quibbling about things that are not essential to salvation should not divide God's people. He uses the example of eating meat which was perhaps offered as a sacrifice to idols. His point is that those who would not eat the meat are weaker Christians and the stronger who recognize that all things are pure before God and none is unclean, should not pass judgment on those who will not eat.

Sproul's point is that since God has not forbidden eating in this situation, this cannot be essential to one's salvation and thus is not bound by the conscience. The meaning here is that people should not put undue non-biblical condemnations upon living which are not given in the Bible.

We must remember that Paul was in the process of writing the New Testament under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and many of these writings will not be available to the general public until towards the end of the first century. Thus the only Bible available for instruction is the Old Testament. However, we must recall the walk to Emmaus the day of Jesus' resurrection. The two men were given instruction and illumination by Jesus by "and beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:37). So it is possible to know and be convinced of salvation without the New Testament. This led one of the disciples to announce "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" Thus, the Old Testament is sufficient.

And so, it is the things of the heart that matter. The New Testament clarifies the things of the Old making the things of God much more understandable and contains much instruction in Christian living.

As Paul and the other New Testament writers wrote and distributed the gospel and the other writings, it was probably around 90 or 100 AD before the church had these writings in their possession.

When someone reads something which scripture equivalently shows quite clearly with no possible ambiguity and then he rejects and refuses to accept that which is read, he is bringing condemnation on himself. The Statement of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in America is the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith speaks to all what one should believe. Each of the 33 articles has a multitude of scripture proofs to show without any mistake that which is true. The rejection of this confession is a rejection of God and His Word.

This document was hammered out by 121 Divines meeting under the authority of the English Parliament, charged by that parliament to be men "learned, godly and judicious Divines, to meet at Westminster Abbey in order to provide advice on issues of worship, doctrine, government and discipline of the Church of England", meeting from 1643 to 1647. It was a monumental task quite thorough in its deciding all the questions brought about by the Reformation.

Those who refuse to understand what John Calvin has so clearly given as interpretation of biblical truth, will surely pay the consequences. His brilliant scholarly *Institutes of the Christian Religion* is a thing of beauty. To reject what he writes is also to reject the Bible.

Later in 1689 the Baptist Confession of Faith was written and is almost word for word identical to the Westminster Confession. Do any Baptist churches today have the 1689 confession as the basis for their beliefs?

Rejecting the Confession is a grievous error and is surely damning. For those in position to instruct a congregation in denying these doctrines is a seriously grave error indeed. And as James tells us, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." (James 3:1).

In the early church, there was an emphasis on unity. Councils were called to act on doctrine which was thought to be heretical. Many of the council verdicts were to declare a person as a heretic or a belief as heretical. In the process, orthodox positions were developed such as the Nicene Creed.

As I do research on documents of Christian denominations, I try to find their Statement of Faith. This is the list of beliefs which that church holds as its foundation for Christian existence and teaching. I have found that many denominations have a Statement of Faith consisting of three short paragraphs or so. What comes to mind is how is it possible to condense the 1200 to 1500 pages of the protestant Bible to three short paragraphs. Obviously much has been left out.

The early church had convened many councils to study and clarify important doctrines of the emerging church. These councils denounced many of the points of discussions as heretical. If these issues were of importance in the infant church why would they not be important today to prevent the intrusion of error. They worked hard at forming the correct position based on Scripture.

The Nicene Creed was the result of several of these councils. This creed is obviously a summary of the Christian beliefs as given in God's Word. There are churches which boast of "our only creed is Jesus". How sad. How can those attending this type of church learn anything from the pulpit with that creed?

Dr. Robert Godfrey gave a talk at a Ligonier Ministries Conference on The War of the Word. He gave five errors that evangelicals make with regard to the Word.

The five errors are:

1. Sloth
2. Pride
3. Limited Connections
4. Irresistible Moralism
5. Persevering Unbelief

Sloth or laziness. People are too lazy to search for the truth. Deuteronomy 32:45-47, "Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, and he said to them: 'Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life.' "

Godfrey says that we so often exhibit slothfulness in reading the Word that we don't put forth the effort to fully understand what was read. Are we engaging with the Bible when we read it? Are we pausing to understand what it is saying to you what it is testifying to you about Jesus Christ.

Pride, unconditional self-confidence. We look at liberalism. What is the basic principle of liberalism? It is that I stand in judgement of the Word it does not stand in judgement of me. I'll decide what to follow and what not to follow. I will decide what is true and what isn't. I will decide what to rely on.

Limited connectedness is to treat the Bible as a group of disconnected stories. Evangelicals know the stories of the Bible but they don't always see the progressive nature of the stories.

Irresistible moralism is turning every biblical text in the Bible into a morality tale. American culture possesses the myth that says anyone can get ahead. We can pull up ourselves by our bootstraps and find success. This instructs that what is important is our efforts in life instead of recognizing that it is God's will which will be done and our success starts with what Jesus did on the cross for us.

Persevering in unbelief is failing to find Jesus in the gospels. Jesus when speaking to the Jewish leaders in John 5 says His Word does not dwell in you because you do not believe the One He sent.

Of course a basic premise of logic is that if you do not accept every word of the Bible as God speaking, then how can you believe any of it. There is a movement that examines all of what bibles have printed in red ink for what Jesus actually said. How can you possibly read the gospels and determine Jesus probably said this but not this? Ω

# Five Evangelical Myths or Half Truths

By  
R.C. Sproul Jr.

It can happen even in careful systematic theology. How much more so in popular parlance? We take what the Bible actually teaches, rephrase it so we can understand it, and end up believing our own phrasing, rather than the actual biblical truth. It's not malicious, but it is dangerous. What follows are five common thoughts, common expressions, within the evangelical church that just aren't so.

## 1. "All sins are equal in the sight of God."

Well, no. It is true enough that every sin is worthy of God's eternal wrath. It is true enough that if we have broken part of the law we have broken the law (James actually says this.) It is true enough that unjust anger is a violation of the commandment against murder (Jesus actually says this.) None of this, however, means all sins are equal in the sight of God. To say that because all sins deserve eternal wrath means they are all equal is like saying that all numbers over 100 are equal. The truth is that Jesus said of the Pharisees that while they rightly tithed their mint and their cumin, they neglected the weightier matters of the law (Matthew 23:23). No sin is weightless, but some weigh more than others.

## 2. "Hell is the absence of God."

Well, no. If God is omnipresent, and He is, is there anywhere He cannot be? David understood this, and thus affirmed, "If I make my bed in Sheol, Thou art there" (Psalm 139:8). Hell isn't the absence of God, but the presence of His wrath. God is there, but His grace, His kindness, His peace are not. God is the great horror of hell.

## 3. "Jesus saves us from our sins."

Well, no. It is absolutely true that Jesus saves us. When we face trouble, He is the one we should be crying out to for deliverance. But the great problem with our sins isn't our sins, but the wrath of God. The trouble I need to be delivered from is the wrath of God. Hell is not my sins, but the wrath of God. We don't need to be saved from our sins. We need to be saved from the wrath due for our sins.

#### 4. "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life."

Well, not if your name is Esau. Okay, there certainly is a kind of universal love that God has for all mankind. And certainly all those who repent and believe will be blessed. And certainly God calls all men everywhere to repent. But it is also true that God has prepared vessels for destruction (Romans 9:22). Being prepared for destruction likely wouldn't be considered "wonderful" by anyone. We don't know God's hidden plans, and thus should preach the gospel to all the world. But we shouldn't, in so preaching, promise what He hasn't promised.

#### 5. "Money is the root of all evil."

Well, no. Actually this one is wrong on two counts. First, the text (I Timothy 6:10) tells us that it is the love of money, not money, and that it is all sorts of evil, not all evil. If money were the root of all evil, all we would need to do to bring paradise on earth would be to have no more money. If money were the root of all evil, the problem would be out there, rather than in our hearts. Sin is not an it problem, but an us problem.

The devil isn't lazy. He will take the breaks we give him. Myths and half-truths are perfect opportunities for us to miss who we are, who God is, and how He reconciles His own to Himself. Perhaps were we more faithful to His Word, we might just be more faithful. Ω

# Session Report

## June 2016 Session Report

Please join us and welcoming the Gildemaster family as members of Northwoods. Todd, Sandra, Seth, Bethany, and Micah come to us by transfer. Please greet this wonderful family and welcome them.

# Important Things

**Men's Breakfast**— At the church, Saturday Morning, June 18, 8:00 AM. . Brian Church is teaching a new study on *The Dark Side of Islam*. This is a very interesting study. We always have a hearty hot breakfast and a great fellowship time. See you there.

**Men's Bible Study**— June 13 & 27, 7:00 PM. Meet at the Norgauer home. We are studying in-depth the book of Ephesians.

**Women's Bible Study**— Does not meet over the summer.

**Adult Sunday School**— Will again be studying *Pilgrim's Progress*.



Nursery

### Nursery Schedule for June

- 5th - KENDRA TUNNICLIFF
- 12th - LAURA TWITCHELL
- 19th - KAIRA TUNNICLIFF
- 26th - YVONNE NEWSOM

Please trade with someone if you are unable to do nursery duty on the assigned day.



- |                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Stephani Trujillo | 1st  |
| Dale Vosler       | 3rd  |
| Bill Williams     | 9th  |
| Elijah Norgauer   | 13th |
| Matt Davison      | 21st |
| Zane Newsom       | 24th |

- |                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| Enno & Lorelee Nomm     | 2nd  |
| Alex & Esther Davison   | 7th  |
| John & Susan Sackett    | 12th |
| Francis & Marilyn Reuer | 14th |
| Al & Sharon Auzqui      | 24th |



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# Problems with the Evangelical Church

From FaithStreet

The wider evangelical church is suffering terribly from theological bankruptcy. A recent Barna survey is particularly revealing. Their report reads in part:

Overall, the current research revealed that only nine percent of all American adults have a biblical worldview. Among the 60 subgroups of respondents that the survey explored was one defined by those who said they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is important in their life today and that they are certain that they will go to Heaven after they die only because they confessed their sins and accepted Christ as their savior. Labeled "born again Christians," the study discovered that they were twice as likely as the average adult to possess a biblical worldview. However, that meant that even among born again Christians, less than one out of every five (19 percent) had such an outlook on life

The Barna Group's research goes on to reveal that 79 percent of those identifying as "born again Christians" firmly believe the Bible is accurate in all its teachings — which is pretty good, I guess — but it also reveals that only 46 percent of these "born agains" believe in absolute moral truth, only 40 percent believe Satan is real, and only 47 percent strongly reject the idea that you can earn your way to heaven. Further, only 62 percent of the born-again Christians surveyed strongly believe that Jesus was sinless.

This data is very sobering. It indicts evangelicals, yes, but surely it also indicts the information centers they are learning from. It demonstrates that over the last generation, not only has America become less Christian, but professing Christians have become less Christian.

I think this is the direct result of evangelicalism's relentless prioritization of what seems useful over what is true. We have tended to favor the practical half-truth rather than the (allegedly) impractical whole truth. Ω

# The Cost of Compromise

By  
John MacArthur

Martin Luther wasn't prone to compromise. He famously said in his sermon "Knowledge of God's Will and Its Fruit":

The world at the present time is sagaciously discussing how to quell the controversy and strife over doctrine and faith, and how to effect a compromise between the Church and the Papacy. Let the learned, the wise, it is said, bishops, emperor and princes, arbitrate. Each side can easily yield something, and it is better to concede some things which can be construed according to individual interpretation, than that so much persecution, bloodshed, war, and terrible, endless dissension and destruction be permitted.

Here is lack of understanding, for understanding proves by the Word that such patchwork is not according to God's will, but that doctrine, faith and worship must be preserved pure and unadulterated; there must be no mingling with human nonsense, human opinions or wisdom.

The Scriptures give us this rule: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

It is interesting to speculate what the church would be like today if Luther had compromised. The pressure was heavy on him to tone down his teaching, soften his message, and stop poking his finger in the eye of the papacy. Even many of his friends and supporters urged Luther to come to terms with Rome for the sake of harmony in the church. Luther himself prayed earnestly that the effect of his teaching would not be divisive.

When he nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door, the last thing he wanted to do was split the church.

Yet sometimes division is fitting, even healthy, for the church. Especially in times like Luther's—and like ours—when the visible church seems full of counterfeit Christians, it is right for the true people of God to declare themselves and defend the truth. Compromise is sometimes a worse evil than division. Second Corinthians 6:14-17 isn't speaking only of marriage when it says:

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what

fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Satan, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord.

Sadly, this familiar command to separate is frequently both misunderstood and violated. But Paul is not giving believers license for legalism, sectarianism, or monasticism.

Instead, he's drawing on an analogy from the Mosaic law. In Deuteronomy 22:10, the Lord commanded the Israelites, "You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together." Those two animals do not have the same nature, gait, or strength. Therefore it would be impossible for such a mismatched pair to plow together effectively. They would be unequally yoked.

Paul's meaning is clear: believers and unbelievers are two very different creatures and cannot work together in the spiritual realm. He called for separation in matters of the work of God, since such cooperation for spiritual benefit is impossible.

We sometimes tend to think of the early church as pristine, pure, and untroubled by serious error. The truth is, it wasn't that way at all.

From the very beginning, the enemies of truth launched an effort to infiltrate and confuse the people of God by mangling the truth and by blending lies with Christian doctrine. Attacks against the truth regularly came not only from persecutors on the outside but also from false teachers and professing believers within the visible community of the church.

That was the case in the Corinthian church, where false teachers brought with them a quasi-Christian syncretism of gospel truth, Jewish legalism, and pagan mysticism. They were eager to blend the people of God with the pagan worshipers, and the truth of Scripture with the lies of Satan.

That kind of spiritual blending is exactly what Jude warns against in the third verse of his short epistle. "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." Through the pen of Jude, the Holy Spirit urges us to

exercise caution, discernment, courage, and the will to contend for the truth.

Notice what we are supposed to be fighting for. It is not anything petty, personal, mundane, or ego related. It's not mere wrangling between competing ideologies. It's not a campaign to refine someone's religious creed or win denominational bragging rights. It's not a battle of wits, or a game of any kind.

What we are called to defend is no less than "the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." He's talking about a serious struggle to safeguard the heart and soul of the truth itself and unleash that truth against the powers of darkness. Compromised truth has no hope of rescuing the eternal souls of men and women who have been unwittingly ensnared by the trap of devilish deception.

This is a battle we cannot wage effectively if we always try to come across to the world as merely nice, nonchalant, docile, agreeable, fun-loving people. We must not take our cues from others who are perfectly happy to compromise the truth whenever possible for "harmony's" sake. Friendly dialog may sound affable and pleasant. But neither Christ nor the apostles ever confronted serious, soul-destroying error by building collegial relationships with false teachers. In fact, we are expressly forbidden to do that (Romans 16:17, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 2 Timothy 3:5, 2 John 10-11).

Infiltrating churches under the guise of tolerance and cooperation is one of Satan's most cunning ploys. He does not want to fight the church as much as join it. Undiscerning believers who partner in a common spiritual cause with unbiblical forms of Christianity or other false religions open the door wide to satanic corruption. The appearance of unity, no matter how enticing, is not worth sacrificing the clarity of the gospel.

Furthermore, embracing those heretical systems falsely reassures their followers that all is well between them and God, when actually they are headed for eternal damnation. Partnering in a spiritual enterprise with unbelievers helps Satan muddy the doctrinal waters, and it cripples our ability to preach the need for repentance.

Scripture is clear about how we are to respond when the very foundations of the Christian faith are under attack: our duty is to contend, not compromise. **Ω**

# What's One of the Greatest Doctrinal Threats Facing the Church?

By  
Michael Horton

I really do believe we are facing the same doctrinal crises that the Reformers faced, only in some respects it's worse because Rome never questioned the authority of Scripture or the inerrancy of Scripture. Both are widely disputed in Protestantism generally, and increasingly in evangelicalism particularly. If we lose the authority of Scripture and the sufficiency of Scripture, then what's the point? There would be no point in trying to understand what we believe and why we believe it—no point in even talking about a Gospel because there would be no authority for this Gospel. Then justification is as much up for grabs today as it has ever been. According to all the studies I've seen, most American evangelicals believe that they save themselves with God's help. That's the prevailing view in all the studies that have been conducted. Do your best. That's why Jesus is no longer seen as the only way, truth, and life. And that wasn't up for grabs in the Reformation—that Jesus is the only way of salvation—that wasn't up for grabs. The issue in the Reformation was how salvation is applied to us, but everyone believed Jesus was the only way of salvation. Today, that's no longer taken for granted. We have to fight for it.

Religious pluralism has not only made us more aware of other beliefs, which is good, so that we're explicit about what we believe and why, it has made us more vulnerable to the belief that religion is really about morality. It's about being nice. It's about being good. It's about loving each other. It's not really about the intervention of God in human history, assuming our flesh, dying on the cross, and being raised the third day for our justification, His return in judgment, and a real Heaven and a real Hell. To the extent that we've already turned religion into morality—something we do rather than something that God has done for us—to that extent, religious pluralism will mean, not only that there are lots of people of different religions we must respect and to whom we have to witness, but rather that there are all of these wonderful people who have their sources of morality just as we do, and we need to realize that there are different paths to God. Increasingly that's where we're going with a lot of pastors, telling believers that Jesus is the best way of pursuing community and self-sacrifice, but not the One who was sacrificed for our sins and raised for our justification. Ω

## Have a need? Contact one of the officers.

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**If you have a request for the prayer chain contact Branda Church 221-9206 and if not available, Kelleigh Anderson 635-2578 or send an email to churchfamily@outlook.com.**

***Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself,  
and our God and Father, who has loved  
us and given us everlasting consolation  
and good hope by grace, comfort your  
hearts and establish you in every good  
word and work.***

***Hallelujah, Amen***