

Returning to Protoevangelical Faith: The Theology and Praxis  
of Dr. Dallas Willard

Submitted by Gary E. Black, Jr. to the University of Exeter  
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Abstract:

This thesis describes the theology and praxis of philosopher/theologian Dr. Dallas Willard and its effect on contemporary forms of evangelicalism in America. Willard's works have become increasingly attractive to emerging generations of Christians protesting the perceived excesses and hegemony of mainstream evangelical culture. Willard presents a positive alternative to contemporary versions of evangelicalism seen by many as increasingly devoted to soteriological escapism, modern consumerism, individualism and sectarianism. Alternatively, Willard proposes a return to the original (proto) message of good news (evangel) articulated by Jesus in the New Testament. For increasing numbers of disaffected evangelicals with postmodern sensibilities, this protoevangelical vision offers a more robust doctrine of God, a return to the primacy of discipleship to Christ, and the experience of a holistic and integrated life in the Kingdom of God. Ethnographies of four evangelical organizations applying Willardian theology provide insight into the current evolution within American evangelical theology and praxis.