

LESSON 13: December 17: LABOR, created to create.

INTRODUCTION: What have you seen or read this week on worldviews?

1. Sue VanDerAa email: go to: www.kids4truth.com/watchmaker/watch.html (a case for intelligent design rather than evolution.)
2. Bob Brichoux's email: article from the LA Times reprinted in Fuller's newsletter. What are the important issues for evangelicals to be arguing about today?
3. The word for 2006 is "truthiness". READ article.

Richard J. Mouw, Pres. of Fuller Seminary and a leading evangelical, belongs to the 2.3 million member Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) He has conservative leanings on such issues as abortion but is a social activist from the 1960s. He is committed to eradicating poverty and injustice, stopping genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan and solving the AIDS crisis and global warming. During a recent interview, Mouw reflected on a "wonderful word" that has become "tied up with culture wars." What is an evangelical?

"What does it mean to be an evangelical Christian? To be an evangelical is to take seriously the cross of Jesus Christ as the only solution to the fundamental issues of the human life. We are sinners who need to come to the cross in order to get right with God. That's what it means to be an evangelical. Four criteria, enunciated by British evangelical historian David Bebbington, are widely accepted as necessary to be an evangelical:

- Conversion — the belief that lives need to be transformed through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Belief in the Bible as the supreme authority.
- Cruci-centricism — the emphasis on the Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross.
- Activism — living out one's faith through witnessing to others, social action such as serving the poor and disenfranchised, and developing a holy life.....

The point about evangelicals is that we highlight the criteria, and we're willing to argue about them a lot. At the heart of it is the combination of biblical authority and that sense of having a personal relationship with Christ and the atoning work of Christ.

What are the origins and historical significance of the evangelical movement in this country? The movement in North America can trace its roots to times after the Protestant Reformation, when preaching and worship became much too formal and highly intellectual. Movements in favor of a more warm-hearted embrace of the Gospel — and a strong sense of experiencing the grace of God in one's personal life — came to be known as pietism in Germany, the Netherlands and in Scandinavian countries and as Puritanism in the British Isles. They very much fed the evangelical movement as we see it today in North America.

In the 19th century, evangelicals were social activists. They considered their faith as very much tied to concerns with antislavery, poverty, women's rights. But that changed in the

20th century, with the rise of secularism. Evangelicals became disillusioned with American culture. “You can’t rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic,” was the talk. When evangelicals lost the evolution debate, it was, “Well, it’s all over. We no longer control the culture. Our main job then is to get as many individuals saved as possible — get them ready for heaven.” The focus was on going to heaven — getting saved in order to go to heaven rather than dealing with the basic issues in our culture. They withdrew from society and concentrated on saving souls. This is what Timothy Smith, a famous evangelical historian, calls the “great reversal.”

Why has the term “evangelical” become so unflattering in the popular culture? Since about 1980, with the emergence of the Moral Majority and the new religious right, people have seen evangelicals as a group to be afraid of — that we’re trying to do something bad. Prior to that, for most of the 20th century, evangelicals were pretty withdrawn from American life. But in the 1980s, it took a very political form and especially a very conservative, moral right-wing kind. Much of that came into being because of the sexual revolution. A lot of people have this image that around 1980 evangelicals said, “Let’s get involved with politics and try to impose our view on everybody.” What really happened in the 1960s was that Hugh Hefner and the “Playboy philosophy” came along, as well as the birth control pill. Suddenly there was this emphasis on sexual freedom, and many evangelicals got very worried about the rise of pornography, the gay rights movement and sex education. It was this that got a lot of evangelical involvement in politics going.

Ten years ago Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell may have set the agenda for evangelicals. But today, I think it’s Rick Warren and Bill Hybels who are more visible in setting the agenda for the evangelicals. [What is their agenda? Rick Warren is very concerned about the AIDS crisis. He has been willing to speak about torture and on global warming. And Bill Hybels is very concerned about urban injustice and race relations. So there is a broadening of the evangelical agenda.]

What are the important issues for evangelicals to be arguing about today? Who is Jesus Christ and how do we understand the Bible’s authority? These are the two basic question. For some of us — because we are committed to women in ministry and we’re committed to staying in a serious dialogue with the larger culture — we don’t want to get bogged down in arguing about whether women can be pastors or elders. We don’t want to get bogged down in a very narrow view of the literal six days [of creation] and that kind of thing. The real issue is how does a human being get right with God? Who is Jesus? Can we trust biblical authority, or do we look to the culture to tell us what to believe?

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What do you think? Have evangelicals lost interest in engaging the culture? Is the product of being saved merely getting ready for heaven? What is the effect on evangleicalism when evolution and secular humanism take over our culture?

What do you think are the important issues for evangelicals to be arguing about today?

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The sphere of labor: How important is it? It funds everything. Evil, too.

The 4th Commandment: Exodus chapter 20:9-10

The command within the command. 6 days you shall labor and do all of your work.

Mark 2: disciples picking grain on the sabbath; accused of working on the sabbath; what did Jesus say? Jesus' "man for sabbath or sabbath for man.

Our pattern is after God again. God created in 6 days and then rested.

1. some people find work uninteresting 2. bound up in this sphere of labor is economics, art, media, etc.

What is the world's view of work. Clip 6:20-9:50

the pits, what I do to get to Friday, work only because need the money

James 5:4 "wages not paid cry up from the ground" God is concerned about work.

1455 Gutenberg invented the press; what was his view of work? God was using him for a mighty work. He knew the importance of his work. Consider the computer. Has this inventions in our lifetime been something used for God's glory and the advancement of his kingdom? Have they also been used for evil?

CLIP 15:48 -20:15

God created and then made us creative stewards. We have the privilege of being creative stewards in Gen 2:15. You get to work, make, care for etc.

Why do people hate to work? that which was intended for good?

Is work a curse?

READ gen 3:17f-19 What was easy will no longer be easy. Why? the earth is corrupt, winding down.

The sabbath was made for man.

The sphere of labor: How important is it? We get food, clothes, housing, medicine, transportation, communication, water, gas, electricity,..... It funds everything.

Also from this sphere of labor we get drugs, abortion, gambling, pornography, movies and music, genetic engineering, Enron. It finds everything. It generates evil too.

How can we not address this sphere from God's view?

General economic model:

GOD [Gen 1:26-30, 1 Chr. 29:10-14

STEWARDS [Ex 20:8-11, 15,17; Prov 10:4, 14:23; Matt 6:20, 25:14-30

GOODS [Lev 25:23, Psa 50:7-12

1. All things belong to God. Psalm 50:7-12. [Greed is rampant in our world]

2. God has appointed man to become a creative steward of his goods. Gen 1:28;

define steward: a person or group of persons placed in a position of authority over someone else's property.

economics: management of the property that ultimately belongs to God over which He has placed a steward and over which that steward will be held accountable.

accountable for how we handle God's goods. Parable of talents.

Labor sphere

OWNER

WORKER

GOODS

READ Ephesians 6:5-8 "working as unto the Lord" Christians should be the best workers because they are trustworthy, hard working, joyful, etc. If you fulfill God's design for a worker....

Ephesians 6:9>> Employers have an obligation. How to delegate, etc.

3. Theft and Coveting another's goods is wrong. Ex 20:15, 17

4. Skills and abilities to work come from God Ex 35:30-33

5. Work is profitable, good and to be pursued; laziness is not. Rom 14:23; 10:4, 28:19. 2 Thessa 3:10; Matt 25 parable of talents.

6. Love God and not your goods. Matt. 6:19-24.

7. Be compassionate and generous with your goods to those in need. Lev 19:10; Eph 4:28; 1 John 3:17; pro 28:27;29:7;

Beauty is that which is good, true, beautiful. Psa 101:3; Bach illustr. Solo Deo Gloria