A Theology of Social Engagement for Evangelicals: The Reign of God and Social Transformation

Description

Title: A Theology of Social Engagement for Evangelicals: The Reign of God and Social Transformation

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Abstract: This thesis emerges from my own concerns about how North American evangelicals approach social and environmental challenges. As an evangelical pastor I continue to be troubled by the lack of attention paid by evangelicals to actually making the world a better place. I began by investigating the theological reasons behind the evangelicals’ lack of commitment to social amelioration. In those studies I discovered eschatological concepts that shaped the evangelicals’ attitudes towards the socio-political world. Therefore, this thesis is an exploration of a cluster of related, yet complex subjects: evangelicals, eschatology, and social engagement. The primary aim of this thesis is to address the eschatology that shapes the approaches evangelicals take in engaging with the social and environmental challenges of our day. This thesis begins by describing the historical roots of contemporary evangelical eschatological theology. Having described the complexity of evangelical eschatology, the second chapter offers a sustained reflection on the neo-evangelical critique of the pessimistic eschatological theologies that emerged from the
Fundamentalist movement. Through the neo-evangelical critique, this thesis then analyzes some of the more significant problems with contemporary evangelical social engagement. Those deficiencies are brought into dialogue with the Hope Theology of Jürgen Moltmann. Moltmann's proposed eschatological theology coincides with the neo-evangelical proposal of an inaugurated-enacted eschatology. This inaugurated-enacted eschatological theology is then used in the construction of my own theological proposal for a theology of social engagement for evangelicals. This theological proposal identifies several key ideas posited by an inaugurated-enacted eschatology and then applies these ideas to evangelical notions of biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism, and activism. A final chapter explores the potential of my proposed theology of social engagement for overcoming deficiencies in evangelical environmental theologies. This final chapter demonstrates the efficacy of my proposed evangelical theology of social engagement for improving evangelical approaches to social and environmental amelioration. Throughout this thesis I claim that evangelical can and must do a better job of addressing the social and environmental issues of our day. My contribution is to offer an eschatological framework for improving evangelical theologies of social engagement.

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Moreover, I especially appreciated that Evangelical Theology was historically informed. Because a systematic theology has so much ground to cover, it would be tempting to bypass the historical development of doctrine and leave that work to church historians. Likewise, when Bird treats the attributes of classical theism, he lacks engagement with the past (Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, etc.) and present advocates (Helm, Dolezal, etc.), nor does he critique the shift away from classical theism by contemporary evangelicals. In similar fashion, Bird never addresses the drift towards social trinitarianism at length and its abandonment or revision of Nicene orthodoxy by modern theologians. In 'Announcing the Reign of God' Mortimer Arias proposes that the time has come to recover in its fullness the biblical perspective of the kingdom for the mission of the church. Book of Blessings, 1992, Religion, 604 pages. This abridged edition of the Book of Blessings has been prepared for use when blessings are celebrated outside Mass or outside of the church. This text is written for a one-semester introduction to statistical analysis course in sociology, criminal justice, social work, or psychology in which students will be exposed download The Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology from a Seventh-Day Adventist Perspective Andrews University Press, 1985 Scientific American The Big Idea, David H. Levy, 2001, Science, 281 pages. The Evangelical experience is so fascinating that even anthropologists long to look into it. That's just what Tanya ("T.M.") Luhrmann has done in her. Thus the rigorous straining to learn to discern the voice of God from their own voices in their head. The spiritual disciplines, of prayer (and quiet places and times for prayer), fasting, Bible reading, listening to preaching (much of which informs listeners what God is saying to them), reflection on "God's will," and so on, are ways to train the mind to discern the voice of God. Moreover, social science isn't theological analysis. Finally, it seems important to note that the idea that God can communicate with us, and us with God, is certainly not a brand new insight that comes from mid-twentieth-century evangelicalism.