

Current Events :: Time Magazine lists "The New-Calvinism" as #3 in 2009's "Top 10 Ideas Changing the Wo

Time Magazine lists "The New-Calvinism" as #3 in 2009's "Top 10 Ideas Changing the World Right Now" - posted by int

Let me say from the onset that I'm not posting this to start a theological debate, but it is nonetheless interesting - and I dare say, perhaps an answer to SI's prayers for revival and awakening - that a secular tabloid like Time would be willing to publish an article like this as by comparison, some of the other items on the list range from what are becoming cultural norms to the downright weird.

3. The New Calvinism

By DAVID VAN BIEMA

If you really want to follow the development of conservative Christianity, track its musical hits. In the early 1900s you might have heard "The Old Rugged Cross," a celebration of the atonement. By the 1980s you could have shared the Jesus-is-my-buddy intimacy of "Shine, Jesus, Shine." And today, more and more top songs feature a God who is very big, while we are...well, hark the David Crowder Band:

I am full of earth

You are heaven's worth

I am stained with dirt

Prone to depravity

Calvinism is back, and not just musically. John Calvin's 16th century reply to medieval Catholicism's buy-your-way-out-of-purgatory excesses is Evangelicalism's latest success story, complete with an utterly sovereign and micromanaging deity, sinful and puny humanity, and the combination's logical consequence, predestination: the belief that before time's dawn, God decided whom he would save (or not), unaffected by any subsequent human action or decision.

Calvinism, cousin to the Reformation's other pillar, Lutheranism, is a bit less dour than its critics claim: it offers a rock-steady deity who orchestrates absolutely everything, including illness (or home foreclosure!), by a logic we may not understand but don't have to second-guess. Our satisfaction — and our purpose — is fulfilled simply by "glorifying" him. In the 1700s, Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards invested Calvinism with a rapturous near-mysticism. Yet it was soon overtaken in the U.S. by movements like Methodism that were more impressed with human will.

Calvinist-descended liberal bodies like the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) discovered other emphases, while Evangelicalism's loss of appetite for rigid doctrine — and the triumph of that friendly, fuzzy Jesus — seemed to relegate hard-core Reformed preaching (Reformed operates as a loose synonym for Calvinist) to a few crotchety Southern churches.

No more.

Neo-Calvinist ministers and authors don't operate quite on a Rick Warren scale. But, notes Ted Olsen, a managing editor at *Christianity Today*, "everyone knows where the energy and the passion are in the Evangelical world" — with the pioneering new-Calvinist John Piper of Minneapolis, Seattle's pugnacious Mark Driscoll and Albert Mohler, head of the Southern Seminary of the huge Southern Baptist Convention.

The Calvinist-flavored ESV Study Bible sold out its first printing, and Reformed blogs like *Between Two Worlds* are among cyber-Christendom's hottest links.

Like the Calvinists, more moderate Evangelicals are exploring cures for the movement's doctrinal drift, but can't offer the same blanket assurance.

"A lot of young people grew up in a culture of brokenness, divorce, drugs or sexual temptation," says Collin Hansen, author of *Young, Restless, Reformed: A Journalist's Journey with the New Calvinists*.

"They have plenty of friends: what they need is a God." Mohler says, "The moment someone begins to define God's biblically, that person is drawn to conclusions that are traditionally classified as Calvinist." Of course, that presumption of inevitability has drawn accusations of arrogance and divisiveness since Calvin's time. Indeed, some of today's enthusiasts imply that non-Calvinists may actually not be Christians. Skirmishes among the Southern Baptists (who have a competing non-Calvinist camp) and online "flame wars" bode badly.

Calvin's 500th birthday will be this July. It will be interesting to see whether Calvin's latest legacy will be classic Protestant backbiting or whether, during these hard times, more Christians searching for security will submit their wills to the austere and demanding God of their country's infancy.

(http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1884779_1884782_1884760,00.html) http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1884779_1884782_1884760,00.html

Re: Time Magazine lists "The New-Calvinism" as #3 in 2009's "Top 10 Ideas Changing the World Right Now", on: 2009/3/24 20:40

doomed!

First, this is the first time I even got the slightest hint of what "calvinism" is, by Time magazine, imagine that. The Lord has kept me BLISSFULLY unaware of inter-protestant doctrine fights.

Now, in my opinion when Time magazine starts opining on things of the Faith, watch out!

here's what I didn't know:

Quote:
-----and the combination's logical consequence, predestination: the belief that before time's dawn, God decided whom he would save (or not), unaffected by any subsequent human action or decision.

really? no free will? No choosing to heed the Call of Christ? No choice to walk into the Light?

Quote:
-----Indeed, some of today's enthusiasts imply that non-Calvinists may actually not be Christians. Skirmishes among the Southern Baptists (who have a competing non-Calvinist camp) and online "flame wars" bode badly.

oh...indeed, take a walk thru our very forum...or to be fair, other christian forums.

Besides the fact that Time magazine presents Christianity as a back-biting den of competing "churches", I find it utterly disheartening that the Name above all names, Jesus, is mentioned all of three times, two of them with a smarmy irreverent tone, ie:

Quote:
-----Jesus-is-my-buddy

and
Quote:
-----friendly, fuzzy Jesus

while Calvin, a mere man is mentioned over 16 times. Something is very very wrong with that.

neil