

May Evangelicals Dispense with Propositional Revelation? Challenges to a Traditional Evangelical Doctrine

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Few times in history has revealed religion been forced to contend with such serious problems of truth and word, and never in the past have the role of words and the nature of truth been as misty and undefined as now. Only if we recognize that the truth of truth—indeed, the meaning of meaning—is today in doubt, and that this uncertainty stifles the word as a carrier of God’s truth and moral judgment, do we fathom the depth of the present crisis. When truth and word remain as the accepted universe of discourse, then all aberrations can be challenged in the name of truth. Today, however, the nature of truth and even the role of words is in dispute.¹

Is propositional revelation an essential evangelical doctrine? Carl F. H. Henry argued vigorously that it was essential: “it is nonetheless wholly necessary to insist that divine disclosure does indeed take propositional form... That divine disclosure is cognitive and intelligible... is intrinsic to Judeo-Christian revelation” (*GRA*, 3:481). To explore this issue, this paper will first summarize Henry’s understanding of propositional revelation, then that of a counter-proposal by Stanley Grenz (particularly in his book *Revisioning Evangelical Theology*), and finally assess the discussion and propose an answer to the question, “may evangelicals dispense with propositional revelation?”

This is but a one-page abstract of the paper. The complete paper (nearly 40 pgs.) will be posted online at the URL below the week of the conference. Only selected portions will be read at ETS (Wed., 11/14, 4:35 PM, Colorado Hall F [E]).

http://faculty.bbc.edu/rdecker/documents/prop_rev.pdf

You are also invited to explore my New Testament Resources page at:

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Please note that there is an underscore in each of the URLs above, not a blank space. If you’re configured appropriately, you should be able to click the link in this pdf file, but if you have to type it in manually, that underscore will make a big difference! ☺

¹ Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols. (Waco, TX: Word, 1976–83), 1:24.