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Mars' la Vérité
'Truth Has Died' by Goya

Post-Modernism & TV Culture

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(abridged version)

"Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?" John 18:37-39

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6

"Thy Word is truth" John 17:17

Recently a massive change in the way we think, a megashift, has taken place in Western society. For instance, Muslims come to the West (North America, Western Europe, and Australia) and observe that it is immoral and hedonistic (living for pleasure). Sadly, they are not equipped to analyze the difference between evangelical, biblical Christianity and secular Postmodern philosophy. They do not understand the philosophy of the West. Herein we will describe the basic elements of Postmodernism (PM for short)

Postmodernism Defined

Utterly basic to Christianity is the sovereignty of God. The Almighty orders and designs all that comes to pass—yet He is not the author of sin. He is working everything out according to His purposes. There is a big story which gives an overarching explanation of the world as we know it. This can be called a "meta-narrative." In the Greek, meta means "alongside." Used in this context, meta conveys the idea of an overarching purpose that gives meaning to everything in the universe. Over all the particulars of life there is a grand design and purpose for everything which originates in the heart of God. There is an explanation in all of history. This is foundational to our correct understanding of God and the Bible.

The postmodernist denies that there can be such a thing as a meta-narrative. Instead, the postmodernist believes that each person constructs his or her own "narrative," or reality, usually depending on one's own community of knowledge. Most people have been used to thinking in terms of two competing meta-narratives: the Christian one, which consists of the revelation of God in the Scriptures, and the humanistic, rationalistic one of science, evolution, and "progress."

Postmodernism as a term first arose in architectural circles in the 1970s,[i] but only came into popular usage after the publication of Jean Francois Lytard's The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge in English in 1984 (French edition, 1979). He writes, "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity towards meta-narratives." He is referring particularly to the meta-narrative offered by science, which has become so specialized and fragmented that it cannot possibly speak with a united voice. Because of the triumph of capitalism and the emphasis on efficiency, management is more important than truth. The collapse of communism has reinforced the postmodernist's denial of metanarratives because Marxism claimed to be a monolithic system that explained everything.

The Christian meta-narrative has been discounted by the world for a long time. But it is only in the last quarter of the 20th century that the humanistic, rationalistic one has been questioned radically by the postmodernists.

The Jewish Holocaust, Solzenitsyn's revelation of the Stalinist regime's horrors and the Gulag Archipelago, genocide in Africa, Cambodia, Yugoslavia, the ecological crisis, global warming, the Aids epidemic, and the abuse of political and military power all bring deep-seated disillusionment. No belief system is to be trusted. Indeed, one belief system seems as valid as the next. This attitude has encouraged relativism and bred a fixed aversion to claims of absolute truth. Simply stated, the essence of postmodernism is that there are no fixed absolutes.

It is important to remember that there are many variations in postmodern culture. When Francis Schaeffer wrote The God Who Is There, he analyzed what he called the post-Christian culture within the framework of continental Western Europe. What he called "post Christianity" we now understand as Postmodernism.

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, the Western world has gradually moved philosophically from modernism to PM. For about 200 years, the Enlightenment shaped the world's thinking with its emphasis on human reason coupled with optimism for human ability and human achievement. In its arrogance, this modernist view bypassed God and His revelation, the Bible, which led to the collapse of morality. PM is fiercely antinomian ("against law"). Right and wrong is a matter of human opinion, and, therefore, my view is as good as yours or that of the next man. The result is the slide of Western society into the abyss of lawlessness. This is seen in the break-up of the family, rising divorce rates, and overcrowded prisons.

Christian scholar Thomas Oden maintains that the modern age lasted 200 years—from the fall of the Bastille in 1789 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.[ii] The French Revolution exemplifies the triumph of the Enlightenment. The premodern world with its feudalism and spiritual hierarchies was put to an end with the fall of the Bastille. The monarchy imprisoned its political opponents, but their liberation heralded the exaltation of the Rights of Man. During the course of the Revolution, the Goddess of Reason was installed in Notre Dame Cathedral. Christianity was then relegated to the past; human reason would take the place of God. Later, mankind would see this idea climax on a massive scale in Marxist communism and Stalinism.

"The enchantment of modernity is characterized by technological messianism, enlightenment idealism, quantifying empiricism, and smug fantasy of inevitable historical progress." [iii]

Definitions of PM will vary, but it generally is composed of four aspects.

First, there is the language game called "deconstruction."

Second, there is moral relativism which asserts there are no absolutes and no certainties. Hence, there are no absolute morals which apply to all people in all times.

Third, there is pluralism, which is allied with relativism. Pluralism means there is a level playing field for all religions.

Religion is a matter of personal choice. The one great heresy is to say that your religion is correct and all the others are wrong. Tolerance is the essence of PM. No one religion is superior or to be deemed the final authority.

Fourth, there is existentialism in which feelings rule. It is not doctrine or even empirical facts that count. It is what I feel that is right.

We will outlinine these four categories—deconstructionism, relativism, pluralism, and existentialism. We will conclude with an update on television which is the medium of PM.

1. Deconstructionism

The writings of Roland Barthes (1915-1980), Michel Foucault (1926-1984), [iv] and Jacques Derrida (b.1930) have had a far-reaching influence. The thrust of their idea is that human language, whether spoken or written, does not refer to an objective world out there; it is instead a system of linguistic signs referring back to itself. If you read the gospels, you may consider that the authors intended to describe events that really happened in the land of Israel in the first century. There you read of the Son of the living God who was arrested, died by crucifixion, rose from the dead, and ascended into

heaven. These literary critics regard all that as untenable. The original authors are no longer with us, so you can give whatever meaning you like to their writings. There is no objective world beyond your own interpretation. Words only refer to other words; meaning itself is endlessly deferred. According to Barthes, talk of an objective world is really an attempt by the bourgeoisie to maintain power by manipulation. For Derrida, a text has no point of reference outside itself. [v]

Deconstructionism boldly argues that "there is no escape from the hermeneutical circle [i.e., by interpretation of what is written], none whatsoever. As for words, not only is their meaning constrained by other words (structuralism), but words are viciously self-limiting. In the strongest form of deconstruction, not only is all meaning bound up irretrievably with the knower rather than with the text, but words themselves never have a referent other than other words, and even then with an emphasis on irony and ambiguity. The 'plain meaning' of the text subverts itself. Language cannot in the nature of the case refer to objective reality." [vi]

Another way of stating this view is that anything written will convey meanings that the author did not intend and could not have intended. In any case, the author cannot adequately express in words what he or she means in the first place.

Here is an example of deconstruction. The American Declaration of Independence states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This can be deconstructed, they would say, along these lines:

- Although the text speaks of equality, its language excludes women ("all men are created equal").
- Although it speaks of liberty, its author, Thomas Jefferson, owned slaves.
- The surface meaning of equality and freedom is completely contradicted by the subtext, which denies equality and freedom to women and minorities!
- The passage enshrines the rights of the wealthy white males who signed the document, grounding their privileged status in God Himself.
- The Declaration of Independence can thus be deconstructed into just another power play, implying the opposite of its surface meaning. [vii]

Douglas Groothuis responds to deconstruction by asserting, "When postmodernists seek to disparage meta-narratives, deconstruct truth into language games, and render spirituality a mixture of subjective, compelling elements, evangelicals must bring objective truth back to the table as the centerpiece of concern." [viii] Groothuis goes on to show that leading evangelicals have compromised truth and thus threatened our ability to hear God speak in Scripture. Groothuis praises Carl F. H. Henry for his monumental six volume God, Revelation and Authority (1976-1983).[ix] Henry consistently upholds the absolute nature of propositional revelation. Groothuis shows how even some leading evangelicals are slipping away from this basic postulate.

The apostle Paul met something similar in his visit to Athens. He began by pointing to the fact that the Athenians were idolatrous. Paul exposed the absurdity of this idolatry by pointing to the altar with the inscription TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Paul then began to establish what we now refer to as the Bible storyline. He began with creation and the fact that our Creator has not left us but is in control of all history. Within this framework, Paul declared man's need to repent and to prepare for the Great Judgment. [X]

God acts; He takes the initiative! I love the example of Don Carson who was asked to preach a series of sermons among biblically illiterate postmoderns. His approach was to declare the God who intervenes in human affairs—the same God who created the world. He is the God who did not wipe out the first rebels, the One who befriended Abraham, the God who writes His own agreements, who inscribes His own unchanging law. He is the God who gathered His people out of Egypt. Every preacher can select his own titles from the Bible story-line. Of course, this is "biblical theology," the expression we use to refer to the progressive self-disclosure of the Triune God. His self-disclosure reaches climax in the incarnation and will be consummated in the new heaven and the new earth.

The God of the supernatural is superlatively refreshing because He acts with utterly unpredictable wisdom and surprise. Take Moses, a shepherd well past retirement age, who is suddenly confronted by a Man speaking to him out of a burning bush. Here we have the inception of the Bible as a written record. At the other end, John the apostle, a frail, old prisoner on the island of Patmos who is also well past any kind of expectation, suddenly is confronted by the same Man and is commissioned to write the book which concludes the canon of Scripture. In between, there is the sudden intervention in the life of a young woman, Mary, who is told that she will be with child by the Holy Spirit. For company, her cousin Elizabeth will have a son even though she had long ago given up all hope of having children.

Biblical theology, the task of exhibiting the message of the Bible according to its progressive development, is central to all other theological disciplines. It is the pathway and foundation for them all. Biblical theology is not a sub-discipline. It is, and must be, primary.

The absurdity of Deconstructionism is seen in the fact that Christ has built His Church universally in over 220 nations and in over 1,000 languages. If language cannot convey meaning, how is it that all these tribes and peoples of different languages have the same belief system, believe the same Bible, and are worshippers of the Triune God? Deconstruction is just another excuse to evade the truth. When Adam and Eve fell, they fell into guilt and into enmity against God (Rom.8:7,8). When the Lord came to look for them, He knew where they were as they hid behind the trees of the garden. But He called to them, "Where are you?" He was calling them to account for themselves, but they were unwilling. If Adam and Eve had known about Deconstructionism, they could have replied, "Lord, it is no good You going after us; we no longer understand language—please go away!"

2. Moral Relativism

Francis Schaeffer described an absolute as "a concept which is not modifiable by factors such as culture, individual psychology, or circumstances but which is perfect and unchangeable. An absolute is the antithesis of relativism." Nihilism is "a denial of all objective grounds for truth." [xi]

Postmodernism is nihilistic. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines nihilism as "negative doctrines, total rejection of current beliefs, in religion or morals." There is no ground for absolute truth. For Christians, the Bible is God's Word without error. In that Word we have the absolute of God's being, the absolute of God's unchanging moral law (the Ten Commandments), and the absolute of Christ's Second Coming in Judgment. There are other absolute certainties: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and the worth of Christ's offering, "By one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (Heb. 10:14).

Moral relativism is supported by the prevailing belief that mankind has evolved from animals. John Blanchard is right when he asserts that "Today evolution dominates the entire philosophical scientific landscape. No other theory about human and other life on this planet has done more to influence the way in which people view themselves and the relationships to the world in which they live. Almost all the books on biology issued by secular publishers in recent generations have been written from evolutionary presuppositions. No longer limited to biology, evolution has become a total philosophy that claims to explain the origin and development of everything within a closed universe, and thereby to rule out the existence of God. The evolutionary idea has become so pervasive that any student in a school, college, or university who opposes it is likely to face open ridicule." Blanchard goes on to show how well-known leaders have endorsed evolution with all their might. For instance, Sir Julian Huxley extolled it to the highest in declaring, "Evolution is the most powerful and the most comprehensive idea that has ever arisen on earth." [xii]

The moral consequences of this concept are grim. Hitler implemented the idea of the suppression of the weak in favor of the strong, and even attempted the extinction of the entire Jewish race. Marxism, fueled with the same evolutionary philosophy, resulted in even greater and more extensive human misery. [xiii]

It is imperative that the absolute of God's law written on stone tablets is preached, and expound that law as it relates to every conscience. Paul's explanation in Romans of the place of the moral law is especially relevant. It was the tenth commandment that brought him to an end of his own righteousness (Rom. 7:8-12). Unlike postmoderns, Paul lived in a framework that accepted the history of revelation. It is here that Romans 2:15 is relevant: "The requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them."

The application to the conscience of the absolute truths of God's moral law is of the utmost importance.

This can be done by preaching on specific commandments or on statements directly related to the moral law of God.

For instance, Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."

It is important to assert the reality of the coming great day of Judgment. Following is a helpful outline by Sinclair Ferguson on Matthew 25:31-46:

1. The Final Judgment: The Certainty of It is seen in the fact that the Scripture promises it, Christ describes it, God's law demands it, conscience confirms it, justice requires it.

2. The Final Judgment: The Manner of It – Christ will be the Judge. It will be a Judgment of every nation. It will be a Judgment of every individual. It will be a Judgment according to works. It will be a Judgment with eternal implications of heaven or hell.

In their faithfulness and effectiveness in preaching on the Great Judgment, the English Puritans set us an example to follow.

"First the Puritans recognized how dominant a motif the last Judgment is in the Christian gospel. It is not going too far to say that their recognition of this is what enabled them to see why the gospel is necessary, and why it is such a glorious gospel to preach. This note needs to be recaptured in the preaching of the Word in every generation, and certainly in our own.

"Second the Puritans used considerable imaginative power to express this truth in such a way that their hearers would feel it—but not in the sense that they gave free reign to their imagination and exercised no biblical control over it. It is important to remember that powerful preaching on Judgment was for the Puritans a matter of neither mere personality nor macho brashness. It is hard to imagine Sibbes and Watson, for example, as strident preachers. Rather these Puritans endeavored in their preaching to plant the seed of this solemn word inside the minds, hearts, and affections of their hearers—so that they would unavoidably be confronted by its truth in terms they could grasp. Grace requires such preaching, or its own grace becomes incomprehensible.

"Third the Puritans did both of these things because they themselves had meditated long and hard on this solemn subject, and they themselves lived in the light of its enormity. Shallow thought and superficial meditation may be coupled with a certain eloquence to give the impression that we are preaching biblical truth. But biblical truth is preached biblically only when we ourselves have contemplated the Judgment seat of Christ and known the fear of the Lord that drives us to persuade men. Then our preaching on the Last Judgment always has a tear trickling through it." [xiv]

A bold proclamation of God's absolute truths in Scripture is the answer to moral relativism.

3. Pluralism

Pluralism is seen in the growing diversity of race, heritage, religion, and value systems. In one city road of a hundred meters, there can be one Shinto, one Hindu, one Buddhist, one Muslim, one secular European, and one Caribbean evangelical Christian household. There is, however, a philosophy of pluralism which insists that all opinions have the same value, and that value is no value at all except to the persons who hold them. The prevalent view is that absolute values in religion have led to strife, war, and persecution wherever they are found. Think of the burning of the Protestant martyrs or of the Protestant/Catholic divide in Northern Ireland. Think of fundamentalist Islam and September 11, 2001. For many, religion spells trouble. To have any kind of credibility, you must proclaim your tolerance—it is simply out of place to criticize others' religions. The general opinion is that they might all have some truth and comfort to offer. The arch-heresy is to maintain that your religion is the only right religion and that all the others are wrong.

There are some cities in Europe today which are more Asian than European. The city of Bradford, England, is one of these. Among the Asian majority, the Muslims predominate. They are vigorous in the propagation of their Islamic faith. They remind us that they have the authoritative word in the Q'uran, which they say is more up-to-date because their prophet, Mohammed, post-dates Jesus Christ. PM has not yet taken hold of the Muslim community; they live within their own world. [xv]

But the fact is that Christianity is complete and comprehensive. The Bible provides a worldview. PM is a philosophy that believes that every person is entitled to a belief system, but nobody is entitled to assert that his/her faith is superior to the others. This is daunting, because the Bible declares that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—that He is the only way to the Father.

Acts 4:12:

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

The Holy Spirit will witness to the truth He loves as the uniqueness of Jesus is proclaimed in spite of the obstacles we face in pluralism. In contrast to Islam, Christianity does not need coercive power and threats of death in order to see its message spread.

The incarnation is unique. From eternity past, Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, has taken manhood to Himself. He is unique. He alone has lived a righteous life. Not only did He not sin, He actually fulfilled positively all that God's law requires.

About 60 billion people have been born into the world; each person is unique or different in personality. But Jesus is unique and different from all others in the following ways:

1. Jesus was predicted in detail by prophets centuries before His birth.
2. Jesus was born of a virgin.
3. Jesus lived a sinless life.
4. Jesus made unique "I AM" claims of Deity.
5. Jesus supported these claims with miracles.

6. Jesus made a sacrifice of Himself that ended all sacrifices.
7. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit.
8. Jesus has kept His promise to build His church.
9. Jesus is the Creator of the world.
10. Jesus is the Judge of all mankind.

The Q'uran acknowledges the virgin birth, sinlessness, miracles, and the future return of Christ, but it denies His atoning death on the Cross. In salvation, Jesus is unique in providing an imputed righteousness, which justifies the sinner. That is achieved by His past work. His work in the present also is unique inasmuch as He ever lives to intercede for all those who come to the Father through Him. His salvation is completed in the future when He bestows glorified bodies upon true believers in Christ. It is obvious that no other man can do this, because all others are themselves subject to death and the grave.

4. Existentialism

Sister to PM is existentialism. In philosophical terms, Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) is viewed as the father-figure of existentialism. Though it began long before PM, existentialism has become part of the mindset of Western society. Kierkegaard reacted against the nominal Christianity of Denmark, putting great emphasis on the authenticity of an individual Christian.

Existentialism is concerned with the nature of being and of existence. Authentic existence is resolute and makes choices; existentialist thinking is intended to involve the whole person. The objective realm is absurd and void of any human significance. Existentialism focuses on the inner experiences of the will and emotions and is essentially subjective. The existentialist believes that there is no meaning in any one thing or in everything put together. In its extreme, the world becomes pointless and absurd.

Francis Schaeffer drew attention to the leap of faith as taught by Kierkegaard. Since there is no objective reality upon which we can rely, we must make a leap of faith. And in this leap there is a personal experience, an experience which is valid for me because truth is truth as it relates to me.

The search for reality within oneself is conducive to the drug culture. By using drugs a person hopes that he will experience reality, something which will give his life meaning. The drug provides a boost, a great feeling of well-being. This, however, is short-lived because it is merely biological and physically harmful. The quest for "more" leads to addiction, and addiction ends in death.

In existentialism, feelings are uppermost. Feeling-centeredness is conducive to the quest for feeling-centered music, feeling-centered drama, and feeling-centered films. The faculty of the mind plays a minimal role. This factor leads us to consider television.

Television: the medium of Postmodernism

"TV has achieved the status of a 'meta-medium'—an institution that directs not only our knowledge of the world, but the ways in which we are to perceive the world." [xvi] Television has become a radical monopoly. John Campbell describes TV as "ubiquitous [it is everywhere], capable of manipulating opinion, reinforcing pluralism, and revamping reality in a short time. Appearance replaces reality, charisma replaces content, and result [pragmatism] replaces integrity." [xvii]

The entertainment industry spreads PM philosophy into every home through TV and the internet, one of the wonders of the age of technology. TV could be used on a grand scale for benevolence according to the tenets of Philippians 4:8:

"Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

However, TV networks are under the dominion of those who purvey PM culture and, in some instances, are massively under the influence of the gay lobby. Television in Europe and the USA is out of control as far as modesty is concerned. Restraints that used to prevail have gone. The situation is one of lawlessness because there are no laws which are effective.

(Very little is written on this subject of modesty, but it needs to be addressed. [xviii])

Technically, new fibre-optic technology allows hundreds of channels which creates an ever more segmented audience. One can flick from murder, to adultery, to blasphemy, to pornography, to mockery of Christ.

The effect of several hours a day of indulgence in TV for a vast number of people calls for analysis. "Reading a 300-page book demands sequential thinking, active mental processes, sustained mental engagement, and a long attention span. Reading also encourages a particular sense of self—one reads in private, alone with oneself and with one's thoughts. Watching TV, on the other hand, pre-sents information rapidly and with minimal effort on the part of the viewer, who

becomes part of a communal mass mind. Visual images are presented rapid-fire, with little sense of coherence, consistency, and unity for its viewers." [xix]

The power of TV over written material is that it comes in a moving image. It is image-driven, image-saturated, and image-controlled. When the image overwhelms and subjugates the written word, the ability to think, write, and communicate in linear fashion is undermined. Ideas are dislocated. Television images are poured out in the form of impressions, emotions, and stimulations. Written propositions and statements are not like that; a written proposition is either true or false. Images in themselves do not have truth-value. Muggeridge commented that when the Israelites worshipped the golden calf instead of waiting for Moses who would speak to them, they attempted to "televise" God. Making graven images is an attempt to make visible images of the invisible. In the beginning was the Word, not an image (Jn. 1:1).

The effect of a welter of images and impressions that lack moral and intellectual cohesion is to fragment the mind. This is exactly in accord with the postmodern mind, which abandons a unified, disciplined cosmos. A person bombarded incessantly is brought unconsciously into a world of unreality. He or she is impacted with fleeting impressions very often in advertising. Should we not refuse to listen to advertisements on radio or watch them on TV? As men we should love the Lord our God with all our minds; but we are inevitably hindered in doing so by squandering our time on trivia.

By the reading of books, we can learn from great spiritual leaders and thinkers. Reading engages our minds. We are in control as we read. This is not the case when we are watching TV. When I read, I am able to stop, meditate, reflect, and underline. I am able to revise, reconsider, and go over the ground again and again until I know that I have mastered a theme. When last did you stop in the middle of a TV program and meditate on some great truth presented? Television decays moral and spiritual values. Apart from the news, which is mostly partisan, most of what we see on TV is not anchored in the real world but concerns unreality. The real world simply is not like Hollywood.

The habit of reading is absolutely vital today. Through meditation on the Word of God, assisted by exposition, the believer is built up in his faith and in his worldview. The Jews were intrigued with miracles. They wanted, as did Herod, to see a miracle. But Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples" (Jn. 8:31). If TV takes over from reading, it means that those addicted are run according to an agenda that is hostile to thinking.

They resemble chimpanzees rather than humans created in the image of the living God.
"Postmodernism thrives on fragmentation, incoherence, and meaninglessness as modes of being and acting since there is no God and no objective reality and no universal reality to provide unity to anything." [xx] The speed of the images portrayed on the television screen makes careful evaluation almost impossible.

Habitual viewing tends to make people intellectually impatient and lazy. They are less able to think in a straight line and less able to sustain concentration.

"The great imperative in TV is incessant entertainment. Amusement triumphs all other values and takes captive every topic. Every subject—whether war, business, law, or education—must be presented in a lively, amusing, or stimulating manner." [xxi] If it fails to entertain, boredom results. The yawning watcher will turn to another channel if he is not entertained. He must be entertained incessantly.

In churches, the TV mentality comes through when people call for entertainment rather than preaching. When it comes to preaching, they want it to be entertaining and full of anecdotes, stories, and images (which they have become accustomed to on TV). They do not want preaching which demands concentration and challenges their minds. In postmodern culture, people look for the feel-good factor. So if the preacher does not make them feel good, he is regarded as a failure. In stark contrast, John the Baptist, our Lord, and His apostles confronted their hearers with reality, sin, righteousness, and judgment to come.

In PM, absolutes have been stripped away. Whatever censorship there used to be has been rusted away by ignoring the Judeo/Christian moral law and basis of ethics. Many TV producers are obsessed with sex which is portrayed fully and explicitly. There is no modesty; there is no sense of shame. Television will portray everything irrespective of the harmful effects this will have on children. Millstones are multiplying; there is a price to pay. But those who have power over the media glory in their unrighteousness and mock those who complain. The Word of God promises that the punishment of eternal fire is not far away.

pornography. According to the logic of the system, paedophilia and bestiality cannot be far behind." [xxii] Sometimes there is a moral reaction to a specific event. But the short term response is always overwhelmed in time by the flood tide of PM.

If you are addicted to TV, the answer is to eradicate from your TV menu all trivia and all that is unhealthy. Use the media only for the information you really need. The desire to read and the ability

to read well suffer under the ruthless regime of TV. One way to deal with this is to go on a TV fast. Replace TV-watching with truth-enhancing activities— especially reading books which will cause you to grow in grace and in knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). Well-chosen Christian biographies can have a powerful effect in redirecting and inspiring you.

Conclusions

People do not long for God because they are at enmity against Him. But they do long for happiness and reality. Much ministry today is directed to those whose marriages have ended painfully and to families deeply hurt and grieved by the wreckage of family life with damage suffered by children.

A statement by a contemporary young woman, illustrates this point:

"I belong to the Blank Generation. I have no beliefs. I belong to no community, tradition or anything like that. I'm lost in this vast, vast world. I belong nowhere. I have absolutely no identity." [xxiii]

We were created to relate to each other, to have fellowship with the Father, the Son, and with other believers—the assembly of believers who reflect the love of our Triune God (1 Jn. 1:1-4). Christians are by virtue of their union with Christ brought into the heart of the Trinity, a heart which is love ("God is love"). The Father loves the Son eternally and perfectly; the Son loves the Father and proved it throughout His life on earth. The Holy Spirit infinitely and comprehensively loves the Father and the Son. Jesus referred to our union with the Father, and in that context prayed fervently for the complete unity of His Church. This unity is one of love which, when witnessed by the world, proves to be a tremendous drawing factor.

Take a stand against Postmodernism and be drawn to the wonderful, unchanging truths of God's Word, and see the reality of Christ's love.

Psalm 118:8-9
It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

Colossians 2:8
Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Notes

i Dr. Donald M. MacDonald, The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland. September 2000
ii Thomas C. Oden, Two Worlds: The Death of Modernity in America and Russia, IVP, 1992, p. 32
iii David S. Dockery, The Challenge of Postmodernism, A Bridgepoint book, 1995, p. 24
iv Foucault found expression for his philosophy in the gay bathhouses of San Francisco, California, where he eventually contracted AIDS and died of related illnesses in 1984.
v Donald A. Carson, The Gagging of God, Apollos IVP, 1996, p. 73 ff. cf Bob Letham, Reformation Today, 162, p. 7ff
vi Ibid, Carson, p. 72
vii Veith uses this example in his book on Postmodernism. Gene Edward Veith, Jr., Postmodern Times - A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture, p. 55
viii Douglas Groothuis, Truth Decay, Defending Christianity against the Challenges of Postmodernism, IVP, 2000, p.115
ix Carl F. H. Henry, Revelation and Authority (1976-1983). The key sections are Vol. 3, The Bible as Propositional Revelation, p. 4554 ff., and the whole of volume 4, (674 pages). There is a supplementary note (pp. 196-200) on Karl Barth and in particular Barth's expression "the vulnerability of the Bible" and his concession that error is not limited to historical details but includes religious and theological teaching.
x Carson, ibid, On heralding the Gospel in a pluralistic culture, p. 491ff
xi Francis Schaeffer, The God Who Is There, Hodder , 1968, p. 177
xii John Blanchard, Does God Believe in Atheists? EP, 650 pp., 2000, p. 83
xiii Blanchard documents this well, ibid, p. 119ff
xiv Sinclair Ferguson, The Last Judgment in Puritan Preaching, in the Westminster Conference Papers for 1999
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