

# **Evaluating Liberal Theology's Biases: Stories of Engagement and Is It All Bad?**

This seminar will discuss how evangelical Christians can effectively engage with more liberal expressions of theology (as well as more moderate ones). What lessons can be learned for how to do this in ways that show the credibility of our faith? What can be learned in the dialogue that inevitably comes with such exchanges? Join us for this seminar as we address these questions and more, drawing on the speaker's experience of theological engagement in public spaces.

**Darrell L. Bock** is Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas, as well as Executive Director of Cultural Engagement for the Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership there. An author of over forty books, his special fields of study involve hermeneutics, the use of the Old Testament in the New, Luke-Acts, the historical Jesus, gospel studies, and the integration of theology and culture. It is this latter area that is the focus of his work at the Hendricks Center, where he is responsible for producing a web-based, weekly podcast on issues of God and culture called *The Table* and author of the recent book, *Cultural Intelligence: Living for God in a Diverse, Pluralistic World*. He is a graduate of the University of Texas (B.A.), Dallas Theological Seminary (Th.M.), and the University of Aberdeen (Ph.D.). He has had four annual stints of post doctoral study at the University of Tübingen, the second through fourth as an Alexander von Humboldt scholar through a scholarship offered by the Federal Republic of Germany (1989-90, 1995-96, 2004-05, 2010-2011). He was editor at large for *Christianity Today* for several years and served as President of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) for the year 2000-2001. He currently serves on the boards of Wheaton College, Chosen People Ministries, Christians in Public Service (CIPS), and the Institute for Global Engagement (IGE). He also serves as elder emeritus at Trinity Fellowship Church in Richardson, Texas. Married to Sally for over forty years, he is the father of two married daughters and a son, and is also a proud grandfather.

## **1. Getting Situated**

Defining Liberal Theology

Origins in the Enlightenment

Contrast to Orthodoxy

Our Current Situation

Its Impact

The Attempt to Dismember the Bible

The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy and Its Shadow

The Turn to Issues of Power and Oppression

Preparing to Think Through Some Examples: Acts 17 and Mars Hill. Wisdom from Above and Virtue, Col. 3

## **2. Basic Communication: Know Your Audiences**

The Liberal

The Listener who Is Deciding Between Options: Our Real Audience

The Conservative Fighter: It Is All Bad

Gospel Questions and Categories and Modern Man: The Story of the Nones

Four Key Questions the Gospel Assumes that Modern People Do Not

Why These Questions Matter.

## **3. Examples and Assessment**

So What Are We To Make of This?

In the Area of Theology and Revelation: Deeply Flawed

In the Area of Gospel Study and Historical Jesus: A Mixed Bag

In the Area of Ethics and Society: Identifies Symptoms But Does Not Offer Solutions But a Continuation of Identity Warfare

How to Think about Public Square Debates

## **4. Summary**

Need to Discern

Requires Careful Listening of Two Audiences

Seriously Flawed But with Enough to Pay Attention To--To Pay Attention To!

Never Leave the Priority of the Key Lens of Scripture - 2 Tim 3:16

***Suggested Readings:***

*Biblical Critical Theory: How the Bible's Unfolding Story Makes Sense of Modern Life and Culture* by [Christopher Watkin](#) (Author), [Timothy Keller](#) (Foreword) Zondervan Academic. 2022

*Christianity and Liberalism*, by [J. Gresham Machen](#) (Author) Ichthus Publications. 1923

*Cultural Intelligence: Living for God in a Diverse, Pluralistic World* by [Darrell L. Bock](#) (Author) B & H Academic. 2020

*Purpose Directed Theology: Getting Our Priorities Right in Evangelical Conversations*, by Darrell L. Bock IVP. 2002

*The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* August 4, 2009 by [Timothy Keller](#) (Author) Penguin Books. 2009