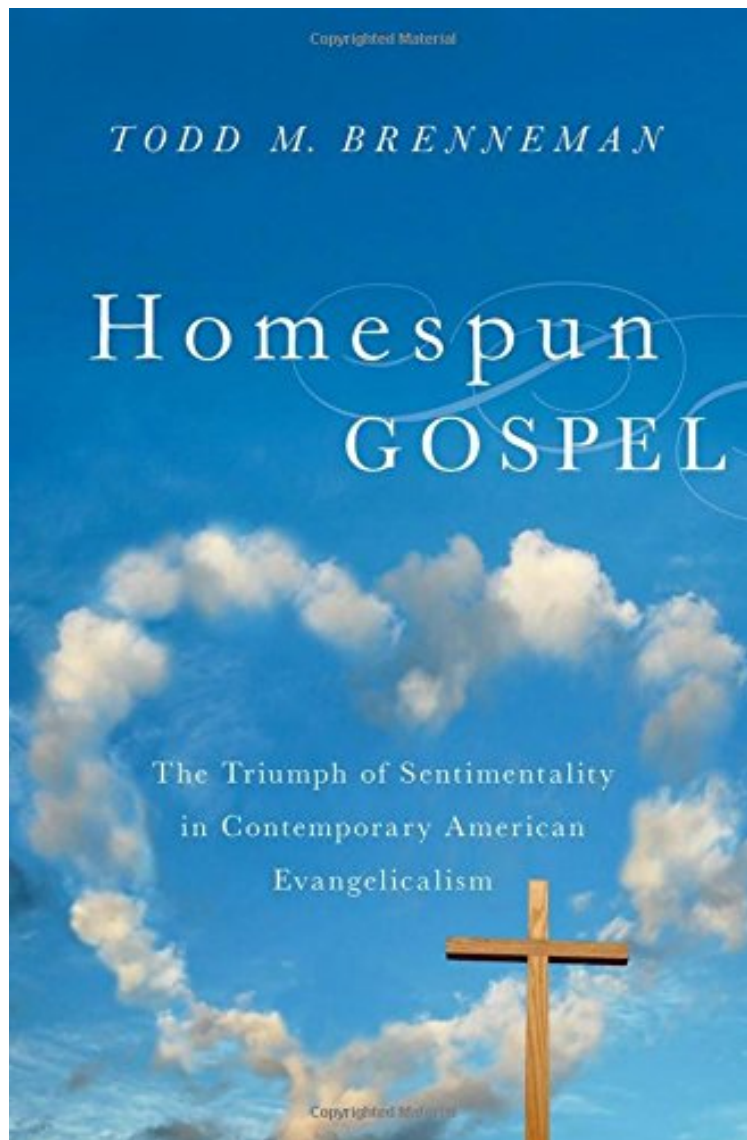


(Download free pdf) Homespun Gospel: The Triumph of Sentimentality in Contemporary American Evangelicalism

Homespun Gospel: The Triumph of Sentimentality in Contemporary American Evangelicalism

Todd M. Brenneman

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#486344 in Books Oxford University Press 2013-12-03 Original language: English PDF # 1 6.30 x 1.00 x 9.401, .95 #File Name: 0199988986208 pages | File size: 42.Mb

Todd M. Brenneman : Homespun Gospel: The Triumph of Sentimentality in Contemporary American Evangelicalism before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Homespun Gospel: The Triumph of Sentimentality in Contemporary American Evangelicalism:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good book
By Roms
It did meet my expectations
8 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A Worthy Topic
Gone Badly Off the Rails
By GSL
There can be no doubt that Christianity in general and evangelicalism specifically has drifted from its moorings. In fact, drifted is far too passive a word. It has fired up the dilithium crystals and is traveling at warp speed into the post-modern cultural miasma. The author might be interested to know that evangelicalism did not invent narcissism. They have simply caved into the zeitgeist. It doesn't take a PHD to recognize the lunacy of Osteenian religion, the triviality of a multitude of authors made in the image of Lucado, and the consumerism of Warren and the mega-church model. The problem with this pedantic rant is that it contributes nothing to the conversation. It is clearly the product of a liberal theological education that is as far off the rails as are the subjects of the author's ire. Since when is it a failure of the intellect to view evolution as bad science? Since when is it a failure of the intellect to question the JEPD theory of Biblical authorship? Since when is it a failure of intellect to recognize that God created man with a full range of emotional capacities and relates to His creatures in highly emotional ways, e.g. Ps 23, Lk 15, Mt 5:29-30, the whole book of Revelation, just to name a few? (I am not defending the obscenely smarmy antics of contemporary Christian writers. I am suggesting that Brenneman throws the baby out with the bath water...forgive the sentimentalist expression). Mr Brenneman advocates strong intellectual doctrinal Christianity (who wouldn't?) but does not clarify one issue doctrinally. If I had only this book to try to comprehend anything about valid Biblical Christianity I could only conclude that the God of the Bible is a Vulcan who hates all human emotion, has no use for strong families, is pro-gay, pro-abortion, antisocial, and uninvolved in anyone's life. Furthermore, we must avoid reading, listening to, and watching anything claiming to be Christian because these are the insidious means by which power hungry people manipulate their followers. This begs the question why Mr. Brenneman would write a book? Is he trying to "instantiate" his beliefs and get us to cede authority to him? (I suppose that can be said of anyone who writes to make a point. Sounds like your typical leftist paradigm...oh, but wait...Mr. Brenneman is above the political fray.) His take on music sort of misses the point as well...as music is highly emotive. I agree that today's Christian music could really use a tune up but I truly fear any hymn that Mr. Brenneman might write. It would no doubt musically be in the genre of the Gregorian chant and lyrically sound something like: "We praise the God of Heilsgeschichte, but can't make head nor tail of it". (Sorry, I couldn't resist). So here is a piece of homespun wisdom that Mr. Brenneman could learn from: Any jackass can kick a barn down. It takes a craftsman to build one. If you are going to rail against things that admittedly should be railed against (in this case extreme and imbalanced Christian sentimentalism...not all emotional "tropes" are evil. Paul says we cry out Abba, Father by the Spirit of God...Christian consumerism, Christian narcissism...a true oxymoron...Christian anti-intellectualism) do so with balance and constructive Biblical insight. And find a few synonyms for "trope". Good heavens man. It became fingernails on a chalkboard.
1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Too scholarly
By Daniel Thomas
This book was too scholarly for my taste. It's better suited for the seminary classroom.

In popular evangelical literature, God is loving and friendly, described in heartfelt, often saccharine language that evokes nostalgia, comfortable domesticity, and familial love. This emotional style has been widely adopted by the writers most popular among American evangelicals, including such celebrity pastors as Max Lucado, Rick Warren, and Joel Osteen. Todd M. Brenneman provides groundbreaking insight into the phenomenon of evangelical sentimentality: an emotional appeal to readers' feelings about familial relationships, which can in turn be used as the basis for a relationship with God. Brenneman shows how evangelicals use tropes of God as father, human beings as children, and nostalgia for an imagined idyllic home life to provide alternate sources of social authority, intended to help evangelicals survive a culture that is philosophically at odds with conservative Christianity. Yet Brenneman also demonstrates that the sentimental focus on individual emotion and experience can undermine the evangelical agenda. Sentimentality is an effective means of achieving individual conversions, but it also promotes a narcissism that blinds evangelicals to larger social forces and impedes their ability to bring about the change they seek. *Homespun Gospel* offers a compelling perspective on an unexplored but vital aspect of American evangelical identity.

"Brenneman's work fills a gap...little [scholarly attention] had been paid to the pastor-purveyors of popular 'inspiration' and therapeutic advice that form such a large part of evangelical culture itself. Brenneman provides a solid analysis establishing the way that this discourse naturalizes the sentimentalist sensibility that shapes a dominant American evangelical way of understanding self, cosmos, and the parameters of legitimate political agency."--*The Journal of American Culture*
"*Homespun Gospel* is an insightful work that encourages us to rethink, and re-feel, evangelicalism. It should stimulate and provoke a great many conversations to come."--*Sociology of Religion*
"*Homespun Gospel* is a nuanced and thought-provoking work... Recommended."--*CHOICE*
"*Homespun Gospel* could very well launch a broad reinterpretation of contemporary evangelicalism. The genius of Brenneman's book is in reexamining old, familiar scenes through freshly adjusted lenses."--*Christianity Today*
"*Homespun Gospel* shows that the pulse of American evangelicalism resides, appropriately, in the heart. Brenneman skillfully moves evangelical studies away from beliefs and politics before revealing how sentimentality informs those spheres, too." --Steven P. Miller, author of *Billy*

Graham and the Rise of the Republican South" Why read this book? Because it redirects our search for the soul of evangelical politics from the preacher-politicians who dominate the media to those preacher-authors who claim no political involvement at all, and whose books, Brenneman argues, foster a culture of simplicity, dull the evangelical intellect, legitimate narcissism, and shape the evangelical 'mind.' A provocative read to say the least!" --Richard T. Hughes, author of *Myths America Lives By* "Homespun Gospel provides an insightful analysis of well-known, but seldom studied figures of contemporary evangelicalism. Brenneman's argument that evangelicalism can best be understood through the lens of sentimentality is both provocative and compelling. Brenneman challenges readers to grapple with evangelicalism on different terms and makes a great contribution to the study of this complicated religious movement." --Lynn S. Neal, author of *Romancing God: Evangelical Women and Inspirational Fiction*

About the Author Todd M. Brenneman is Assistant Professor of Christian History at Faulkner University in Montgomery, AL. He earned his Ph.D. at Florida State University. His research interests include religion in the United States, evangelicalism, the history of Christianity, and religion and children.