What is an evangelical?

The National Association of Evangelicals (www.nae.net) offers this definition of an evangelical:

Evangelicals take the Bible seriously and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The term "evangelical" comes from the Greek word euangelion, meaning "the good news" or the "gospel." Thus, the evangelical faith focuses on the "good news" of salvation brought to sinners by Jesus Christ.

We are a vibrant and diverse group, including believers found in many churches, denominations and nations. Our community brings together Reformed, Holiness, Anabaptist, Pentecostal, Charismatic and other traditions. Our core theological convictions provide unity in the midst of our diversity. The NAE Statement of Faith offers a standard for these evangelical convictions.

Historian David Bebbington also provides a helpful summary of evangelical distinctives, identifying four primary characteristics of evangelicalism:

> Conversionism: the belief that lives need to be transformed through a "born-again" experience and a lifelong process of following Jesus.
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> Activism: the expression and demonstration of the gospel in missionary and social reform efforts.
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> Biblicism: a high regard for and obedience to the Bible as the ultimate authority.
>
> Crucicentrism: a stress on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as making possible the redemption of humanity.

These distinctives and theological convictions define us, not political, social, or cultural trends. In fact, many evangelicals rarely use the term "evangelical" to describe themselves, focusing simply on the core convictions of the triune God, the Bible, faith, Jesus, salvation, evangelism, and discipleship.