

CENTRAL TENETS OF AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM
PRESENT-DAY FINDINGS

COMMON BELIEFS

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Man a child of God. Tho born in sin & subject to human frailties & perversities, he has an immortal soul & the present life is merely a period of preparation for a life hereafter.

2. Human destiny under control which is intelligent & friendly & best symbolized by idea of heavenly Father.

3. The great authoritative revelation found in Old & New Testaments. These are to be interpreted by enlightened conscience of individual.

4. The supreme revelation of character & will of God found in life & teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

5. Sexual continence required not for its own sake but for sake of marriage relationship.

6. Jesus thru his sacrificial death appeased wrath of a just God & won salvation for believers. Process of salvation involves 1) conviction of sin, 2) reconciliation, 3) sanctification.

7. Perpetuation & re-creation of religious faith conditioned upon religious assemblage for instruction and common worship.

Man a social being & personality is the internalization within the individual of the social organization. Isolation as essence of damnation. Man's infinite complexity.

Idea of God rooted in need of love at its best of which parents are merely representative. It stands for integrity & friendliness of universe.

Revelation continuous. Means within social process for sifting out superior from inferior beliefs - consistency, continuity, social acceptance, social consequences.

Sharp distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.

Sex maladjustment a potent factor in mental illness because of tendency to regard sex as something forbidden & not to be talked about.

Doctrine of vicarious atonement an escape device explained by frailty of human nature. Ancient teaching regarding process of salvation has much to support it.

Synagogue & church, where people think & feel together about what matters most provide outstanding examples of group therapy.

Opposition between human frailty & moral law, between consciousness of sin & need of salvation, between responsibilities of present & punishment hereafter placed in sharp relief. Consequent effort to re-make world.

Idea of God as personal springs from man's social nature. Religions without personal God satisfy only intellectuals & leave common people a prey to beliefs in capricious spirits (e.g., Hinduism, Confucianism).

Protestant emphasis upon right of individual to interpret Bible for himself has favored development of popular education &, with it, development of science; also of individualism & competition.

Embodiment of Christian faith & teaching in a beautiful & luminous personality a decisive factor in vitality of Christian religion.

Protestantism has sanctified marriage, finding its ideal of holy life in the Christian home & thus permitting the devoutly religious to perpetuate themselves.

Protestant hope calls for individual transformation & involves day of judgment in which good shall be separated from bad. Its hope for future makes it superior to social order while participating in social process.

Assemblage for common worship & instruction has enabled Hebrew-Christian religion to re-think fundamental beliefs in light of changing conditions.