

Evangelical & Fundamentalist Protestants

In recent years major growth within Christianity has come from the groups known as "evangelical", while at the same time, most of the groups identified as "mainline" have declined in membership (p.131)

EX: Kelly, Why Conservative Churches are Growing, written in the 1970's; Billy Graham; Christian radio & TV; parachurch movements (Campus Crusade, etc.) Jesus Revolution of the 70's; explosive growth in evangelical seminaries

Historically, the major difference between evangelicals and fundamentalists has been the degree of engagement with secular culture

- "reform and redeem" vs. "separate from"

EX: Bob Jones III on parent's choices for education

MAJOR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES:

- (1) virgin birth of Jesus; fully human and fully divine
- (2) need for salvation through Jesus' sacrificial death; emphasize personal relationship with God as a personal need
- (3) need to evangelize; reality of heaven and hell
- (4) the Second Coming of Christ; followed by the last judgement
- (5) the Bible as the "Word of God", guide for faith and practice
- (6) emphasize tithing of income

NOTE: These are only some very general statements of belief; there are a wide variety of interpretations which fit under the evangelical "umbrella". Another major distinction between evangelicals and fundamentalists is the rigidity with which they hold to certain beliefs

EX: Creationism vs. Intelligent Design theory
pre-millennial vs. amillennial vs. postmillennial vs. "pan-millennial"
Home School movement (James Dobson, Focus on Family)

SOCIAL AND MORAL ISSUES

- (1) basically pro-life on abortion, euthanasia, etc.
- (2) pro-marriage; discourage divorce, remarriage, etc.
- (3) pro-sex within marriage
- (4) emphasize abstinence from alcohol and other drugs

THERAPY ISSUES

- (1) Building trust and credibility will be important
 - work within their idioms; use their language; if you don't understand it ASK
 - listen nonjudgementally; helpful to validate feelings
EX: " I shouldn't be feeling this way"
 - build network of referral and support
- (2) Diversity issues
 - male therapist/ female client may bring out authority issues
 - there is an increase of racial/ethnic diversity among groups
 - wide variation between beliefs and prax

SUMMARY

Most problems that need therapy seem to arise from situations where the faith "does not work"; this creates a "crisis of faith". Overspiritualization may be a problem with more committed clients.

INTERVENTIONS/ISSUES

- (1) Forgiveness
- (2) Cognitive - Behavioral Therapy
- (3) Image of God may be too harsh, punitive, unforgiving
- (4) Perfectionism may be problem- look at biblical heroes
- (5) Issues of "submission" are often misunderstood & misapplied