
Evangelicals

Origins

The term 'Evangelical' was initially associated with the Lutheran tradition within the Reformation. However, Evangelicalism as a separate tradition is usually regarded as arising out of the Protestant movement in the eighteenth century. In particular, it arose from the so-called First Great Awakening in the 1730s and 1740s, which saw an increase in religious fervour in Britain and America. Central to this were the Anglican preachers George Whitfield and John Wesley. Emphasis was given to personal conversion, associated with personal faith and repentance.

The Evangelical Alliance was formed in 1846 in London. Factors which contributed to the decision to form such an alliance included the need to oppose Tractarianism, which involved tracts being issued by those advocating a return to more Catholic ways. The work of the London Missionary Society also encouraged Evangelicals. The majority of the delegates were from Britain, but there were some from America, Europe, and other parts of the world. Various alliances were formed along national or regional lines. A journal called *Evangelical Christendom* began in 1847, running under this name until 1957 when it was replaced by the *Evangelical Broadsheet*. From the outset, the Alliance saw as one of its important roles the pursuit of religious liberty, and ran campaigns to this effect in various countries, including Turkey, Russia, Italy and Spain.

Today

A significant phenomenon in recent years has been the popularity of the Alpha course. Although used by various Christian denominations, it is recognised as being particularly favoured by Evangelicals. Originating in the late 1970s, over 33,000 courses are running in over 160 countries. Evangelical churches make use of modern technology, including cameras, big screens and downloadable sermons. Many Evangelicals favour women being appointed to the ministry.

What the mainstream says

- God is a Trinity.
- Christ is deity.
- Jesus is central, as the one and only Son of God, who willingly suffered death and triumphed over it to set all free from the consequences of rebellion against God.
- Justification comes through Christ's substitutionary atonement.
- Christ physically rose from the dead and currently reigns.
- A new birth and progressive sanctification comes through the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- Christ will personally return.
- Scripture is the final authority and is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- Fellowship with Christ is by faith.
- The world is both under God's care and under His judgement.

(Source: http://www.churchsociety.org/churchman/documents/Cman_111_4_Curry.pdf)

Suggested initial Scriptural approach

The Holy Spirit is a key area to address, both with regard to the Trinity and its supposed influence today. The statement by the Angel Gabriel is a good point to start, showing that the Holy Spirit is "the power of the Highest" (Lk. 1:35), and that this power came upon Mary before Christ was conceived. It should be shown that this power was given to believers as specific gifts, which were later "done away" (1 Cor. 13:10), but it never worked in a direct way upon the heart, as claimed by some today.