

The Gospel According to Voddie Baucham: Part 2

By Paul M. Dohse: Editor

New Calvinism = Control

In part one, Baucham's gospel, which is run of the mill New Calvinism was examined. Examples/excerpts were taken from his most recent book, *Family Shepherds*. Though much more could be discussed, a major characteristic of New Calvinism looms large in the book: New Calvinism's objective to control their subjects/"sheep." That is what I will examine in this second, and last part.



Why does New Calvinism possess this obvious obsession with controlling people? Much could be discussed here as well, and in fact will be discussed at length in the second volume of *The Truth About New Calvinism*, but for now, suffice to say that free thinking of the Berean sort is a threat to New Calvinism's controversial doctrine. In my opinion, John Immel has pioneered understanding in this area of New Calvinism via his book, *Blight In The Vineyard*.

Many of Baucham's themes in the book are worthy of ecstatic praise, but the devil is in the details. No, the church nor Christian schools should be a substitute for spiritual training in the home. Sounds good, but hold on to your spiritual wallet. First, the book employs all elements of two movements spawned by New Calvinism since its own conception circa 1970: the contemporary resurgence of the Patriarchy movement, and the Shepherding movement (circa 1971). Again, this will be addressed in detail in TTANC volume 2, but suffice to say for now that the Patriarchy program puts husbands in firm control of their wives, and then the Shepherding movement puts Reformed elders in firm control of the fathers/husbands. It's really not even ambiguous; there is reason why these two movements are a staple of New Calvinism.

As a prelude to the CONTROL issue, it might be noted that the primary doctrine of New Calvinism is, and note carefully, the centrality of the objective gospel completely outside of us; and then I will add for easy understanding, and that goes for both justification/salvation and sanctification/"spiritual growth" as well. The question that immediately follows is the very simple key to interpreting everything the New Calvinists teach: "Uh, Paul, how does that work? I can understand how an alien righteousness saved us, but how does an alien righteousness sanctify us; ie., spiritual growth minus any righteousness that is inside of us that we do not possess as our own gifted to us by God?"

Good question, and that's clearly the equation if you also consider that they teach the following: Christians are still totally depraved; all of our works are filthy rags; God is never pleased with us or anything we do, but only what Christ has done. Clearly then, no matter how orthodox sounding new Calvinists are, they do not believe we do works in sanctification. When they speak of "obedience," it's not a common understanding of what that word means. Regardless of what they say and how orthodox they make it sound, they believe Christ obeys for us as a result of gospel contemplationism.

So what is the use of the law? A. To show us all that we can't do and what Christ did for us (invoking gratitude [contemplation]), and B., a policy/polity tool for organizing the church and controlling the totally depraved sheep. Just pay attention, New Calvinist elders don't think parishioners should read the Scriptures to form their own ideas/beliefs about what God says concerning various issues. They are to meditate on the gospitality, and leave the thinking to the elders, and now coming to my point of this post—this mentality can be plainly seen throughout Baucham's *Family Shepherds*.

As I stated prior, the book is replete with information that solidifies the husband/father as the undisputed dictator in the home while the wife is busy in the kitchen, barefoot and pregnant, hopefully with triplets. Bauchman then makes it clear that church membership is synonymous with having a relationship with Christ:

"It's important for family shepherds to see that their families are members of local churches so that they might be identified with Christ and his people. Jesus himself identified this as one of the principle marks of

genuine discipleship: (p.148).

Baucham then quotes John 13:34,35 to make the point which states nothing about church membership, but rather the importance of Christians showing love for each other—then Baucham uses that observation to make a further case that Christians can't love each other without being members of a church:

“One of the principle ways we demonstrate this “love for one another” is through membership in the local church. By sharing life together in identifiable communities, we exemplify Christian love as we celebrate together, labor together, and even suffer together (p.149).

Certainly, church membership is important, but we find ourselves in a perilous time when many refuse to join churches because of being identified with compromisers on the one hand, and being under the control of spiritual despots on the other. I, myself, have been associated with two churches who tried to dictate what I write on my blog, and know of two other bloggers who encountered the same effort by churches they were associated with. Moreover, New Calvinist churches offer a double dose of both because sin isn't the issue in their churches; after all, sinners will be sinners. But yet, people are brought up on church discipline for anything that threatens the wellbeing of the local machine; i.e., questioning doctrine, nonattendance, not tithing, etc. This makes New Calvinist churches the best of both worlds in regard to what the *no members only* crowd is running from.

Baucham then takes this illustration even further by implying that church membership is the only way to be identified with sound doctrine:

“This identification is also important from a doctrinal perspective. For instance, a person who professes to believe in Christ but actually holds to Mormon doctrine is easily identified by his or her membership in a Mormon body. By the same token, those who are members in good standing of healthy, theologically sound local bodies bear witness to the truths their church upholds. In fact, drawing such distinctions is one of the primary functions of church leaders (see Titus 1:9) [obviously, this wouldn't be limited to church members] (p.149).

On these same passages, Baucham quotes New Calvinist pastor Mark Dever several times to make the point; Dever, like many New Calvinists, believes that his church has authority over any professing Christian that comes through the front doors of the church professing that “Jesus is the Christ.” One of his elders wrote an article on *9Marks* blog stating the case for such authority based on Peter's confession to Christ recorded in Mathew 16. Still, encouraging church membership and making it synonymous with a valid relationship with Christ better solidifies the control they want over the sheep.

So, we have the authority of the church over the believer, the authority of the husband/father over his family as “priest, shepherd, and prophet,” and...well, sort of. Baucham describes what teaching from the “priest, shepherd, and prophet” *looks like*. And trust me, it doesn't “look like” the Bereans searching the Scriptures to see if they saw things the same way the apostle Paul did. Most of chapter 5 advocates the father/husband merely interacting with his family in devotions through catechisms. Furthermore, in regard to family devotions and the fathers role, Baucham states the following on page 79:

“Family worship isn't a full-on church service every day; instead it's a brief time of devotion before the Lord. The elements are singing, Scripture reading, and prayer. That's it! You sing together, pray together, and read the Scriptures together. Giving fifteen to twenty minutes a day to these simple practices will transform your family.

Conspicuously missing is a balanced view of the father/husband studying the Scriptures in-depth in order to be fully equipped for every good work and to show himself approved. But in case a father/husband would dare to do just that, Baucham makes it clear that there is a group within the church charged by God to make sure the Scriptures are not misrepresented in the home—the elders, who by the way are the ones who are conspicuously missing in the authority structure for the home outlined in Ephesians 5: 22-33. Baucham writes the following on page 35:

“The third and final leg of the discipleship stool is the biblically functioning home. We see this directly in Paul's warning in Titus 1:10-11 concerning the urgent need to rebuke those who contradict sound doctrine:

“For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting *whole families* [emphasis by Baucham] by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.”

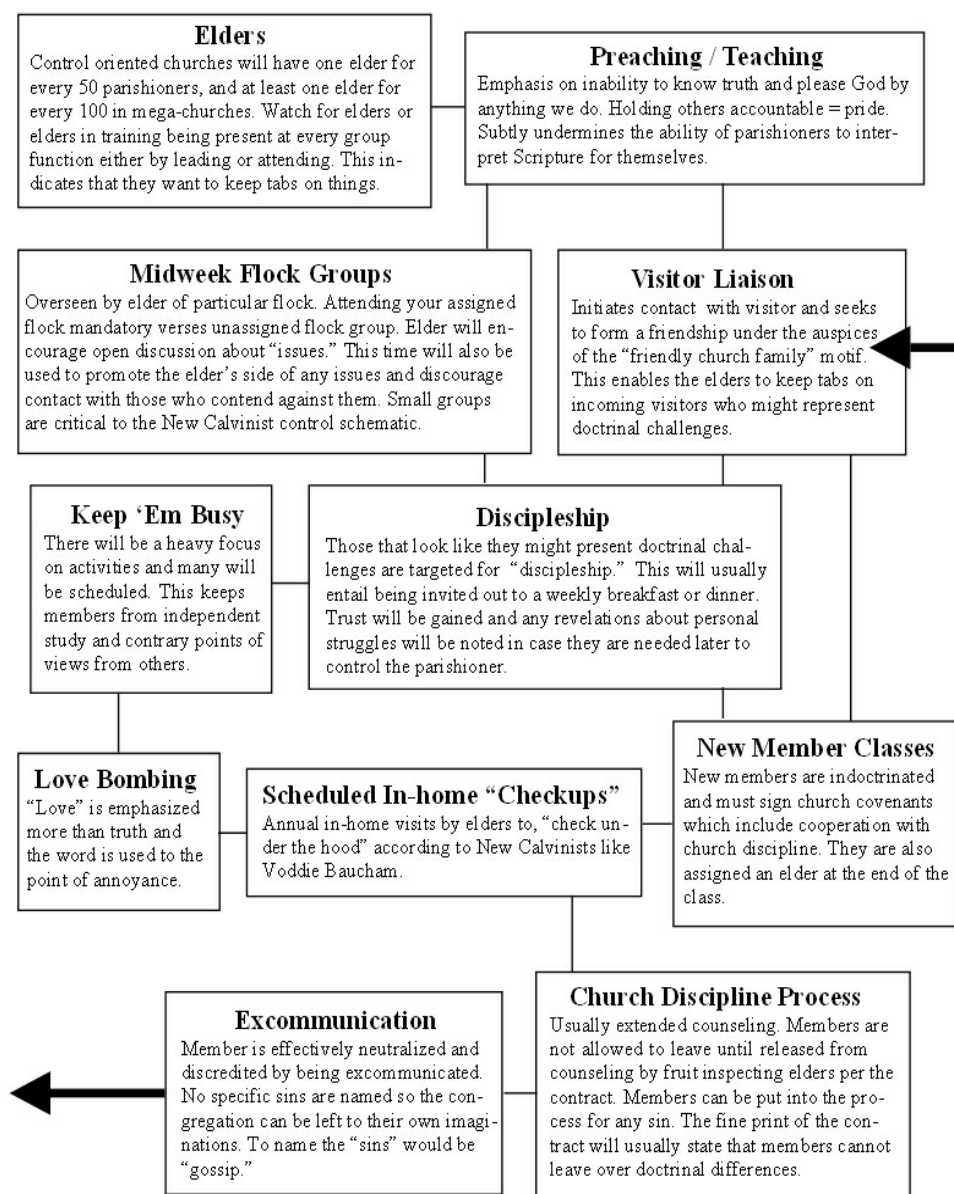
The teaching ministry of the elders is therefore linked directly to defending the discipline ministry that's carried out specifically in families. As Calvin notes about these verses:

"If the faith of one individual were in danger of being overturned (for we are speaking of the perdition of a single soul redeemed by the blood of Christ), the pastor should immediately gird himself for the combat; how much less tolerable is it to see whole houses overturned?"

Baucham puts the icing on the *control cake* via "Appendix One" at the end of the book. He there outlines how the elders can keep tabs on the family ~~shepherds~~ sheep: monthly men's meetings; one on one 'discipleship' [wink, wink]; weekly fellowship meals; monthly in-house elder calls; and yearly in-home visits. I'm not kidding. This is an A-Z lockdown.

Elders are to lead by example—that's where their authority is derived. We follow them as they follow Christ, the Chief Shepherd. We are exhorted to obey them, when it is warranted, for our own benefit and the benefit of others. But be sure of this: the word of God is our ultimate authority, and elders have no authority in our homes.

New Calvinist Schematic for Controlling Totally Depraved Parishioners



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