

We are not just Conservatives

Written by Calvin Fox

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I read and benefit from many Conservative columnists. I am often tempted to simply link their articles to my Blog and let their views be as they are. But as a Christian I am committed to analyzing everything I read from a Biblical Perspective. I want to persuade all Christians to do that! We can not be simply social or economic Conservatives!

I say "Biblical" not "Christian". We are committed to approaching and understanding the world from a Biblical World View- more than that- a Neo-Calvinist World View, not simply a "What would Jesus do?" view and not a "according to the Gospel" view. You may have noted the title of my Blog and its tagline: "A Neo-Calvinist Commentary". I explain that on this website, / <http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Calvinism is far more than the 5 famous doctrines having to do with Salvation. It is about the Sovereignty of God over all and is actually a world view to live by. And that Calvinist or Reformed World View as developed by the Dutch Theologian, Abraham Kuyper(1837-1920), is known as Neo-Calvinism. In practice, Neo-Calvinism includes 7 Essential Principles as follows.

ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF NEO-CALVINISM

Creation, Fall and Redemption- God's Creation is good, i.e.- its essential Structures are good. As such, as created, Creation glorifies its Creator.

But Creation has been radically corrupted by the Fall. This corruption includes the "Antithesis", the consequence of the Fall that gives all beings an active animosity and rebellious spirit against God their Creator. The the directions in which all natural structures are taken by Humanity have been diverted or perverted from God's creative purposes for them- everything from the Arts to Sexuality.

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Redemption includes restoration of that Creation in Christ, not primitivism [not restoring Eden]but the recovery and renewal in Christ of the Structures of Creation to their God-intended purposes that they might again be all that God intends them to be to His Glory.

The Rejection of Dualism- Dualism dominates much Christian thinking. The most fundamental dualism is between Nature and Grace, i.e.- between what is material and spiritual, between what is secular and sacred, between the world and the Church. Neo-Calvinists maintain that Grace (Common Grace and Saving Grace) restores Nature in Chrsit. The Church as the Covenant People of God are to be as Salt and Light in Culture as well as God agents to transform Culture.

Jesus is Lord over all of Creation- Kuyper proclaimed, “there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’” Jesus' lordship extends through every area and aspect of life-it is not restricted to the sphere of personal Salvation or of personal piety or the Church. He is Lord of all.

All of life is to be Redeemed- The work of Jesus on the cross was intended to defeat Evil in all areas of life and establish His Lordship there. The resurrection of Jesus is meant to lead to the renewal of all life for both individuals and Society. The total fulfillment of this Goal is not meant to be achieved by an human institutions or work, but remains until the Second Coming of Christ to the earth.

Cultural Mandate- Genesis 1:26-28 is the mandate from God to Humanity to care for and cultivate all of Creation, including Culture and Civilization, to God's glory, All human being, created in His Image, share responsibility to be His lieu-tenants, His Stewards of Creation.

Sphere Sovereignty- The Spheres are God-given Institutions (Marriage, Family, local Church, Civic Community and Civil Government). Each of these Institutions is sovereign unto itself. Each has boundaries that mark off its sphere of responsibility and influence from the other Spheres. All are responsible to God. In relation to each other, no Sphere is to usurp the other. And although they are autonomous, they are to be cooperative. They need each other. A practical application of this concept is to political policy. Political Policy begins at the family and local level and works its way up to Civil Government, not the other way around.

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The Role of Law- God's Law is His will for the living of life in all Spheres. Law is more than the Decalogue. It is the Torah (Five Books of Moses) and begins with the creation ordinances (Norms) established by God Law. This Law of God also includes the Natural Law which God has written on the hearts of all human beings and can be known to them by conscience and reason.

Caution: Not all Calvinists are Neo-Calvinists. Many actually oppose it. And many who claim to be neo-calvinists today do not believe in or advocate all these Principles. The latter tend to emphasize only the first 5 Principles, minimize the Fall and deny the Antithesis. In fact many of them are not Calvinists at all.