

Evangelical Orthodoxy

What new trends will confront the Church in Europe in the decades to come and how can Evangelicals remain firm? In this talk Stefan Gustavsson steps back to survey the cultural, intellectual, and moral challenges emerging from European culture in the last forty years, taking them as harbingers of challenges yet to come. By examining these trends and the ways in which the Church has both succeeded and failed in responding to them, we can better fulfill Paul's admonition to stand firm in the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15).

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Introduction:

“We should ‘not feel’. We should argue rationally, feel deeply and take full responsibility for our interaction with the world.” Historian Molly Worthen, *Stop Saying ‘I Feel Like’*, The New York Times, 30 April 2016.

“... no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.”
Apostle Paul in Eph 4:14

I. Looking Back; 40 Years in the European Wilderness

- A. Ever increasing speed of new trends, loaded with new promises. Theological versions of popular ideas: *Marxism, Feminism, Ecology, Gay Movement, Queer Theory, Postmodernism ...*
- B. Suspicion about truth claims; no unfiltered connection with reality and therefore no truth about reality.
- C. The NT contrast: “... no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.” Eph. 4:14

II. The Poisoning of our Culture; Man as the Measure of All Things

- A. The great epistemological irony: the search for certainty ended in subjectivism
- B. Friedrich Nietzsche: “Why does man not see things? He is himself standing in the way: he conceals things.”
- C. The need for revelation: the parable of the spacecraft

II. Stand firm; the Calling of the New Testament

- A. A clarion call from Jesus and the Apostles: “Stand firm” 26 times
- B. Not rigidity:
“Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.” John 7:24
- C. Luther and the reading of the Quran
- D. Not silence:
Heretics named in the New Testament: *Philetus, Hymenaeus, and Alexander*
- D. Not new truths:
The battle is constant, the issues differ; Trinity, Christology, Justification ...
Answers to new questions; universalism, same sex marriage, queer theory ...
- E. The importance of drawing a line: Truth and Unity must go together
- F. The message of John 17: “I pray for them”, v. 9,
“protect them from the evil one”, v. 15
“sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth”, v. 17
“that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you”, v. 21

III. A Test Case; 1 Corinthians 15

- A. The Original Gospel, v. 3
For what I received ...
We can trace the Gospel back to the 30s

- B. The Necessary Gospel, v. 1-2
I preached ... You received ... have taken Your stand on ... You are saved if You hold firmly to the word. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.
- C. The Christ– Focused Gospel, v. 3-5
died – was buried – was raised – appeared
- D. The Bible—Based Gospel, v. 3, 5
according to the Scriptures
- E. The Truth of the Gospel, v 6-8, v 14-19
he appeared ...
Three individuals: Peter, James and Paul
Three groups: the twelve, all the apostles, more than 500
What if the resurrection is not true?
- F. The Worldview Behind the Gospel, v. 13
If there is no resurrection of the dead ...
- G. The Cosmic Results of the Gospel, v. 20-28
Christ the firstfruit ... so that God may be all in all

Conclusion