



Reformation Christian Ministries

Are All Gospels the Gospel?

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I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. [Galatians 1:6-8]

Over ten years ago at a world-view conference on the theme of the Christian impact on our society, an elderly well-known Reformed theologian was a speaker. Noting the attendance of Roman Catholics, Mormons, charismatics, Pentecostals, as well as those of a Reformed Baptist and Presbyterian/Reformed persuasion, I asked a question as to **how cultural transformation could take place if it was built on so many different gospels** as represented by those in attendance. After every other speaker declined answering the question, the noted theologian asked to look at it. While pondering the question while other questions were answered, he later responded and said, **"These are not different gospels, just different perspectives of the same gospel."** I was shocked. The pastor who sponsored the seminar was shocked along with some others. We all consulted each other to see if we had misunderstood. We all heard the same. We were stunned.

In missions we often run into a similar question: **why do we need to send "Reformed" missionaries in places where there are other churches that preach the "gospel"?** This question parallels the above comment in that those asking obviously do not consider these to be "different" gospels, just different perspectives on the same gospel. Isn't the gospel the gospel? Or better yet, **since "not all Israel is Israel" (Romans 9:6), are all gospels the Gospel?**

Over time, I have come to recognize that many (thankfully not all) in our Reformed churches (used broadly to mean those who confessionally hold to the Gospel of God's sovereign grace) consider most of the various "gospels" orthodox, just to lesser degrees than "ours". In other words, they consider the Reformed Gospel to be the high mark, and many others to be errant in greater degrees but still "the gospel". In other words, **we are the theological elite, while others are of lesser theological caliber.** They do not consider them a false gospel (except, of course, for the Mormons).

So, are all gospels the Gospel? Put succinctly, *the Bible reveals only one Gospel and all others are perversions or false gospels and accursed.* **How can we tell the difference between them?** Put simply: the true Gospel depends solely upon the work of Christ alone, while all others depend to varying degrees upon something originating from man. Satan's light-masquerading doublespeak employs redefined buzz-phrases like "grace" and "not of works" to mean something quite different from the work of Christ alone.

Generally those favoring the latter will stumble over questions like: **Did Christ die for everyone? Does God love everyone?**

Most today would answer to the first, *"well of course Christ died for everyone"* which then leaves the question as to why some go to hell, which then leads to the "fact" that some refused Him, while others received Him. In other words, man's choice was the decisive factor. *"Does God love everyone"* again leads to the question of how a loving God could send people to hell, which then results ultimately in the response "they refused Christ": again, man makes the final decision even though Christ may take over from there. (Cf. also Ps. 5:5; 10:3; Lev. 20:23; Pro. 6:16; Hos. 9:15; Mat. 7:23; 25:41; Rom. 9:13).

This mentality is not solely that of those outside the Reformed camp, **for even many in our circles who justly love their "high ground" confessions, find their faith based upon their intellectual assent to said confessions, going through catechism and making a "public confession of faith" all of which can simply be the right thing TO DO.** Then, as long as you stay out of serious trouble thereafter, you can remain a member in good standing of the church. **Sometimes right confession, right church, right forms and "sincerity" become the basis for salvation, rather than total reliance upon the work of Christ alone.** (Works righteousness can even take place in *grace alone* churches.)

As a consequence of this indiscriminate acceptance of "other gospels" which the Apostle Paul labeled as "accursed", much "Christian work" in missions around the world passes for biblical when instead it is that which the Bible condemns. While preaching salvation by "grace alone," they then rely upon man's decisions and man's faith to receive Christ and then man's works to maintain that salvation. As a consequence, **there is a tremendous amount of work going into that which Christ secured solely by His work on the cross.**

While this may seem like a tragedy, it also can be a providential blessing in moving people toward Christ (albeit some are so near yet so far) but must never be confused with the true Gospel. Consequently, RCM works in places that not only contain overt pagans, but also those that contain evangelicals, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox. For many, if not most, **their gospel is a perverted or false gospel and the truth needs to be revealed to them.** It is in these circles that the RCM's Good News Bible Study has often been so well received. It is a common thing for many evangelicals who take our course to say, *"I have been a Christian for many years, but I never realized what a sinner I was."* How is it possible for a person to become a Christian without realizing what a sinner they are? One fellow in Albania asked years ago what he was doing wrong since he had accepted Jesus into his heart many times, but nothing seemed to work. These are common comments from those who operate under the premise of a false gospel.

The true Gospel sees nothing from man as its hope, but rests solely upon God's sovereign election, quickening and drawing based upon the particular redemption secured by Christ alone. As a result, the righteousness of Christ begins to increasingly take over a person's actions and thinking at the same time the person increasingly sees and feels the exceeding sinfulness of his sins (Romans 7:13) with no recourse but in Christ alone (Romans 7:24-25). Pray for the spread of the Gospel through RCM and its colleagues and the exposure of all false assurances from other gospels.

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