

Discerning New Evangelicalism

Lesson Three

The Hegelian Dialectic

The Helgelian Dialectic is basically a process that ultimately results in Centrism. This is accomplished by bringing together diverse positions for *dialogue*. The process involves bringing together a thesis (extreme right) together with an antithesis (extreme left) for discussion that moves both extremes towards the center (compromise). Two things happen to the majority of those involved in the dialogue:

1. The majority of the participants form a synthesis (a composite position) somewhere between the two extremes (this is the goal of the Helgelian Dialectic).
2. Those not accepting the synthesis become sympathetic towards the various degrees of positions of those involved in the dialogue in that *tolerance* becomes the banner under which the process functions.

This process is repeated with each generation and the center (synthesis) constantly moves towards the extreme left (compromise, tolerance and liberalism). No one likes to be viewed as an extremist or a radical. That is why all Christians are naturally prone towards moving towards the middle on every issue of conflict. That is the reason why the vast majority of local churches, associations of churches and conventions/denominations have become New Evangelical and Liberal.

When conflicting positions arise, we will find most people settling for one of two solutions: tolerance or compromise. Neither of these two positions is acceptable to God. Neither should they be acceptable to the person that calls himself a *Biblicist*. Truth is always a constant. God is immutable. All truth originates in God's immutableness. Therefore truth is immutable. Which of God's truths is inconsequential to Him? Which of God's truths does He delineate as a *major* truth and which is a *minor* truth? If a truth is distorted in any way, does it cease being truth?

CENTRISM: the political or religious philosophy of avoiding the extremes of right and left by taking a moderate position; synonym, moderatism.

If we follow Jesus through the gospels, we need not travel too far with Him to find that the kind of Christianity defined by His teaching is radically different than the vast majority of what calls itself *Christianity* (even that which calls itself *fundamental Christianity*). Christianity is presented throughout the epistles in military terms and Christians are metaphorically presented as "soldiers." The fight we are involved in is to "contend earnestly for the faith."

The following is a quote from an article by Paul Proctor entitled **WILLOW CREEK; HEGELIAN DIALECTIC & THE NEW WORLD ORDER**

"For the benefit of those who have not yet heard of the Hegelian Dialectic, let me briefly run through it as taught by Authority Research Center president, Dean Gotcher. The Hegelian Dialectic or "Consensus Process" is a 200 year-old, three-step process of "thesis, antithesis and synthesis", developed in the late 1700's by a German named Georg William Friedreich Hegel that results in what we now know as "group-think". It is a system Dean calls "Praxis" that Socialists have used for centuries to seduce, seize and control mass populations without warfare. It is also in full operation here in the United States under such names as: "Outcome Based Education", "Goals 2000", "Sustainable Development", "School To Work", "DARE" and many more. It's all about embracing "tolerance, diversity and unity" for The New World Order. To put it in layman's terms, it's brainwashing.

Here's how it works: A group gathers, and has agreed beforehand that each in attendance will ultimately surrender his or her own personal position on any given issue to the will or "consensus"

of the group after *processing to consensus* through dialog. In a Christian setting, the presupposition is that the group's will determines "the will of God". The group's "facilitator", whoever that may be, mediates between sides, be they "good and evil", "for and against", "republican and democrat", "liberal and conservative", etc., whatever the case may be, often instigating heated confrontations between the opposing sides for the purpose of suggesting compromise as the perfect solution to restore and maintain the peace and the relationships of everyone involved. The resulting outcome or *consensus* is then re-introduced if necessary, at the next meeting for more "Praxis", more dialog and more compromise until another "consensus" is reached. Then the "process" repeats all over again...and again...and again until the facilitator's desired outcome is achieved. Over time, the convictions and concerns anyone may have had originally are processed away beyond recognition or relevance leaving one and all to accept the facilitator's pre-determined outcome as the consensus of the group. It's no longer a question of what is right or wrong, good or bad, lawful or unlawful, but rather HOW WE ALL FEEL ABOUT IT...no absolutes, no conscience, no convictions, no laws, no Constitution, no Bible and NO GOD!!!...only consensus....and a contrived consensus at that. Pretty slick huh? That's the Hegelian Dialectic."
(<http://etherzone.com/2001/proc121101.shtml>)

This is also a very accurate description of how Progressive Fundamentalism has come into existence (*Group Think* or the *Democratic Process*). In every *Group Think* situation I have been involved in, where there was wide diversity of theological positions among the constituents, the resulting conclusive statements have always tended to be inclusive, even when the original intent was to make an exclusive statement.

This process over a number of years has historically proven to be the downfall of denominations, conventions of churches, as well as fellowships and associations of churches. Those organizations that have survived over long periods of time are those that have instituted the use of exclusive *Resolution* statements that have dealt with extreme theological positions BEFORE they have infiltrated the membership of the organization.

Those organizations that have not used this methodology have progressively become more inclusive and have succumbed to Liberalism in various degrees. When this begins to happen, the normal dynamic is that those who refuse to accept the wider and more extreme theological positions begin to drop out (separate or disassociate). While in the use of *Resolutions*, the opposite is true. Those holding to the *extreme* positions are actually *culled* from the association (fellowship, convention or denomination) by the *Resolutions*. Centrism is the natural result of this Helgelian process.

Those organizations that seek to maintain the numbers of its membership, whether it is a local church or any type of association of local churches, without exclusive doctrinal statements, that organization is doomed to inclusivism and its tendencies toward New Evangelicalism and, ultimately, Liberalism.

I believe that is why God has instituted the preaching (proclamation) of truth as the means of a continuum to propagate truth. Individuals can respond by accepting or rejecting what is being proclaimed. Individuals remove themselves from local churches where things are preached that they vehemently disagree with. If a large enough group disagree, they will remove the Preacher. Of course, this works in both ways when *Group Think* is involved.

God never intended Truth to be protected against the infusion of heresy through the medium of Group Think (i.e., Dialogue). We only need to look back in history at the Ecumenical Councils to see the natural tendency towards inclusivistic thinking in this process called Dialogue. The natural tendency is to avoid the areas of disagreement and focus upon the areas where agreement is found. This is the thrust of the four volumes called **The Fundamentals** referred to earlier.

In these so called foundational documents of Fundamentalism, after close scrutiny, we should be amazed at the numerous areas of doctrine that are given little mention, such as Infant Baptism, Covenant Theology, Sacramentalism, etc. Although these areas might be mentioned in passing, they are not dealt with at any depth or length (although there is one good article against Baptismal Regeneration).

Even though these articles are exclusive by nature, in that they dealt negatively with the extreme positions of Modernism and Higher Criticism, they were also inclusive in their failure to deal with the extremes within the group that called themselves Fundamentalists, which would have included such theological diversities as Pentecostals, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and the Salvation Army (to name a few).

Because of this failure, these latter groups, including many of the Baptist denominations, were later drawn back into the Group Think of New Evangelicalism and Ecumenicism. Their exclusive statements protected them from the influence of Higher Criticism and Liberalism for a time, but it was the inclusivistic nature within these groups that ultimately brought them to the development of New Evangelicalism and Ecumenicism.

New Evangelical and Liberal *Group Think* are more easily propagated today through a number of mediums. One such medium that readily propagates *Group Think* by inculcating more inclusivistic ideas and doctrines in a wide group of people is *Christian* radio and Television. Other mediums are Bible Colleges and Seminaries. One teacher or professor can inseminate hundreds of students with extreme theological positions, who, in turn, teach them to others. This latter medium has inculcated numerous associations, denominations and conventions of churches with New Evangelicalism and Liberalism.

The Abdication of Theological Dogmatism

ABDICATE:

1. To give up formally (a high office, throne, authority, etc.)
2. To surrender or repudiate (a right, responsibility, etc.)

Dogmatism has become a word of disdain in many theological circles today. The new word is *tolerance*. Tolerance, to some degree, always equals neutrality. God condemns this.

“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Matthew 12:30).

We cannot consider neutrality to be a non-position or even an acceptable position when it comes to truth. It is a position condemned by God.

“¹⁴ And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; ¹⁵ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ¹⁷ Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: ¹⁸ I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:14-19).

Three Governing Principles for Worship

1. “Let all things be done decently and in order” is an over-riding principle that guides everything done in the church (1 Corinthians 14:40).
2. “God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Although worship can take different forms, it must always be according to God’s wants (will) not man’s wants (will). Worldly and carnal practices cannot be used to worship.
3. Things used for worship must be distinctively holy (separate) from the things used by the world. If they are not, those things defile the whole of the worship.

“¹¹ Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests *concerning* the law, saying, ¹² If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. ¹³ Then said Haggai, If *one that is* unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. ¹⁴ Then answered Haggai, and said, So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so *is* every work of their hands; and that which they offer there *is* unclean” (Haggai 2:11-14).

The sad truth why Progressive Fundamentalism progresses is that people are always willing to conform to the ideals of any person or group they want to be identified with or accepted by. That is a historical fact and a very dangerous reality for every generation of Christians. It usually genders a *Peer Pressure Theology* and it is easy to get caught up in this *whirlpool* if a person is not careful.

The Pastoral Paradox in all of this is to be caught somewhere (anywhere) between absolute obedience to one’s individual understanding of Truth (and the dogmatic proclamation of that truth) and an attitude of self-preservation. That is a dangerous place to be. The Apostle Jude gives us God’s command for all Christians regarding this issue.

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3).

The words “earnestly contend” in the above verse are from the Greek word *epagonizomai* (ep-ag-o-nid’-zom-ahee). The prefix *epi* always heightens the intensity of the word it precedes. There is already an intensity communicated by the word *agonizomai* (ag-o-nid’-zom-ahee). Therefore, the intent here is one of extreme intensity involving the struggle to maintain “the faith.”

The words “the faith” refers to the inscripturized body of Truth regarding life and its practice. These Truths are entrusted to the care of all true believers. They are guarded and continued by diligent study and commitment to practice and they are propagated, not by treasuring them away, but by dissemination (teaching them to others; i.e., discipleship). Doctrinal purity will never be maintained if Truth is not taught systematically and dogmatically (“Thus sayeth the Lord”).

The purpose of secular scholarship is to gather knowledge (which is usually viewed relatively). This philosophy is often engrained even in religious institutions of higher learning. Therefore, this philosophy (whether in secular or religious institutions) naturally leads to Relativism, Modernity (Fluid Constructionism) and tolerance.

The purpose of true Biblical Scholarship is to know Truth (which is always absolute; i.e., if Truth is not always True, it cannot be said to be Truth). Biblical scholarship naturally leads to dogmatism and intolerance.

New Evangelicalism was (and is) conceived in the womb of the tolerance of theological diversity and is born through the “scholarship” that sees various theological positions (i.e., Covenant Theology, Reformed Theology, etc.) as possible and viably correct. Progressive Fundamentalism is only one step behind. This is a form of AGNOSTICISM (I Don’t know!). This form of Agnosticism is nothing more than a passive rejection of absolute truth and dogmatism.

The tragic infection of Progressive Fundamentalism is the false notion that we cannot be dogmatically sure of most theological positions because there are so many variables. *Progressive Fundamentalist* will even go as far as accusing a person of spiritual pride if he holds dogmatically to a certain theological position.

This is the natural outcome of teaching Theological Theory. This system of teaching simply views its responsibility as providing a *smorgasbord* of theological ideas from which the student can choose. **This produces a Theory-ology, not a Theology.**

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1. What is the end result of the *process* of the Helgelian Dialectic called? _____

2. Define the following three aspects of the Helgelian Dialectic and how *dialogue* works in moving a system of thinking or Truth away from its norm.
 - A. Thesis _____

 - B. Antithesis _____

 - C. Synthesis _____

3. Define Centrism _____

4. Define Progressive Fundamentalism as the outcome of *dialogue* with Evangelicals and New Evangelicals. _____

5. Define *Group Think* (Process Thinking) as it relates to the Helgelian Dialectic, Progressive Fundamentalism and *dialogue*. _____

6. Discuss why God's chosen method of preaching is the best method for a continuum to propagate truth.

7. Define dogmatism. _____

8. List and define the three governing principles for acceptable worship
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
9. Discuss why (and how) Progressive Fundamentalism (New Fundamentalism) *progresses*. _____

10. What is the Pastoral Paradox of this *process*? _____

11. Discuss the differences between secular scholarship and Biblical scholarship. _____
