

Wayne Grudem. *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2006.

Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, along with Erickson's *Christian Theology*, pretty much define the evangelical landscape these days. Erickson has continue to write in theology, defining ever more clearly the doctrines of God, Christ, last things, and salvation. Grudem, on the other hand has almost exclusively worked on issues related to egalitarianism vs. complementarianism, two views on women and women's role in the church and home. In this volume Grudem argues that egalitarianism is a step toward liberalism and specifically toward the acceptance of homosexuality within the Christian worldview. Interestingly, Erickson is an egalitarian, as is Roger Nicole, and other inerrantists.

First, does Grudem make his case? If you mean, are the modern deviations from Scripture within evangelicalism coming from complementarians or egalitarians? The answer is from both, but mostly from egalitarians (though not from Nicole or Erickson). So egalitarianism must be a factor, though it seems to me to be only one of several.

Grudem acknowledges that many of his friends have moved to egalitarianism without at any other point leaving inerrancy. This is an important point to make. Yet Grudem argues that the hermeneutical steps made will (if applied to other passages) lead to liberalism. This is an important warning, and Grudem cites individuals who have made the shift. But not all will feel the freedom to make such serious shifts. Because Nicole accepts egalitarian interpretations does not mean he will eventually favor homosexuality. Nor does Grudem claim that he will.

Grudem does, however, cite specific cases (with names and specific references) where egalitarians say Genesis is wrong, that Paul was wrong, that some verses found in every manuscript are not really part of the Bible, that we all just choose our favorite verses, that a

pastor's authority can grant exceptions to Scripture, that experience or "calling" can trump Scripture, that circumstances may override Scripture, and several other similar claims.

Some have claimed that Paul is speaking only to specific cases, not universally. For example, some have claimed that Ephesian women were uneducated and were teaching false doctrine, or that the women were excessively disruptive in Corinth. Some claim that the word for "head" really only means "source." More seriously, some have questioned the Trinitarian relationships as set forth in Scripture. All this and more are cited by Grudem with specifics.

Grudem believes that the next step will be the denial of anything uniquely masculine, the affirmation of God as our mother (Southeastern was already into this in every chapel prayer when I first arrived in 1989), and finally the approval of homosexuality (SEBTS had its share of advocates for this as well in the early 90s). Complementarians come in for some well deserved criticism as well. Some are harsh, mean, or abusive of women; others have simply been silent on their beliefs (thus helping the feminists). Grudem says that the Bible itself is at stake.

I agree with Grudem about 110% of the time. In this case he has the documentation to make his case, but his case is essentially a warning. Some (but not all) have seriously misinterpreted Scripture. That needs to be corrected. I could argue a similar case against those who compromise the biblical doctrine of creation. Loss of the doctrine of creation is, to me, far more likely to lead to liberalism. Grudem's corrective may open the way for other correctives, that the word of truth may be secured.

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