

Chapter 1 : The Sexual Harassment Crisis: Is It a Theological Problem? -

Crisis theology definition is - neoorthodoxy especially in its pessimistic view of human nature that holds that humans and all human institutions are inevitably confounded by their own inner contradictions and that the resultant crisis forces humans to despair of their own efforts and possibly to turn to divine revelation and grace in faith.

But divided it had been by intractable theological, political, and economic forces. Never again would the Bible completely recover its traditional authority in American culture. Noll in *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* points out that a belief in divine providence and adherence to Scripture provided purpose and stability in the lives of antebellum Americans. But, religious leaders in the years leading up to the Civil War were unable to provide a definitive answer on the most difficult question of the period: Does the Bible condemn or condone slavery? Relying primarily on the writings of nineteenth-century theologians and other religious thinkers, Noll concludes that the clashes over these two issues revealed a theological crisis and resulted in a major turning point in American religious thought. Noll points out that the supporters of slavery rested on a literal interpretation of the Bible, while abolitionists maintained that slavery violated the spirit of the Bible. Opponents of slavery furthermore contended that Scripture condemned slavery as it existed in America, for the system was riddled with abuses. While Southern ministers admitted the system required reform, but not abolition. In addition to the slavery question, Noll argues that Americans were also at odds over the workings of a providential God. Before the war, American theologians demonstrated confidence in their ability to fathom the meaning behind worldly events. During the war, both sides claimed that God supported their cause; however, the ways of God had become uncertain. Noll devotes only one chapter to this important topic and leaves the reader wanting to know more. In order to provide a broader framework, Noll also includes foreign theological commentary, both Protestant and Catholic, on the issue of slavery and the Bible. Although Noll admits that his work here is preliminary, his use of these often overlooked sources makes these two chapters the most intriguing of the book. Indeed, they were more opposed to slavery than they were in favor of the North. The second strand of foreign commentary came from conservative European Catholics, who did not categorically condemn slavery, but did criticize the institution as it existed America. But, conservative criticism went much further as Catholics took advantage of the opportunity to underscore the authority of the Church. Catholic theologians pointed out that because of the religious individualism that played such an instrumental role in the creation of the United States and its national culture, there was no overarching religious authority to offer a definitive statement on the issue of slavery. Reviewed by Kent T. You find it in the Old and New Testamentsâ€”in the prophecies, psalms, and the epistles of Paul; you find it recognized, sanctioned everywhere. It does not rest on your action for its origin, on your consent for its existence. It is a common law right to property in the service of man; its origin was Divine decree. Lee, Leader of the Confederate Army of the South When the Confederate states drew up their constitution, they added something that the colonial founders had voted to leave out, namely, an invocation of the Deity. Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South] Our [Christian] denominations [in the South] are few, harmonious, pretty much united among themselves [especially on the issue of slaveryâ€”E. We have been so irreverent as to laugh at Mormonism and Millerism, which have created such [religious] commotions farther North; and modern prophets have no honor in our country. Shakers, Dunkers, Socialists, and the like, keep themselves afar off. I believe you would do so justly. There is no material here [in the South] for such characters [from the North] to operate uponâ€”A people [like we Southerners] whose men are proverbially brave, intellectual and hospitable, and whose women are unaffectedly chaste, devoted to domestic life, and happy in it, can neither be degraded nor demoralized, whatever their institutions may be. My decided opinion is, that our system of Slavery contributes largely to the development and culture of these high and noble qualities. Revivals of religion and revivals of the slave trade go hand in hand. Were I to be again reduced to the chains of slavery, next to the enslavement, I should regard being the slave of a religious master the greatest calamity that could befall me. For of all slaveholders with whom I have ever met, religious slaveholders are the worst. I have ever found them the meanest and basest, the most cruel and cowardly, of all others. It was my unhappy lot to belong to a

religious slaveholder. He always managed to have one or more of his slaves to whip every Monday morning. In August, , my master attended a Methodist camp-meeting and there experienced religion. He prayed morning, noon, and night. He very soon distinguished himself among his brethren, and was made a class leader and exhorter. Harriet Jacobs, in her narrative, informs us that her tormenting owner was the worse for being converted. *New Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. If God sent you to preach to sinners did He direct you to keep your face to the white folks constantly? Or is it because they give you money? If this is the cause we are the very persons who labor for this money but it is handed to you by our masters. Did God tell you to make your meeting houses just large enough to hold the white folks and let the Black people stand in the sun and rain as the brooks in the field? We are charged with inattention. It is impossible for us to pay good attention with this chance. In fact, some of us scarcely think we are preached to at all. Money appears to be the object. We are carried to market and sold to the highest bidder never once inquiring whether sold to a heathen or Christian. If it is, there will be a good many who go there. If not, their chance of getting there will be bad for there can be many witnesses against them. *Letters of American Slaves*, ed. Starobin It is not uncharacteristic in the study of race relations that the catechisms, as instruments of control, revealed more about the thinking of the slaveholding society and its clerical leaders than they did about the slaves. Wood, *The Arrogance of Faith*: Another false legend exposed here is that northern churches aided and encouraged efforts to free the slaves: Northern churches considered slavery a political issue rather than a moral one so as not to offend their southern affiliates. Allowed to sing only religious music, slaves often composed songs that were outwardly biblical, but that were actually coded messages for the underground railroad. The author contends that since the few freethinkers were not organized, they had no say in the slavery issue. His research is incomplete: Thomas Paine almost single-handedly abolished slavery in Pennsylvania, the first state where it was outlawed, in In fact, when did the other northern churches abolish slavery? He spends only a few pages on the genocide of the Native Americans, and almost totally ignores slavery in the Spanish settlements. Among their number were the best conservative theologians and exegetes of their day, including, Robert Dabney, James Thornwell and the great Charles Hodge of Princeton—fathers of twentieth century evangelicalism and of the modern expression of the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy. No one can really appreciate how certain these evangelicals were that the Bible endorsed slavery, or of the vehemence of their argumentation unless something from their writings is read. Therefore, the South had to secede in order to protect its providential trust of slavery. At least one slave responded to such theological resolutions with one of his own: To judge by the hundreds of sermons and specially composed church prayers that have survived on both sides, ministers were among the most fanatical of the combatants from beginning to end. The churches played a major role in dividing the nation, and it may be that the splits in the churches made a final split in the nation possible. In the North, such a charge was often willingly accepted. I believe it is true we did bring it about, and I glory in it, for it is a wreath of glory round our brow. Southern clergymen were particularly responsible for prolonging the increasingly futile struggle. The Crusades aside, Civil War armies were perhaps the most religious in history. Troops who were not especially religious prior to the war often found comfort in religion when faced with the horrific reality of combat. Those who had held strong religious beliefs before they went into battle usually found their faith strengthened. Both northerners and southerners were used to expressing themselves via religious metaphors and Scriptural allusions. Once war broke out, both sides saw themselves as Christian armies, and the war itself served to reinforce this. This identity inspires our hope and establishes our confidence. It has become for us a holy war, and each fearful and bloody battle an act of awful and solemn worship. Admittedly, diarrhea killed more Civil War soldiers than were killed in battle. But then, influenza killed more World War I soldiers than were killed in battle. Neither is there any doubt among historians that religion played a more pervasive and intimate role in heightening disagreements and animosities during the Civil War than in those others. *The Civil War as a Religious War*: It can be argued that the Civil War was as much theological as it was political. Ministers signed up for war in larger numbers, especially in the South. All the officers in one Texas regiment were, apparently, Methodist preachers. Religious propaganda drove war fever and inspired confidence in ultimate victory. *Ham and the Christian Defense of Slavery*: The primary focus of those using Christianity to defend slavery and segregation was the

story of Noah, specifically the part where his son Ham is cursed to serve his brothers. This story long functioned as a model for Christians to insist that God meant Africans to be marked as the servants of others because they are descended from Ham. Slavery, Christian Honor, and Social Order: The concepts of honor and social order have been integral to Southern Christianity and Southern defenses of slavery. Black Africans, as descendants of Ham, were seen as lacking honor and therefore deserving of slavery. Maintaining social order meant preserving traditional structures of authority: Southern Christianity and Liberty: Southern slave owners had little interest in general liberty or maintaining a democratic republic. Their ideals were founded upon patriarchy, timocracy, and authoritarianism – not liberty, democracy, or other values people tend to take for granted today. In effect, Christianity constituted an important basis for anti-democratic movements in the South designed to deny liberty to large numbers of people, primarily though not solely slaves. Christianity as a Source of Weakness in the South:

Chapter 2 : Scrivenings: The Civil War as a Theological Crisis, and a "Holy War"

The third crisis which is upon theological education today is a crisis of nerve. Since the days of the first Great Awakening on the American frontier, Christian institutions in America have been in a place of respect and privilege.

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: University of North Carolina Press, Historians have argued for years about what caused the Civil War: Noll suggests a new entry: In a fascinating proposition, Noll argues that differing understandings of the Bible helped drive the wedge between Americans who supported slavery and those who did not. The fundamental question was whether to believe the Old Testament ideas that seem to endorse bondage or to take the larger message of the New Testament, which promotes empathy and compassion. The obvious problem with the New Testament, the view favored by those opposed at least to the extension of slavery, is that it never refutes slavery directly. And what about the abolitionists? They undermined their own cause early on, Noll says, by rejecting any part of the Bible that did not agree with their point of view. Because of the particular way Americans absorbed the Enlightenment, they could not agree to disagree over varying interpretations of the Bible. The Enlightenment had made Americans certain they could divine the truth, and anyone who disagreed with their view was flat-out wrong. Then, as now, this made biblical interpretation a fraught, contentious, and ultimately deeply divisive issue that helped drive the nation to war. The most gnawing is that he focuses almost exclusively on a small cadre of intellectuals and theologians, yet makes broad claims for American society based on this narrow sample. There is little evidence of how deeply these theological arguments penetrated into the consciousness of regular Americans. Noll offers a glimpse here and there, but not enough to support the extent of his assertions. Noll is willing to look to more popular sources such as the London Times in his excellent chapters on the European view of the American debate. This raises the obvious question of why he did not use that kind of material, along with letters and diaries, for his discussion of the domestic dispute. My second criticism has to do with the title and its relation to the contents. This book is really about the antebellum era, not the Civil War, as a theological crisis. Noll says little about the war itself. At best, it is mentioned glancingly in a single chapter the Europeans get two chapters. Did the war itself present so little in the way of theological crisis? How did preachers explain the hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded men? The suffering of their families and of refugees forced out of their homes by war? How did the men who had rationalized slavery through the Bible explain emancipation, either during or after the war? How could they square that with their antebellum views? In the introduction, Noll posits that the breakdown of antebellum arguments helped secularize the nation after the war, but again, this tantalizing statement [End Page] receives only brief treatment in the body of the book. This leaves one to wonder whether it was disillusionment with the arguments, disillusionment with God, or a new interest in science that prompted some Americans to turn their backs on religion. The Civil War as a Theological Crisis is an intelligent, nuanced look at theologians in the antebellum period. The book offers a convincing argument about the breakdown in their discourse, but fails to follow through on its promises of broader reception, a wartime view, or the postbellum fallout. You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

Chapter 3 : The Sexual Harassment Crisis: Is It a Theological Problem? - calendrierdelascience.com

Noll has opened up a new, theological understanding of warAlabama Review A distinctive piece of Civil War scholarship This slim set of lectures greatly enhances the study of religion's role in the American Civil War and the study of Christian intellectual life during a crucial period of U.S. history.

These frequently asked questions and theological answers are an additional resource. First, in reference to history, it refers to the fact that in Europe, the Free Church was free from the state church control. Second, in reference to theology, it refers to our local church polity in that each local church is autonomous, i. Here is how this is explained in Evangelical Convictions: Though not included among our central doctrinal convictions, the Evangelical Free Church of America is congregational. That is, Evangelical Free Churches are autonomous and self-governing. Does the EFCA have a position on the age of the universe, either young-earth or old-earth? In Article 1 of our Statement of Faith , we affirm the following: We believe in one God, Creator of all things [who has] limitless knowledge and sovereign power [and who] has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory. These are the explicit essentials of creation we affirm. When addressing the age of the universe, i. What this means is clarified in Genesis 1 expresses truth about God as Creator and His creation, but because of the uncertainty regarding the meaning and literary form of this text and the lack of Evangelical consensus on this issue, our Statement does not require a particular position on the mechanics of creation. However, to be within the doctrinal parameters of the EFCA, any understanding of the process of creation must affirm: To be acceptable within the EFCA any views on these specifics must completely affirm this Statement of Faith and align within these essential parameters. Historically, Evangelicals affirm that because of sin God initiates salvation. Though there are differences, in both streams God initiates and affirms that He must do so because of the state of all of humankind after the fall of being spiritually dead. Evangelicals deny Pelagianism condemned at the Council of Ephesus in and semi-Pelagianism condemned at the Council of Orange in The fact of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone is essential. Whether regeneration precedes faith Calvinism or faith precedes regeneration Arminianism , we have placed in a secondary category. This does not mean that each local church has an equal number of those positions represented. Each local EFC church leans in one theological direction more so than another. But whichever way the church leans, the church ought to be welcoming to the person who leans in the other theological direction. In the EFCA we allow beliefs within certain acceptable theological parameters on a number of doctrinal issues. For example, this is true regarding the issue of the age of the universe, time and mode of baptism, whether faith precedes regeneration or regeneration precedes faith the Arminian and Calvinist discussion. Once [the early Free Church leaders] began to put in writing what was commonly believed among them, they were silent on those doctrines which through the centuries had divided Christians of equal dedication, Biblical knowledge, spiritual maturity and love for Christ. What it does mean “ we affirm the following truths and commitments: Though the EFCA is premillennial, we embrace the breadth of premillennialism, including the various positions of Dispensationalism, Progressive Dispensationalism, and Historic Premillennialism. The broader view of premillennialism, including the breadth noted above, also has specific nuances of the tribulation including the following views: The Lord Jesus mandated that the church celebrate the ordinances. It is not a matter of indifference adiaphora , since it is a clear command given by the Lord Jesus for the church to celebrate Matt. But the timing paedobaptism and credo and the mode sprinkling and immersion we have placed in a category of silence, i. The EFCA is primarily believer baptism by immersion in both belief and practice. Some churches do practice infant baptism, though not considered for salvation. With this position, we do not want to portray that the Scriptures are unclear or baptism does not matter. The key is not the command to be baptized but the time and mode of baptism. We recognize that the interpretations of Scripture on the relevant points regarding the two positions on baptism differ with one another and are in some ways incompatible. We allow different interpretations, not because we think Scripture is intrinsically ambiguous on the matter, nor because we think Scripture provides so little information that it is unwise to hold any opinion, but because some of us think the

credobaptist position is in line with Scripture and that the paedobaptist position is mistaken, and some think the paedobaptist position is in line with Scripture and that the exclusively credobaptist position is mistaken. In other words, both sides hold that Scripture speaks to the matter, but each side holds a view that excludes the other. However, we do not believe that our differing views on this matter among others should prevent our unity in the gospel in full local church fellowship. How should local churches respond to the Supreme Court decision regarding same-sex marriage? Writing on behalf of the majority, Justice Anthony Kennedy sought to respond to some of the concerns raised by religions and those with religious convictions. Finally, it must be emphasized that religions, and those who adhere to religious doctrines, may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned. The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths, and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered. As part of this defense this bill prevents federal intrusion and government retaliation, specifically against those individuals and institutions who support traditional marriage. For example, the bill would prohibit the IRS from stripping a church of its tax exemption for refusing to officiate same-sex weddings. It is interesting to note, that two legal issues that strike at the heart of key biblical truths and central issues of living out our Christian faith – abortion and same-sex marriage – are both rooted in the 14th Amendment: In *Roe v. Wade*. In the first few days after the decision a number of Christians have begun to think along these lines as they ponder further how we ought to process this and how we ought to respond. Theologically and pastorally, we affirm God is the sovereign one who remains sovereign as he unfolds his providential plan in this fallen-redeemed-not-yet-glorified world. This will impact believers, churches and church-related institutions, but we do not know in what way. It is most likely that church-related institutions rather than churches themselves will be most affected by this new law. You can be assured the EFCA will work prayerfully and diligently to provide instruction, guidance and resources for pastors and churches. It is not as if this is catching us completely unaware, but it is a new day that will require a new way of thinking about and responding to this. Our biblical and theological commitment remains the same. It is likely that the Spiritual Heritage Committee will be enlisted to work on how best to guide our thinking and responding, biblically, theologically and pastorally. We have also provided resources and policies. What is the EFCA position on homosexuality and same-sex marriage? Article 2 which grounds and guides our understanding of and response to homosexuality and same-sex marriage. We also have a statement on same-sex marriage that provides guidance to local churches who are writing a policy on this issue: This Statement is drawn from Scripture as our ultimate authority. It sets forth a Christian vision of human sexuality as a good gift of God. The divine design for sexual expression within the commitment of marriage between a man and a woman is fundamental to the well-ordering of human society and is integral to human flourishing. God created human beings as male and female Gen. Scripture grants two life-enhancing options for sexual behavior: In Scripture monogamous heterosexual marriage bears a significance which goes beyond the regulation of sexual behavior, the bearing and raising of children, the formation of families, and the recognition of certain economic and legal rights. We regard marriage as a good creation of God, and marriage within the Church as a rite and institution tied directly to our foundational belief of God as creator. We also regard marriage as a sacred institution which mirrors the mysterious and wonderful bond between Christ and His Church. Marriage is much more than merely a contract between two persons a secular notion. We therefore only authorize and recognize heterosexual marriages. We define marriage in the following way: The EFCA premillennial position embraces the breadth of premillennialism, including the various understandings of it. Some in the Free Church say those covenantal promises will be fulfilled with the nation of Israel Evangelical Dispensational Premillennialism, while others would claim that those promises have been fulfilled by Christ, are being fulfilled in the Church and will be fulfilled when Christ returns Historic Premillennialism. Both of these positions are acceptable within the EFCA, as is the more mediating position known as Progressive Dispensationalism. Those in the EFCA who embrace a Historic Premillennial position say that the promises have been fulfilled in Jesus, the church, new heavens and new earth, thus affirming a fulfillment theology, not a replacement theology. It is important to acknowledge that there are some who

affirm replacement theology who have desired to do Israel harm. How is premillennialism understood in the EFCA? In affirming premillennialism, we affirm the breadth of the premillennial view including Dispensation Premillennialism, Progressive Dispensationalism and Historic Premillennialism. The specific answer to this question is found in Evangelical Convictions: Our affirmation of the premillennial return of Christ in the Statement entails the following: The kingdom of God will not reach its culmination and fulfillment on earth before Jesus Christ comes in glory. He will be seen to be the King of kings and Lord of lords by all, and He will establish His reign on this earth. The coming of Christ will not simply usher in some spiritual heaven divorced from this created order. In an intermediate stage, Jesus must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet, before He hands over the kingdom to God the Father, ushering in the new heaven and the new earth in the eternal state. Evil will not be overcome fully and completely when Christ returns in glory, but only after an intermediate kingdom which must precede that final victory of God. There will be one more uprising of the evil one at the end of the millennium, before the dawning of the new heaven and the new earth. Further, this Statement affirming premillennialism does not mean: It does not require a specific position on when Christ will come in relation to a time of great tribulation. It does not require a certain way of reading the Bible regarding the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, whether that fulfillment is found in the nation of Israel, in Christ, in the church, in the millennium or in the new heaven and the new earth. It does not entail a particular understanding of Israel and the church or of the current nation-state of Israel. The former view is generally held by those who would be more Reformed in their leanings, while the latter would be held by those more Arminian and Lutheran. Because the EFCA is a place for both Arminians including Lutherans and Calvinists, there is no official position mandating or prohibiting either position. Our official position is that we are a place where both can serve and minister together. It is not to be a doctrine that causes division in the EFCA. Local EFCA churches lean in one theological direction more than another on this doctrine. But the church ought to be welcoming to the person who leans in the other theological direction. This means this issue is local church specific and a local church distinctive. The EFCA believes cf. Article 7, The Church that one is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone key Pauline and Reformation truths.

Chapter 4 : Crisis Theology | Definition of Crisis Theology by Merriam-Webster

The theological roots of the present crisis An ambiguous attitude to "human sexuality" on the part of "mainstream" moral theology led in time to bishops effectively turning a blind eye to.

Is It a Theological Problem? Post navigation The Sexual Harassment Crisis: The rash of sexual harassment scandals is sweeping the nation to the point that it seems almost no male is exempt from its terrible fury. Anyone can be denounced by the media. And powerful men who have abused their positions of authority are now having to give a reckoning. Everyone has a theory that points to social, cultural or psychological causes. However, the only compelling explanation for what has gone wrong is a theological one. Nothing else can explain it. Indeed, the inconclusive media babble around the issue only confirms an unwillingness to face reality. This dogma of the Faith holds that in Paradise, man and woman were made to live in harmony without the violence of the unbridled passions. All the faculties of the souls were in order. The passions obeyed the dictates of the intellect and the commands of the will. However, our first parents were subjected to a trial and sinned. The consequences of this act were a fall from grace, suffering and death. Humanity is subjected to a strong tendency to sin and a weakness of the will called concupiscence. Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches that concupiscence is a consequence of Original Sin that destroys the harmony within human nature. The appetites no longer are in harmony with the intellect and will. It is for this reason that Saint Paul writes: From the time of the Fall onward, all men and women without exception are prone to sin. History is an account of the fight between sin and virtue; good and evil. Measures to Fight the Effects of Original Sin As a result of Original Sin, the Church wisely erected structures, habits and barriers to make the occasions of sin difficult and facilitate the practice of virtue. The Church administered the sacraments that aid in overcoming our concupiscence. Especially in the highly explosive area of sexual morality, norms of modesty, manners and decorum were observed in which men acted as gentlemen and women as ladies. And Christian society itself was organized in a way that minimized the effects of Original Sin. The natural, God-given institutions of family and community serve to regulate the disordered human appetites. All this is logical, based on the universal experience of human misery. A person might not believe in Original Sin, but it is hard to deny that there is something seriously wrong with man that needs to be constantly regulated and restrained. The benefits of family and community in society are likewise hard to deny. The Enlightenment introduced different concepts of man that try to escape the reality of Original Sin. This theory posits that people are fundamentally good and do not tend to sin. They believe that people will always make the right decision or look after their best interest if they are given the freedom to make choices. The blame for suffering is ignorance, which is the cause of errors and crimes. Proper education is presented as a solution. When individuals fail to live up to the expectation of liberal ideologues, they simply change the focus of their theory. Thus, modernity has produced the wide spectrum of alternatives that include the immaculate conception of the masses, the State or one of the social classes. Inevitably, alternatives like the masses and the State also fail to live up to expectations. The problem, we are told, is always the social structures and systems of society not the wages of sin. Thus, liberals always engage in an elusive search for the right system, be it liberalism or socialism, that will solve all problems – all problems, that is, except the existence of Original Sin. The Modern-Day Effects of Original Sin Perhaps one of the most egregious examples of this false liberal doctrine is the Sexual Revolution of the sixties. It saw maximizing individual freedom as the highest good. The assumption of this revolution is that the cumbersome restraints of morality could be dismantled without destroying society. It was supposed that the promiscuous mixing of the sexes without the barriers of modesty or morals would lead to a society of love. The brutal consequences of the passions can be seen in abortions, unnatural vice, pornography, divorces and abused children. Today, any barrier can be overturned in the name of sexual freedom. People are immersed in a culture of impurity and immorality. The Sexual Harassment Crisis Thus, we reach the present state of the sexual harassment crisis. In a society undermined by the notion of complete sexual unrestraint, it should be no surprise that the restraint of consent would also be overturned. While all are responsible for their own bad acts, those acts are facilitated when no social safeguards are in place. However, the liberal establishment is quick to

pivot from the society of love narrative, where all could be sexually free, to a feminist narrative, which angrily denounces the tragic consequences of this total sexual freedom taken to its extreme. It is a selective outrage that still embraces absolute sexual freedom, abortion and other modern evils that victimize countless women. But they will not address the notion of Original Sin, or any sin. They will never acknowledge the irrational acts that offend a benevolent God. Instead, they will always seek to blame the social institutions, morals and restraints that safeguard society from sin. They will denounce the consequences of the revolutions they set in motion. The cause of this crisis and so many others is a theological one. Until people understand this truth, fallen humanity will continue to tumble ever more deeply. As seen on Church Militant.

Chapter 5 : Review of: The Civil War as a Theological Crisis

Through his years of research and writing on faith in America, Jonathan Merritt has identified "5 Trends Changing the Church Today." If you're a churchgoer or are a cultural observer, you know the American church is changing--especially in a post-Trump America.

From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln. There has never been a period during which America was more unified around a core set of values, Noll argues, than between and This antebellum piety was a unique synthesis of republican ideals, Enlightenment assumptions and traditional Christian beliefs. In Europe antiauthoritarian hopes were assumed to sound the death knell of religion, but in the United States republican ideals and Protestant evangelicalism shaped and reinforced each other. That the success of Jacksonian democracy coincided with the spread of Methodism and revivalism is no accident. If democracy as practiced in the nation could not work, neither could the faith that shored up its legitimacy. The political crisis, in other words, was necessarily a theological one, because theology and republicanism shared the same rhetoric. The key to the antebellum synthesisâ€”and, for Noll, the heart of the problemâ€”was a widespread belief in a commonsense approach to the Bible. A faith available to all had for its authority a book accessible to all. The Bible yields its plain meaning to the believer. No bishop or Harvard scholar was needed to tell the unordained evangelist or even the man in his cabin reading the Bible by firelight what the Bible does and does not say. But common sense applied to morality as well as to understanding the Bible. The ensuing theological crisis was in some ways, then, a battle between moral common sense and exegetical common sense. Those who wanted to criticize slavery and still honor biblical authority could separate out larger principles or themes love of neighbor, say and then use those principles to frame specific problem texts. For churches and theologians, then, the Civil War was an interpretive crisis. Noll frames the stand-off eloquently: There were no resources within democratic or voluntary procedures to resolve the public division of opinion that was created by voluntary and democratic interpretations of the Bible. The Book that made the nation was destroying the nation; the nation that had taken to the Book was rescued not by the Book but by the force of arms. More problematic in the long run than the question of slavery what theologian today would defend it? A leading northern theologian, Charles Hodge, was representative: Still there is some difficulty in ascertaining, and applying it, to particular cases. Where there are divisions of interests and experience, however, what is plainly and obviously right to one may be despicable to another. In responding to this crisis, Noll suggests, European critics of American theology acknowledged problems such as racism and economic self-interest more readily than did their American counterparts. Noll is particularly drawn to conservative Catholic critiques, which make for some jolting examples. He describes the work of one French critic this way: A German critic also declares the Catholic Church a bulwark of human freedom and gets a pass. Forbearance in the face of disagreement makes for its own kind of unity, one worth not fighting for.

Chapter 6 : Crisis in American Theological Education - Dr. John Oswalt

Black & Buddhist in America @ Social Hall, Union Theological Seminary Oct 21 @ pm - pm Join the conversation with 15 leading African American Buddhist teachers.

The Civil War as a Theological Crisis. University of North Carolina Press, Reviewed by Kent T. Dollar, For the Journal of Southern Religion For antebellum Americans, a belief in divine providence and adherence to Scripture provided purpose and stability in their lives. Does the Bible condemn or condone slavery? Relying primarily on the writings of nineteenth-century theologians and other religious thinkers, Noll concludes that the clashes over these two issues revealed a theological crisis and resulted in a major turning point in American religious thought. Indeed, Southerners argued that Scripture sanctioned slavery, while those opposed to the peculiar institution insisted that it did not. Noll points out that the supporters of slavery rested on a literal interpretation of the Bible, while abolitionists maintained that slavery violated the spirit of the Bible. Opponents of slavery furthermore contended that Scripture condemned slavery as it existed in America, for the system was riddled with abuses. In addition to the slavery question, Noll argues that Americans were also at odds over the workings of a providential God. Before the war, American theologians demonstrated confidence in their ability to fathom the meaning behind worldly events. During the war, both sides claimed that God supported their cause; however, the ways of God had become uncertain. Noll devotes only one chapter to this important topic and leaves the reader wanting to know more. In order to provide a broader framework, Noll also includes foreign theological commentary, both Protestant and Catholic, on the issue of slavery and the Bible. Although Noll admits that his work here is preliminary, his use of these often overlooked sources makes these two chapters the most intriguing of the book. Indeed, they were more opposed to slavery than they were in favor of the North. The second strand of foreign commentary came from conservative European Catholics, who did not categorically condemn slavery, but did criticize the institution as it existed America. But, conservative criticism went much further as Catholics took advantage of the opportunity to underscore the authority of the Church. Catholic theologians pointed out that because of the religious individualism that played such an instrumental role in the creation of the United States and its national culture, there was no overarching religious authority to offer a definitive statement on the issue of slavery. In a brief final chapter, Noll sums up the impact of the theological crisis on postwar America. The Civil War as a Theological Crisis is an excellent book and should enjoy wide circulation among Civil War scholars as well as American theologians. Scholars interested in the ongoing debate over slavery in the years leading up to the Civil War and the impact of the war on American religious thought will find this volume immensely enlightening. Dollar, Tennessee Technological University.

Chapter 7 : The Civil War as a Theological Crisis : Mark A. Noll :

From Publishers Weekly In an informative account of the theological dramas that underpinned and were unleashed by the Civil War, Noll (America's God) argues that midth-century America harbored "a significant theological crisis."

While enrollments are better than any one predicted 5 or 10 years ago, analysis of those figures is not comforting. In many cases, it is a burgeoning D. But that is a limited pool which already shows signs of having reached its peak. In other cases, enrollments have been held up or increased by the admission of women. There is nothing wrong with this in itself, but thus far, at least, most of the women graduates either do not enter the pastoral ministry, or if they do, do not remain in it very long. Of those who do, churches often complain that they are not competent to lead a church. As a result, many of the largest churches are declaring that seminaries are irrelevant to the life of the church, and that they themselves can do a better job of preparing pastors through an internship setting. Thus, although relatively stable enrollments are tending to mask the crisis, the fact of the crisis should not. It is entirely possible that semi-nary education as it has been practiced in America for the last years is in the last flush of a terminal illness. What has brought about this crisis? Clearly one of the contributing causes is the crisis of faith which has overtaken all of Protestantism in the last years in Europe and America. This crisis of faith centers upon epistemology and the nature of the Bible. For those without philosophical training, "epistemology" is the study of the origins and nature of knowledge. How do we know the truth about God, the world, and ourselves? For all of its history up until the present, the Church has believed that God has revealed the essential structure of truth in the Bible. Humans do not discover ultimate truth; rather, it has been revealed to them by God, who stands outside the cosmos. Thus, the Bible is the canon, or measuring rod, by which all truth claims are to be judged. To be sure, throughout the Middle Ages, this truth was mediated through a supposedly authoritative Church, and that produced modification and corruption of the truth. But even then, the Church pointed behind itself to the Bible, and whenever the Bible was truly heard, as in the case of Francis of Assisi, reformation followed. Ultimately, of course, an entrenched hierarchy refused reformation, and the Protestants were forced to break away. Having seen what Church authority had done, the Reformers determined that the Bible alone would be the authority. So the situation remained until the 19th century. By that time, enlightenment thinking, with its exaltation of human reason, had gained full sway. Whatever was not discoverable by, and amenable to, human reason was relegated to the realm of myth. Reason, not the Bible, was the sole arbiter of truth. Since much of the Bible is supranational and supernatural, it was necessary to de-construct the Bible so that a rationally acceptable explanation of the origins of Hebrew religion could be reached. This 2 reasonable explanation ended up by showing that the accounts which we have in the Bible are completely untrustworthy. Interestingly, at the same time this was happening, that is, in the last half of the 19th c. The upshot of the rationalist enterprise was that the Bible was discredited as a source of truth. It was a source book on the growth of the Hebrew religion, and could be used by specialists to reconstruct the actual development of that religion. Furthermore, it could be used as a source book for some of the most valuable religious discoveries which humans have made. But it was certainly not a repository of revealed truth, and could not be used in that way. It was this conflict which gave rise to such seminaries as Westminster in Philadelphia, and Asbury in Wilmore, Kentucky. The sad truth is that modernism carried the day, so that with no exceptions it is the critical orthodoxy today in the mainline denominational seminaries and in those connected with universities. The end result is exactly the one predicted by our fundamentalist forefathers of 75 years ago: Thus, since human experience is so varied, truth has become almost hopelessly relativized in the world at large, and even in the Church itself. Truth is whatever those with the loudest voices make it to be. But above everything else, nothing can be true which calls upon a person to surrender his or her independence, convenience, or comfort. Many learned people are telling us that the enlightenment is dead. Further- more, we are seeing a new fascination with spiritism and the occult. We watch bemused as a movie star discourses with great seriousness upon her former life as a dancer in the court of the Egyptian queen Hatshepsut in B. But interestingly enough, none of this has produced any shift in the attitude of either the critics or the general public about the Bible. The same movie star who

announces that she has been reincarnated 10 times can, when asked about the crossing of the Red Sea, sniff that she does not believe in miracles. What we are seeing is the continued worship of reason in the realm of time and space, the world generally relegated to science, while in the realms of ultimate meaning we are rapidly abandoning reason and all its ramifications. The result is that all the worst results of the Enlightenment: The challenge for theological institutions which aspire to remain orthodox is to retain the authority of the Bible. This challenge to this retention comes in two forms: Yet, if we once grant that conclusion, all is lost. How can we obtain higher degrees for our future faculty if all the institutions granting such degrees are destroying the very foundations upon which we depend? We must not discount this threat. The history of the last years show that it is entirely possible for a person whose initial faith was gained in an orthodox environment to retain that evangelical faith while shifting the ground of his understanding of the Bible sometimes in radical ways. Then, since the person still has an evangelical testimony, we conclude that his destructive views of the Bible must not be so bad. Then, too late, we wonder why our students are not holding true. The second challenge is in some ways more dangerous, because it is more subtle. This is the continuing challenge to make the Bible and theology simply two more of the subjects with which a theological student should be familiar. Without question the twin facts of the increasing complexity of our life and the disintegration of our culture has made it imperative that ministers today have a host of competencies and skills which it was not necessary for their predecessors to have. This has placed a terrific burden on the theological school curriculum. Generally, the expansion of the curriculum in the so-called practical areas has come at the expense of courses in Bible and theology. This has come about because of the unexpressed change in the understanding of the place of the Bible and the theology springing from it. Instead of seeing knowledge of these subjects as foundational to everything else in the curriculum, that knowledge is said to be on a par with knowledge of, say, the behavioral sciences. Thus, in depth acquaintance with Biblical and theological truth is no more necessary than in depth knowledge of the behavioral sciences, and is, in fact, considerably less "practical. In liberal institutions where the Biblical and theological courses are both dead and deadly, it is understandable that their influence upon the curriculum would be minimized as much as possible. But it is hard to understand why this would be allowed to happen in institutions where it is claimed that the Bible is the source of all truth. Nevertheless, such is the sinfulness of the human race that we are constantly attempting to minimize our dependence upon the Bible, even when we say we depend upon it for our very life. This is the central crisis of our age for theological education. The vitality of the churches in Eastern Europe who have taken the Bible at face value is a blasting judgment upon the Church in the West, which has taken the Bible as an artifact to be dissected and has cut its own umbilical cord in the process. The second crisis of theological education in America today stems directly from this first one. It is a crisis of vision. What is our calling? What are we supposed to be doing? Are we to be academic institutions with a smattering of "skills" courses? Or are we to be professional schools which have a few introductory "theory" courses? Are we to be a three or four year long spiritual retreat? Or are we to be church-business colleges preparing entry-level ecclesiastical managers? Particularly in the liberal institutions all of these models have been put forward, and are being put forward, as the anchor of Biblical and theological truth has been slipped. The result of this drift is that more and more churches are losing patience with the theological school establishment. They are tired of being ministered to by broken people who went to theological school in order to solve their own spiritual and psychological problems, and did not. They are sick to death of ministers who are much more certain about what they do not believe than about what they do. They are frustrated by pastors whose fear of rejection has never been mastered by a passionate love for God and their flock. They are broken by a series of preachers who have betrayed their trust by talking about lofty spiritual matters while actually living lives of common sin. While it is not always fair that the churches should lay these frustrations and angers at the feet of theological educators, it is often quite fair. What are we about if it is not training capable pastor-teachers, evangelists, and missionaries? While we can hardly guarantee that every graduate will be capable in one or more of these fields, we must not hide behind the excuse that all we are doing is teaching certain subjects in theology and ministry. If we do that, as we have, we should not be surprised if the churches begin to say to us, "If you cannot train them to minister to us, then we will do it ourselves. Their whole approach makes it increasingly

impossible for them to do so. They have no gospel except the one of self-actualization which many other institutions in our society offer more effectively than the Church ever could. But what about evangelical institutions? Will we catch the vision of producing godly men and women who love and understand the Word of God, who have been so far delivered from themselves into the love of God and humans that they can forget themselves in pointing men and women to new life in Christ and holy discipleship to him? This is the vision which we must not lose sight of today. To be sure, the Church is rapidly changing. It is no longer one of the respected community organizations. Now the Church is generally seen as irrelevant to real life. Changes in worship patterns are confusing and sometimes downright frightening. The comfortable and the familiar are being swept away. Moreover, the collapse of our culture is producing a host of broken and damaged people who have been taught to see themselves as victims who have been deprived of their rights. Such persons do not think of giving themselves in long-term, self-forgetful service. Rather, they have been taught to get what they want, and to go else- where if they do not get it. The "Wal-Mart" type churches which have something for everybody are growing by leaps and bounds while the little corner churches which called for "a long obedience in the same direction" are withering and dying as a generation of simple, faithful people is being carried out the door by the undertaker. All of this places sometimes intolerable demands upon pastors, and upon those who would presume to prepare them.

Chapter 8 : Theological Definitions and Positions | EFCA

In an effort to probe wider dimensions of the American theological crisis, I have tried to discover what opinion from outside the United States concluded about the state of American religion as reflected in the War between the States.

Is It a Theological Problem? The rash of sexual harassment scandals is sweeping the nation to the point that it seems almost no male is exempt from its terrible fury. Anyone can be denounced by the media. And powerful men who have abused their positions of authority are now having to give a reckoning. Everyone has a theory that points to social, cultural or psychological causes. However, the only compelling explanation for what has gone wrong is a theological one. Nothing else can explain it. Indeed, the inconclusive media babble around the issue only confirms an unwillingness to face reality. This dogma of the Faith holds that in Paradise, man and woman were made to live in harmony without the violence of the unbridled passions. All the faculties of the souls were in order. The passions obeyed the dictates of the intellect and the commands of the will. However, our first parents were subjected to a trial and sinned. The consequences of this act were a fall from grace, suffering and death. Humanity is subjected to a strong tendency to sin and a weakness of the will called concupiscence. Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches that concupiscence is a consequence of Original Sin that destroys the harmony within human nature. The appetites no longer are in harmony with the intellect and will. It is for this reason that Saint Paul writes: The stain of Original Sin is inherited by all men from the moment of conception. From the time of the Fall onward, all men and women without exception are prone to sin. History is an account of the fight between sin and virtue; good and evil. Measures to Fight the Effects of Original Sin As a result of Original Sin, the Church wisely erected structures, habits and barriers to make the occasions of sin difficult and facilitate the practice of virtue. The Church administered the sacraments that aid in overcoming our concupiscence. Especially in the highly explosive area of sexual morality, norms of modesty, manners and decorum were observed in which men acted as gentlemen and women as ladies. And Christian society itself was organized in a way that minimized the effects of Original Sin. The natural, God-given institutions of family and community serve to regulate the disordered human appetites. All this is logical, based on the universal experience of human misery. A person might not believe in Original Sin, but it is hard to deny that there is something seriously wrong with man that needs to be constantly regulated and restrained. The benefits of family and community in society are likewise hard to deny. The Enlightenment introduced different concepts of man that try to escape the reality of Original Sin. This theory posits that people are fundamentally good and do not tend to sin. What does Saint Thomas Aquinas say about Marriage? For example, the more individualistic liberals see the individual as endowed with infallible reason, a strong will and orderly passions. They believe that people will always make the right decision or look after their best interest if they are given the freedom to make choices. The blame for suffering is ignorance, which is the cause of errors and crimes. Proper education is presented as a solution. When individuals fail to live up to the expectation of liberal ideologues, they simply change the focus of their theory. Thus, modernity has produced the wide spectrum of alternatives that include the immaculate conception of the masses, the State or one of the social classes. Inevitably, alternatives like the masses and the State also fail to live up to expectations. The problem, we are told, is always the social structures and systems of society not the wages of sin. Thus, liberals always engage in an elusive search for the right system, be it liberalism or socialism, that will solve all problems – all problems, that is, except the existence of Original Sin. The Modern-Day Effects of Original Sin Perhaps one of the most egregious examples of this false liberal doctrine is the Sexual Revolution of the sixties. It saw maximizing individual freedom as the highest good. The assumption of this revolution is that the cumbersome restraints of morality could be dismantled without destroying society. It was supposed that the promiscuous mixing of the sexes without the barriers of modesty or morals would lead to a society of love. The brutal consequences of the passions can be seen in abortions, unnatural vice, pornography, divorces and abused children. Today, any barrier can be overturned in the name of sexual freedom. People are immersed in a culture of impurity and immorality. The Sexual Harassment Crisis Thus, we reach the present state of the sexual harassment crisis. In a society undermined by the notion of complete sexual unrestraint, it should be no

surprise that the restraint of consent would also be overturned. While all are responsible for their own bad acts, those acts are facilitated when no social safeguards are in place. However, the liberal establishment is quick to pivot from the society of love narrative, where all could be sexually free, to a feminist narrative, which angrily denounces the tragic consequences of this total sexual freedom taken to its extreme. It is a selective outrage that still embraces absolute sexual freedom, abortion and other modern evils that victimize countless women. But they will not address the notion of Original Sin, or any sin. They will never acknowledge the irrational acts that offend a benevolent God. Instead, they will always seek to blame the social institutions, morals and restraints that safeguard society from sin. They will denounce the consequences of the revolutions they set in motion. The cause of this crisis and so many others is a theological one. Until people understand this truth, fallen humanity will continue to tumble ever more deeply.

Chapter 9 : The Civil War as a Theological Crisis by Mark A. Noll

Viewing the Civil War as a major turning point in American religious thought, Mark A. Noll examines writings about slavery and race from Americans both white and black, northern and southern, and includes commentary from Protestants and Catholics in Europe and Canada.