

Outline of Lecture

Chapter Eleven: Ray Anderson, *On Being Human* A Theological Paradigm for Authentic Personhood

“Who am I?” p161 We answer this question in many different ways; e.g.,

- 1] race/gender
- 2] education/social privilege
- 3] professional standing
- 4] domestic arrangements
- 5] psychological configuration
- 6] theological configuration

“I am” all of these equally? one predominantly? none finally? something beyond all of them?

Recall Luther’s favourite text: Colossians 3:3

In what way are we rooted in God, and not merely in God’s “good pleasure” but in God himself?

This question raises the question of the DOCTRINE OF ELECTION. p163

(ELECTION -- AFFIRMATION OF THE SELF)

In the history of theol. *election* has too often been *selection*. (K. Barth: “The doctrine of predestination is the great ugly scar on the face of the Reformation.”)

Note the problems with the Calvin’s doctrine. (See Shepherd handout.)

Note the shift in Barth: election is moved not only from providence, not only from soteriology, but to the doctrine of God. (This was epoch-making.)

If God isn’t He who wills a people for himself in Jesus Christ, then who is God? That is, who is the *eternal* God if God *isn’t* He who wills a people for himself *from eternity*? Is God a deity whose nature remains unknown to us in that whatever His nature, fashioning a people for himself is *tangential* to that nature? Then is the heart of God something other than mercy?

1] Jesus Christ isn’t the implementation of a decree lying behind him but rather the *one* decree of God *enacted* for our sakes. Therefore JC is the electing God.

2] As God *Incarnate*, he’s the elected human (anhypostasia >>enhypostasia.)

3] Since JC isn’t who he is apart from his body, the church is elect in him.

4] Therefore individuals are elected to the community (no one becomes a Christian in the NT without becoming a member of the body of Christ.)

5] Therefore individuals are elect in Christ and identified as such through their sharing in the body.

Note the order.

In the wake of the Fall God finds no human who is a faithful covenant partner.

In the humanness of the Word Incarnate, however,

- (1) God as man *is* this covenant-keeper.**
- (2) In the Son’s crucifixion, the arms of the Son are the “everlasting arms” of God that embrace *all* without exception, qualification or reservation.**
- (3) In the horror of the Son’s dereliction God the Father is self-alienated; i.e., self-condemned for the sake of our acquittal.**
- (4) To say the same thing: recall Athanasius – “The *whole* Christ (i.e., God *and* man) became a curse for us. That is, to**

save us God cursed our fallen humanity and cursed himself in cursing it. "It was not just a man who suffered and died for us, but the Lord as man; not just the life of a man that was offered to save us, but the life of God as man."

- (5) **Athanasius's pithiest statement: "Our resurrection is stored up in the cross."**
- (6) **In the Son's dereliction God consigns the Son to hell; in the Son Incarnate God consigns himself to hell for our sakes. This truth is part of the doctrine of God, not merely an aspect of soteriology, since God has always willed a people for himself.**
- (7) **Since no one belongs in hell ("...prepared for the devil and his angels"), anyone can get to hell only by repudiating her pardon. {Shepherd: "Faith is my refusal to repudiate my pardon."}**

Note how this truth is related to human freedom. Recall the proper understanding of freedom. 164

"Election is fundamentally [PRO] human in its origin."

Human: Jesus Christ is both the electing God and the elected human.

"PRO": In light of the above el. as a divine decree is always *pro*- human. (Cf. predest'n.)

Anderson's (Barth's) tireless point: actuality precedes possibility. Because God does love me, I know it's possible for him to love me. (He *has* revealed himself: this is how we know that revelation is *possible*.) When this is inverted

[1] we develop a rationalist apologetic that argues for possibility

[2] then we look for "evidences" or we engage in wishful thinking re: actuality.

Actuality precedes possibility w.r.t. creation, calling of Israel, Incarnation and election.

This means that right now every last human being

[1] is made in the I.G.

[2] is the beneficiary of JC

[3] has been appointed to a future she can't imagine and concerning which she needs to be told

[4] can never forfeit I.G. but can, bizarrely, incomprehensibly, repudiate her election. (Why would anyone want to stream past the crucified?)

(COVENANT -- RELATEDNESS OF THE SELF) p169

Covenant is the content of election: God's insistence that humanness is *co*-humanness, and this on two fronts: [1] with our "elder brother," JC, the electing God

[2] with the neighbour whom God brings before us

Because covenant is the meaning of human creatureliness and has been pressed into our "DNA", therefore our God-appointed orientation is to love God and others, however much we contradict this deny it and pervert it. We are ever to "become what we are" -- and therein find ourselves "believing" it all the more readily.

Note Anderson's point p170 "Love is the result of a good relationship, not the cause of it. A good relationship is one which acknowledges the fundamental structure of co-humanity as the core of personhood, and which values the other as constitutive of the self."

Anderson notes that couples whose relationship is shallow can tolerate very little "neuroticism" [or anything else, Shepherd would add – because the relationship is held together by utilitarian concerns rather than by a commitment which allows love to thrive, such love having a high tolerance for "neurotic" behaviour.]

[Similarly election guarantees the depth of our relationship with God. For this reason "neurotic" (even sinful) behaviour can be withstood.]

Unconditional, unrelenting commitment is the human/human parallel to God's election of us humans.

The bottom line (171): because each person is ontologically (not accidentally) rooted in personal being, "belonging is more fundamental and determinative of our being than existential estrangement or confusion" -- i.e., the most confused person is ultimately possessed of an integration *as a person* that we can't see.

"Who am I?" = "To whom do I belong?" p172

(SALVATION/ATONEMENT -- HEALING OF THE SELF)

Shepherd: NB the Pentecostal insistence: "There is healing in the atonement." Of course. The cross spells the restoration of the creature *in all respects*. Therefore the atonement means we are appointed to be free of everything that molests/distresses/disfigures us now.

In the present (p174) the "reconciliation of God expressed through Christ and his continuing ministry through the church exorcises from the human community what is contrary to and destructive of humanity." [NB the significance of the vocabulary of exorcism.]

All such exorcism, however, must be accompanied simultaneously by edification. (At this point God's election of the *community* of persons is evident. Note that the election of the community precedes the election of the individual. Christ is never without his body. Individuals become Christians as they are added to the body of Christ.)

(ESCHATON -- THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SELF) p176

The ultimate significance of my life

[1] is guaranteed by God

[2] won't be determined until the eschaton [the last chapter written in the book yields the meaning of the book]

[3] won't be known by me until then.

Until then we await the eschaton.

Prior to the Resurrection the apostles knew Jesus as "an absence in presence" -- he was physically present, yet they misconstrued him constantly.

After the Res'n they knew him as "a presence in absence" -- he isn't physically present [Shepherd: although bodily present], yet they now understood him and lived in him [in the totality of his reality] in an intimacy and intensity greater than before.

In the eschaton, we shall know him as a "presence in presence". And at this point the purpose of election is fulfilled.

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