

# Progressive Christianity

I consider myself to be a progressive Christian, as opposed to a fundamentalist or conservative Christian. What distinguishes the progressive Christian from the conservative Christian has mostly to do with soteriology (the doctrines of salvation), rather than Scriptural inerrancy or literalism. Believe it or not, some Scriptural inerrantists hold to a progressive view of Christian salvation. So, it's not the Bible itself, but our interpretation of the Bible, that makes all the difference.

For the conservative Christian, getting saved is mostly about whether or not you go to Heaven or Hell after you die. For them, the salvation experience begins at a single point in time, at conversion, and culminates after death in God's heavenly Kingdom. While some of the benefits of salvation may be experienced during this lifetime, including an enhanced relationship with God and the power to live a more Godly life, the main benefit is life after death in God's Kingdom, the alternative being eternal torment in Hell. For this reason, the primary focus of conservative Christianity is saving people from Hell, hence the strong emphasis on the word "saved."

For the progressive Christian, the word "saved" has an entirely different meaning. Instead of being saved from the wrath of a very angry God, the focus is on being saved from an incorrect understanding of what God is really like. According to the progressive Christian, Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to save it from the negative and harmful consequences of living self-destructive lives. God is not the one who condemns. Instead, God is viewed in the Bible as the one who saves. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments God's judgments are followed by mercy and forgiveness. According to 1 Timothy 4:10, God "is the Savior of all mankind, and especially (not exclusively) of those who believe." It doesn't matter whether you interpret the Bible literally, figuratively, as the actual Words of God, or as the divinely inspired words of men, the eventual salvation of all mankind is clearly taught.

Progressive Christians spend little time worrying about how and when people get saved. They don't focus on life after death and who goes to Heaven or Hell when they die. If there is a Hell, it is of our own making and it won't last forever. It is God's desire that eventually all be saved. The loving, just and omnipotent God whom we serve is more than capable of getting the job done. The timing of our salvation has more to do with our own stubbornness and reluctance to obey His commandments than with God's willingness to save us.

The term "progressive" Christian refers to the progressive nature of God's revelations to us, the progressive nature of our salvation in Christ, and the progress the world is making towards the establishment of God's Kingdom on Earth. The progressive Christian believes that we are all children of God and are all on the salvation path. We all possess a divine nature and are all equally loved and indwelt by God. Trouble is, most of us have lost our way in this world and are not conscious of who we really are in Christ and how much God really does love us.

If we really want to make a difference in the world and advance God's Kingdom, the best way to proceed is to let our light shine through deeds of love, kindness and generosity. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news, not just for the few who find their way early on, but for everyone.

*"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven."*  
*Matthew 5:17*