

Embedded Theology v/s Deliberative Theology

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According to the study guide done by the Rev. Ben G. Hubert referencing ‘How to Think Theologically he states the term: Embedded theology points to the theology that is deeply in place and at work as we live as Christians in our homes, churches, and the world. . . . It is rooted in the preaching and practices of the church and its members. It is the implicit theology that Christians live out in their daily lives. “It is embedded theology that rushes to the frontline in every battle over the moral and social issues of the day. Christians rise up to defend their theological convictions or express outrage when those convictions are threatened.”¹ So it is the embedded theology that we have been comfortable with throughout our lives. It is what we have heard from our grandmas, church ministers, religious family members and we have entertained these practices which we have incorporated in the fabric of life. Our embedded theology is, “what we carry it within us for years, unquestioned and perhaps even unspoken except when we join in the words of others at worship.”² It is everything we have been taught from our childhood, even if we don’t believe those teaching today. Embedded in our fabric is what we have ultimately passed down to our own children, our ideas and

1. Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke, *How to Think Theologically*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), pg 17

2. Rev Ben G. Hubert, “” How to Think Theologically - LEAD, 2014, waytolead.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/.../Thinking-Theologically-Study-Guide.pdf. pg. 4

thoughts that carried us into our adult lives. It was how we understood our faith in God and understood who Jesus was to us. It was the practices we engaged in because of our church surroundings and affiliations. It was what we believed strongly to be our Christian cultural and heritage.

“These theological messages from the church have been bred into the hearts and minds of the faithful since our entry into the church.”³ Some examples I can clearly think of is the kind of clothes we wore on Sunday and not being able to play outside on the Sabbath day. One thing for sure is that we all have some of those embedded theologies.

Then the term deliberative theology is the understanding of faith that emerges from a process of carefully reflecting upon embedded theological convictions. This deliberation will make us question that which we would never thought to question. Deliberation theology causes us to have a conversation about what and why we believe. It moves us from our comfort zone, and thinking about our true faith and the Gospel. Each of us needs to question our practices if we are to truly honor and glorify our heavenly Father.

In order to be faithful Christians it is our duty to think intentionally about our Christian faith and seek to truly understand it. “Deliberative theological reflection also carries us forward when our embedded theology proves

3. Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke, *How to Think Theologically*, pg.16

inadequate.”⁴ “As Christians we are called to pursue growth in faith by relearning and reinforcing what we already understand faith to be and by expanding, deepening, and even correcting our initial understanding of the faith.”⁵

4. Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke, *How to Think Theologically* pg.20

5. *Ibid.*, pg. 26