Many teach this today — even in what are considered to be Evangelical churches.

The teaching that there are different "gospels" for different people in different times is not a new one, but it is especially widespread in our time. Much of this false teaching emanates from the expected places — apostate churches and cults. But increasingly, such teachings are plaguing Evangelical churches.

**Early Dispensationalists' Two-Gospel Confusion**

One of the oldest of these teachings that is still alive today has its roots in Dispensationalism. Since the beginning of the Dispensationalist movement nearly 200 years ago, some of its leading teachers have promulgated the heresy that there are two different ways of salvation — law-keeping for the Old Testament peoples, especially ethnic Israel, and faith in Christ for the New Testament "Gentile church." A note on John 1:17 in the original 1909 *Scofield Reference Bible* states this alleged distinction:

As a dispensation grace [in contrast to what are claimed to be the earlier dispensations of law] begins with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 3:24-26; 4:24, 25). *The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation*, but acceptance or rejection of Christ, with good works as the fruit of salvation. [Italics added.]
In the early decades of Dispensationalism, many men held such a view. Dispensationalist theologian Charles Ryrie, in his 1965 book Dispensationalism Today, characterized teachings such as Scofield's note as "unguarded statements that would have been more carefully worded" if they were being made fifty years later.¹ The 1909 Scofield's "unguarded statement" was changed in the 1917 and 1968 editions to align it with orthodox teaching, and most later Dispensationalists repudiated the dual-gospel view.

**Hyper-Dispensationalists' Multi-Gospel Heresy**

However, some Dispensationalist spokesmen continued to hold to this heresy. E. W. Bullinger, Sir Robert Anderson, and Charles Welch were among the leading hyper-dispensationalist teachers of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Men such as J. C. O'Hair, Charles F. Baker, and C. R. Stam continued to promulgate the two-gospels view (and in some cases posited more than two gospels!) later in the 20th century.

In the 21st century, television teacher Les Feldick is a leading proponent of these heretical views. Present-day advocates of these teachings generally refer to themselves as members of the deceptively-named "Grace Gospel Movement". Hundreds of churches in the United States and other parts of the world now identify with it. Christians who are true to the Word must mark these people and avoid them (Romans 16:17-20).

**Other Pseudo-Evangelical "Gospels"**

In our time, multi-gospel thinking is widespread among postmodern Evangelicals, who are caught up in the mindset of the "me generation".

The "prosperity gospel" of Joel Osteen, Benny Hinn, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Joyce Meyer, Creflo Dollar, Jessie Duplantis, and others, may occasionally hijack the language of the true Gospel of salvation through Christ. But the main focus of this
pseudo-gospel is on "saving" yourself in the here-and-now by building wealth and "claiming" health as your rightful possessions.

Closely coupled with this false teaching, in most cases, is the so-called "word of faith" theology that says that faith is a force, your words are the vehicle that releases that force, and therefore you can speak your own reality into existence. In other words, "name it and claim it" and it is yours. You are, as Creflo Dollar and others will tell you, your own god.

Also closely coupled with these false gospels is the Jesus-as-friend or self-esteem "gospel". You "save" yourself by feeling good about yourself. Jesus is your friend, mentor, and life-coach, these false teachers claim. He doesn't want you to feel bad about anything. So there is no such thing as sin, only "poor choices", "mistakes", and "self-destructive behaviors". You just need to follow Jesus' example and make better choices. This, they say, is the "gospel" for 21st-century man.

**Mainline Church Pseudo-Gospels Infect Evangelicals**

Today increasing numbers of Evangelicals are being caught up in the promotion of an "environmental gospel" that was once found only in mainline liberal churches. Among mainline liberals this has led to increasing worship of Gaia the pagan "earth goddess." Among Evangelicals it is producing a shift away from focus on the salvation of souls to an emphasis on the salvation of the planet.

The same is true with what used to be known as the "social gospel". In the 20th century, mainline liberals became increasingly obsessed with the idea of saving man by saving society. Churches therefore engaged in all kinds of social action that the world was quite capable of doing without the organized church, rather than carrying out the Great Commission that Christ actually gave to His true Church.
In the 21st century the Purpose-Driven Church movement, led by Southern Baptist Rick Warren, has launched what it calls a "New Reformation" that is actually nothing more than the old ecumenical "social gospel" in new garb. The Purpose-Driven Church movement will pay passing lip service to the idea of salvation from sin through Christ. But at its core, this new movement is out to save man by saving society, not by preaching the Gospel of repentance from sin and faith in the shed blood of Christ. For this reason, the Purpose-Driven Church movement is increasingly pluralistic in its approach to "gospels". As leader Rick Warren has put it:

The first Reformation actually split Christianity into dozens and then hundreds of different segments. I think this one is actually going to bring them together. Now, you're never going to get Christians, of all their stripes and varieties, to agree on all of the different doctrinal disputes and things like that, but what I am seeing them agree on are the purposes of the church. And I find great uniformity in the fact that I see this happening all the time. Last week I spoke to 4,000 pastors at my church who came from over 100 denominations in over 50 countries. Now, that's wide spread. We had Catholic priests, we had Pentecostal ministers, we had Lutheran bishops, we had Anglican bishops, we had Baptist preachers. They're all there together and you know what? I'd never get them to agree on communion or baptism or a bunch of stuff like that, but I could get them to agree on what the church should be doing in the world.²

What Warren dismisses as "stuff" is, in fact, the core of the Gospel. Whether one believes the one true Gospel of Jesus Christ determines whether ones' views of "communion or baptism or a bunch of stuff like that" are Biblical or heretical, the "stuff" of Heaven or of Hell. But Warren, like his mentor Robert Schuller, seems to believe that "there's a wideness in God's mercy" that will let anyone into His kingdom on any basis.
**Multiple "Gospels" in Conservative Reformed Churches**

Recent decades have witnessed the growth of multiple "gospels" in conservative Reformed churches such as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Today, many men in those denominations teach, with impunity, the false "gospel" that man is justified by faith plus works at the Last Judgment. This teaching takes various forms under various names, including Shepherdism (named for the heretic Norman Shepherd), the New Perspective on Paul, Reformed Catholicity, Covenantal Nomism, and the Federal Vision.

OPC ruling elder John Kinnaird was formally charged with heresy for his misuse of Romans 2:13, the key "proof-text" offered by all purveyors of this heresy. Kinnaird teaches that "it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous on that Day of Judgment." Kinnaird consistently adds the last five words to his personal paraphrase of this text of Scripture, thus changing its meaning entirely.

In context, the Apostle Paul is teaching that no one but Christ was capable of keeping the law, and that His perfect law-keeping righteousness is imputed to believers. But by adding his own words to the end of the verse whenever he mentions it, Kinnaird and his fellow heretics change Romans 2:13 to mean that law-keeping is required of believers themselves in order to be declared righteous on the Last Day.

Dr. Peter Lillback, a PCA minister who is also president of Westminster Theological Seminary, and Dr. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., Westminster's senior theology professor and an OPC minister, defended Kinnaird’s misuse of Romans 2:13 in testimony at his heresy trial.

In response to an initiative promoted by advocates of this false teaching and their enablers, the 2001 OPC General Assembly added Romans 2:13 as a proof text for Westminster Larger Catechism question 90 – "What shall be done to the righteous at
the day of judgment?” – legitimizing the false teaching that believers would be "openly acknowledged and acquitted” on the basis of their law keeping.

In 2003, the OPC General Assembly based its acquittal of John Kinnaird in large part on this action of the 2001 Assembly. The Advisory Committee that recommended Kinnaird’s acquittal to the full Assembly wrote: "There is strong evidence that it is allowable in the OPC to interpret Romans 2:13 (as Mr. Kinnaird does) as a description of something that will be done to the righteous at the day of judgment.”

The only “strong evidence” the committee offered was the fact that the 2001 General Assembly had adopted the neo-liberal-backed recommendation to add Romans 2:13 as a proof text for Westminster Larger Catechism Question 90. Using this wrong interpretation of Romans 2:13 as its starting point, the Advisory Committee also agreed with Kinnaird that there is a final justification at the Last Judgment as well as a first justification in this life, and that "both...are forensic."

A later Justification Study Committee of the OPC, supposedly formed to deal with these heresies, self-consciously choose not to address Romans 2:13, the central passage of the controversy. Eyewitnesses tell us why this was done. An OPC minister who was present during the meeting of the Advisory Committee assigned to deal with the Justification Study Committee Report, writes the following:

I sat in on the (all day) committee meeting with the Justification Committee as well the advisory committee. The topic was discussed of a future aspect of Justification (sic). They [the members of the study committee] specifically said that they did not see the report as cutting off a future aspect of justification, that they had deliberately avoided ruling on this topic, and that Gaffin's view of Romans 2:13, which is shared by others now and in the past in our tradition, was not declared out of bounds by the report.”
In several similar cases, the PCA has also refused to act against this heresy. Thus the OPC and PCA continue to permit two gospels to be preached, and the false gospel is gaining ground.

**Hard-Core Mainline False Gospels**

Beyond these abominations are the hardcore multi-gospels of the mainline liberals, and those even farther to the theological left.

The "liberation theology gospel" proclaims that we can save man by saving him from whatever political or economic injustice his situation presents. This is the "gospel" of wealth-redistribution and government control of every area of society that Barack Hussein Obama imbibed for more than twenty years at the Chicago church of the notorious Jeremiah Wright. Liberation theology has been popular for decades among both liberal Protestants and certain segments of the Roman Catholic church, especially in Latin America and Africa. Over thirty years ago, it spawned the Marxist revolution in Nicaragua. Today, liberation theology underpins the corrupt and dictatorial governments of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, among others.

The "feminist gospel" has become a major force on the liberal church scene and is also infecting Evangelicalism. Feminism is also a force behind the movement to elevate Mary to the position of a fourth person of the Godhead in the Roman Catholic church. In liberal Protestantism, feminists want to "save" the church by feminizing God. Naomi Goldenberg, in her book *Changing of the Gods*, declares with chilling frankness that "the feminist movement in Western culture is engaged in the slow execution of Christ and Yahweh." She goes on to state, with all the rebellious venom we find described in Romans 1:18-32, "It is likely that as we watch Christ and Yahweh tumble to the ground, we will completely outgrow the need for an external God."
Over time, church feminism also led to the production of so-called "gender neutral" or "inclusive language" versions of the Bible, such as Today's New International Version, the New International Version Inclusive Language Edition, the New Living Translation, the New Century Version, and the Contemporary English Version. Even worse have been Bible perversions such as Judith Christ of Nazareth: The Gospels of the Bible Corrected to Reflect That Jesus Was a Woman (published by the Law and Business Institute in 2003).

More recently, the feminizing of God has directly infected Evangelical preaching. I've run across a number of sermons and articles, sometimes by women preachers but more often by men, promoting two heresies. One is a false characterization of God's law as "God's masculine side" and God's grace as "God's feminine side." The other is the teaching that Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit expresses ─ or is ─ "the feminine side of God."5

There is a feminine side of God. I always knew this...It is this feminine side of God I find in Jesus that makes me want to sing duets with Him.... Not only do I love the feminine in Jesus, but the more I know Jesus, the more I realize that Jesus loves the feminine in me. Until I accept the feminine in my humanness, there will be a part of me that cannot receive the Lord's love.... There is that feminine side of me that must be recovered and strengthened if I am to be like Christ.... And until I feel the feminine in Jesus, there is a part of Him which I cannot identify.6

Ever since the Garden of Eden, Satan has sought to distort the image of God and to destroy God-ordained male-female and husband-wife relationships. But the words of the Bible have meaning, and we ignore its clear meaning at our peril. The God of the Bible, revealed in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is unquestionably masculine and in no way feminine. True Christians must not join those who lightly
cast aside the nature of God and the proper place of male authority as revealed in His Word – who say, as the Serpent said to Eve, "Did God really say that?"

And then there is the "all-ways-lead-to-whatever" multi-gospel. Promulgated in our time by talk-show diva Oprah Winfrey and her ilk, this false teaching says that all roads, sincerely followed, lead to "salvation" (however you may choose to define it). As Winfrey puts it, one person may call it "Jesus". Another person may call it "Mary". Another person may call it "the light". Someone else in another part of the world may call it "Krishna". Yet another person may call it "unity with the Earth-mother". Someone else of high intellect may call it "Zeitgeist". But the mantra of this multi-gospel madness is "whatever". Whatever you call it, and however mystically or concretely you may define it, that doesn't really matter. If you sincerely follow it, it will get you to whatever the "end-goal" of this life is.

What are the common denominators in all of these pluralistic "gospels"? Why is there, in fact, only one true Gospel? We shall focus on those questions in part two of this study.

References:


5. See, for example, "The Feminine Side of God" by Janice G. Johnson at http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=71994. See also "Our Mother Who Art in Heaven: A Brief Overview and Critique of Evangelical Feminists and the Use of Feminine God-Language" at http://www.cbmw.org/Journal/Vol-8-No-2/Our-Mother-Who-Art-in-Heaven. (Note: TeachingtheWord does not officially endorse the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood or all of the individuals associated with it, but we believe this article is valuable. If you have questions about this, please contact us.)


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