

The Message and the Situation: An Evaluation of the Preaching of Paul Tillich

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In much of Western Christianity, there exists a problem of identity for the Christian individual. The individual considers him or herself a Christian, but feels a matter of disconnect between who he or she is on Saturday night and who he or she is on Sunday morning. The Christian struggles to live a life in both the sacred and the secular. The Christian struggles to establish an authentic identity, an identity that incorporates all of the human experience. How can this struggle be resolved? Paul Tillich had an answer. Tillich developed his method of correlation as a way of uniting the individual's deepest meaningful questions about life with the message of the Gospel: Jesus Christ as the New Being. Tillich believed there was not a separation between the Saturday night and Sunday morning Christian, between the secular and the sacred. He advocated a theological method that used secular culture – music, art, philosophy – as a means of demonstrating the omnipresence of God within human existence. Further, he used this concept in his preaching of the Gospel. This study shows how he used representations of secular culture in three of his homilies.

Information about the Author:

Benjamin Taylor is a senior theology major. He became interested in the theology of Paul Tillich last summer and has not been able to stop reading Tillich since. After graduation from Valparaiso University, he plans to pursue graduate study in theology at a divinity school. His dream is to one day become a professor of theology so he can talk about God and the meaning of life every day for the rest of his life.

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