CLASSIFYING EVANGELICALS

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Michael Graham and Skyler Flowers have published an article on the current fracturing of evangelicalism. (Graham, Michael, and Skyler Flowers. “The Six Way Fracturing of Evangelicalism.” *MereOrthodoxy*.*com*. 7 June 2021. 13 June 2021.)

Whether you care deeply about Christianity or could care less, presumably you care about the future of America. So you may want to understand the future of America’s largest (when combined) religious group.

The article sees evangelicals splintering into 6 groups.

1. neo-fundamentalists

These emphasize the “Christian” part of Christian nationalism (which is the merger of Christianity and right-wing nationalism). They fear liberalism (both political and theological), and they see the culture as hostile to Christianity, especially “mass media, social media, and the government.”

1. mainstream evangelicals

These are traditional evangelicals (who emphasize the Bible as error-free and the need to convert unbelievers). They have some concern for “the destructive pull of Christian Nationalism, but are far more concerned by the secular left’s influence . . . they are likely uncomfortable with the rhetoric Trump and other conservatives use but view this direction as the lesser of two evils.”

1. neo-evangelicals

These see themselves as “evangelical” but are uncomfortable applying the term to themselves, since it is becoming more political than theological. They are “highly concerned by conservative Christianity’s acceptance of Trump and failure to engage on topics of race and sexuality [but] There is equal concern . . . at the threat the left and the right pose . . .”

1. post-evangelicals

These reject “evangelical” but still have orthodox beliefs and are still churched. They are “focused on abuse, corruption, hypocrisy, Christian nationalism, . . . injustice, inequity, the secular right, and to a lesser extent the radical secular left.”

1. the dechurched (but still Christian)

These “have left the church but still hold [some] Christian beliefs.”

1. the dechurched and deconverted

These have left the church and have “no vestigial Christian beliefs.”

Whether you are an evangelical or (like me) are not, you may find this classification helpful in trying to understand how our society is changing.