

Kingdom of God
Sept. 11, 2013

Emphasis #1 The Kingdom of God is a Social Kingdom

Overview:

the progressive, social organization and improvement of mankind

Definition: Protestant Christian liberal movement prominent in the early 20th century that attempted to apply biblical teachings to problems associated with industrialization.

Basic Theological Underpinnings: Matthew 6:10

Presbyterians described its goals in 1910: The great ends of the church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Driving Force? Basic view of man & Eschatology; AMILL & POST MILL

Historical Development

Leading theologian - Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist pastor.

What lies beneath?

Practical Result – Social Welfare:

settlement houses

The Progressives

Methodist Pastor Thomas Uzzel led the Methodist People's Tabernacle from 1885 to 1910

Baptist minister Jim Goodhart

Social gospel themes were evident in the **New Deal of 1930's**

Historian Paul Boyer sums up: "many Christians came to believe that through reform efforts, through reform legislation dealing with child labor, with slums and tenement houses and unsafe working conditions, human beings really could build the Kingdom of God on earth."

Offshoot: Christian socialism, form of religious socialism based on the teachings of Jesus.

5 tenets of faith in the Social Gospel:

1. Man is good and will do right if given right social environment
2. Exclusive emphasis on the immanence of God and loss of the transcendence of God; led to a stripping away of the supernatural
3. Socialism is the best political system.
4. Approach the Bible w/ a highly critical attitude called higher criticism,
5. Live out our motto: "universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man"

Legacy of the Social Gospel

1908 Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America formed and adopted "the social creed of the churches."

The 21st century

still influential in mainline Protestant denominations

Evangelical left or Progressive Evangelicals

Two men, both professing to be evangelicals, have led the way.

George W. Bush:

Rick Warren

www.thepeaceplan.com.

5 "giants" of humanity's ills:

1. spiritual emptiness
2. self-centered leadership
3. poverty
4. disease
5. illiteracy

Solution?

- (P)lanting churches
- (E)quipping leaders
- (A)ssisting the poor
- (C)aring for the sick
- (E)ducating the next generation

He since added #6 giant:

One fly in the soup? Those pesky *Exclusive* religions

Evaluation:

Good:

Bad:

Subtle Danger

One branch of Protestantism – private focus w/ private, personal call to repent and believe

Another branch – public, with call to seek salvation by building the kingdom of God on earth

*** both evangelical, meaning they drew their message from the Bible and they focused on redemption.

But objects of concern and underlying theology very different.

Another Evaluation:

a sincere attempt by Christians to do those things that they believe will honor God and benefit humanity. In every case, however, the practical working out of "benefiting humanity" has compromised biblical faith and dishonored God.

Why is that?

Popular Examples of Influence:

Eugene Peterson

Rob Bell

Brian McLaren

Is this really what matters greatly to the heart of God?

Sources:

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