

The Development of Evangelical Theology in Postmodern Culture

(An abstract)

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In the last half-century more and more theologians have paid attention to the close relation between theology and culture. They are aware of the fact that culture inevitably forms part of the context within which theology is done. This sets the stage for the issue, namely, the future development of evangelical theology, to be discussed in this paper. If the rise of fundamentalism and neo-evangelicalism were to be seen as an anti-liberalism or anti-modernism movement, we cannot talk about the future development of evangelical theology apart from the cultural context of postmodernism in a postmodern era. Of course, it is expected that no consensus exists among the various views on the relation between postmodernism and evangelical theology. For some, postmodernism is to be seen as an enemy of evangelicalism; for others, it may be a friend. The author of this paper tends to accept the latter view with a critical awareness of the risk of postmodern relativism.

Given that postmodernism is not necessarily an evil, the aim of this paper is to explore the way postmodern concepts or ideologies may contribute to the future development of evangelical theology. This is done on the basis of Alister E. McGrath's summary of the six central

beliefs of evangelicalism as is presented in his book *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*. These six central beliefs include the supreme authority of Scripture, the majesty of Jesus Christ, the lordship of the Holy Spirit, the need of personal conversion, the priority of evangelism, and the importance of the Christian community. This paper hopes to call forth attention to the need for evangelicalism to get engaged in dialogue with the leading ideologies of our era, while maintaining the central beliefs of the Gospel at the same time. This is, of course, by no means a simple and easy task.