

## **The Stages of Salvation**

Written by Calvin Fox

Wednesday, 01 July 2009 10:56 - Last Updated Wednesday, 03 March 2010 15:58

---

### **Statements made by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship Staff in person and on the IVCF website:**

"Our mission in New England is to advance the Kingdom through whole life conversion to Jesus Christ;

"[we want to help] students to move from cynic to seeker to Christ-follower to leader to world-changer."

"students who have made decisions to leave their "cynic" status and become seekers after God, through experiencing the love of Jesus first-hand in their Christian friends who have been exploring the faith with those friends and have made decisions to believe in Christ"

### **My comments:**

cynic n.- misanthrope, misogynist, misogynist, mocker, satirist, scoffer, pessimist, sarcastic person, cavalier, sneerer, flouter, carper, critic, unbeliever, egoist, manhater, skeptic, doubter, questioner, detractor, negativist, nihilist, doubting Thomas

Not all students are cynics vis-a-vis Christianity (those who are, often come from Christian homes or churches and/or have been impacted by cynical college professors or friends) Many may be simply agnostic or indifferent. Some may be very committed to another Faith, World View or Ideology. Evangelism must also connect with these students as well as the "cynics". The following explains their greatest need and the Scriptural steps necessary to meet it.

All students, as human beings, are sinners and their hearts are not only alienated from God, they are hostile to God. This means they must have new hearts (regeneration), otherwise, they not only do not seek Him, even if they are "good" (moral) people and perhaps religious, they do not have the ability to decide to believe in Christ. They do have a faculty and need for spirituality and may well actively seek help meeting that need (from many sources); but seeking to fill a need for spirituality is not the same as seeking God.

Experiencing love from Christians may create in some them a curiosity about what Christians believe (what makes them do loving acts). They may explore "the Faith" and that may lead some to a decision to believe in Christ or become a "Christ-follower". But what all this actually means depends upon the definition of the key terms used: what Christians believe, The Faith, believe in Christ, Christ-follower.

### **The Reformed understanding of the stages of Salvation:**

## The Stages of Salvation

Written by Calvin Fox

Wednesday, 01 July 2009 10:56 - Last Updated Wednesday, 03 March 2010 15:58

---

The Gospel must be heard (crisis, friendship may help to get that hearing). As it is heard, God changes the hearts of some (those whom He has chosen from before the beginning of time). He "regenerates" them. They receive a new mind about God (the gift of repentance) and the gift of faith in Christ, more specifically in the work of Christ on the cross: his atoning death

That faith alone in the work of Christ alone is the basis of a union (connection) with Christ. Christ is the righteous Son of God. By virtue of that union in Christ (the position), the Believing sinner is reckoned and declared (legally, forensically) by God to be both righteous and a son of God. The sonship and the righteousness of Christ are imputed by God to the Believer.

That imputation, not faith, is the basis for Justification: i.e.- forgiveness of sins and a right standing before God- a position of acceptance and favor in God's eyes. Imputation and Justification are the heart of Salvation- the two sides of what is the pivotal moment in becoming a Christian and the tap root of sanctification and living the Christian life which necessarily follow.

Upon being justified, the Believer is given the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit who becomes the source of the power or enablement essential to live the Christian life, a life of obedience and righteousness. (Thus the sinner in Christ actually becomes who God reckons him to be). That enablement and that life will grow and mature over time and become the evidence that the position in Christ is genuine. Present Justification leads to, is the basis for and the guarantee of, future justification on Judgment Day.

Salvation is a process that is the work of God from beginning to end. It goes from position to experience. Justification leads to Sanctification and that culminates in Glory. Salvation is personal and individual; however, it requires the means of grace through which God strengthens and deepens His work within Believers. Those means are in the possession of the Church: the Preaching of the Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. These means are to be experienced within the corporate worship, fellowship and disciplines of the local church.