

Lecture 19: The Infiltration of Evangelicalism (IV)

Father, we thank You for this time we have together. And as we think about the influence of Your Word and Your spirit and Your people upon society, we pray for Your wisdom and for Your understanding. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

Introduction and Review: Continuing examination of the influence of religious existentialism on the modern church.

The Infiltration of Evangelicalism (IV)*I. A Summary of the Problems**II. The Practical Consequences**A. Attack on propositional revelation**B. Reluctance to equate the biblical text with the Word of God**C. Attack on biblical historicity**D. Denial that the Bible speaks truth about the cosmos and science**E. Loss of certainty of knowledge**F. Separation of reason and**G. Emphasis on the internal testimony as the only test of truth**H. Adoption of a dialectical view of truth**I. Drift toward universalism**J. Slipping morality*

*K. Devaluation of Reformation and Christian influence on modern culture (*The Great Evangelical Disaster*, 4:384)*

1. Common denial of the importance of Christianity in history

2. Christian response

- a. Not arguing for a "golden age"

- b. The "Christian consensus"

- 1) The elements of this world view

- a) A God to whom we are answerable

- b) A created, orderly universe

- c) A moral order with God as its source

- d) Antithesis - truth conquers falsehood

- e) Objective human innocence and guilt

- f) All humans on "level ground" before God

- g) All humans are sinners

- 2) The cultural benefits of this world view

- a) The rule of Law

- b) Accountability in government

- c) "Truth can be found" - all disciplines

- d) Democratic impulse

- e) Restraint of those in power

- f) Objective human guilt and need for punishment

- c. Not arguing that all the American "founding fathers" were Christians

- 1) Thomas Jefferson

- 2) Recognition of the "consensus" of their culture

- d. The loss of the "consensus"

- 1) Replaced by "personal freedom"

- 2) Example of Germany

- 3) The need to revive interest in preserving the benefits of the Christian consensus world view
- e. The significance of this devaluation of Christian influence
 - 1) Undercuts the need for Christian influence in the present
 - 2) Denies God's activity in history since the NT
 - 3) The "sacred vs. secular" division of Christian concern
 - 4) Suggests limited, relativistic truth
 - a) The work of Jeremy Rifkin, a non-Christian scholar
 - 5) The Christian challenge
 - a) What remains of the consensus - not the principles, but the influence and benefits
 - b) The need to proclaim these benefits and teach their origin
 - (1) Os Guinness, the Williamsburg Charter
 - c) The problem of legislated Christianity *before* education