

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XVII

September 7, 2008

No. 36

The Influence of Postmodernism

Caleb Westbrook

Paul writes in 1 Cor. 15:33, “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.”

This certainly rings true on a personal level, yet when it comes to the relationship of the Church and the world, often times we lose sight of who is influencing whom.

Webster’s defines postmodernism as “a theory that involves a radical reappraisal of modern assumptions about culture, identity, history, or language.” This theory advocates for a relativistic approach to our concept of truth. Postmodernism also affirms that morality is a subjective phenomenon and emphasis should be placed on individual perception rather than universal truth. Thus spawning a movement which places a premium on feeling, experience, and personal desire, rather than rationale, objective truth, and standard ethics (*A Brief Guide to Ideas*, Raeper & Edwards, 334-335).

Many of our fellowship are influenced by this ideology which permeates our culture, thereby they compromise truth. Consider the following in light of society’s influence of postmodernism.

God’s Word is objective and absolute truth (Jn. 17:17-19). Holy Scripture is inspired by God and able to make man “complete” (2 Tim. 3:17). Also in Ephesians 4:3-6 Paul conveys the objective standards of the basis for unity. Yet, there are some who want to claim that the Bible has “gray areas” and that these texts are too ambiguous to come to a clear understanding. Thus, when these “gray areas” come into question there is no objective truth on the issue, rather it is a matter of opinion. This falls right in line with postmodern thought. By ripping Biblical text away from objective truth men then see themselves “at liberty” to follow their individual perception rather than the truth which the text conveys.

Following the undermining of the Bible’s objective truth many have been impacted by post modernism in the area of fellowship. Instead of following God’s pattern of having fellowship with those who are abiding in Christ’s doctrine (2 Jn. 9; 1 Jn. 1:7), some advocate that brethren can practice and teach differing doctrinal positions and still maintain fellowship. The effects of postmodernism is at work again by sacrificing the stan-

dard of fellowship and replacing it with a personal desire of friendship and brotherhood.

Morality has suffered greatly due to the pull postmodernism in the Church. Currently in certain circles, it is unpopular to say that there is any moral standard at all. Some young women of the Church believe there is no “standard” for modesty and are demonstrating that belief in their dress. God’s is absolutely clear regarding His standard for modesty (1 Tim. 2:9-10, 1 Pet. 3:3-4). The influence of postmodernism will continue to loosen the standards on morality, but the Bible is explicitly clear that morality is not a subjective phenomenon, rather it is commanded to all.

Postmodernism is “evil company” and we must be extremely watchful that it does not corrupt our good habits. The areas previously discussed are but a few of the inroads postmodernism has made. We must be watchful and vigilant against this influence (1 Pet. 5:8). We must realize that the world seeks us to conform to it, but we must only conform to God.