

e-cwip

interactive apostolic ministry training

Class 205—How to Engage Culture without Marrying It

Session 1 (Notes)

Text: 2 Kings 4:38-44

Gilgal as a picture of America:

- **The significance of Gilgal**

First place they camped in the promised land—the arrival in Gilgal marked the start of a new chapter in salvation history

- Center of worship
- Center of prophetic authority
- Center of political authority

The arrival of the Pilgrims in Plymouth marked the start of a new chapter in world history—and in Christian history

America as the center of Christianity last 150+ years

- Center of theological education
- Center of missionary activity
- Center of funding for the advance of Christianity

America as the center of prophetic authority—true compassion, human rights, equality, moral decency, (colonialism never stood for these things)

America as the center of political authority last 100+ years—last of the 20th C. superpowers (that day is over)

- **The demise of Gilgal:**

When you move away from truth, truth moves away from you!

Romans 1

- **The result:**

1. Diminishing influence

2. Famine

In the absence of good spiritual food, people will eat anything!

Notice—all the good food gone, only thing left to eat is toxic

Wild cucumbers—used in medicine for a clean out

in large quantities--lethal

What is “Postmodernism?”

Post-modernism refers to a movement in philosophy, art and literature from the late 1940s to the present time.

Post-modernism is viewed as a reaction to “modernism” that dominated Western culture from the late 1800s to the mid 1900s.

Modernism: Darwin, Karl Marx

Naturalism
Rationalism

We can only know what we can experience through our 5 senses
We can only know what can be scientifically investigated

“A worldview characterized by the belief that truth doesn’t exist in any objective sense but is created rather than discovered . . . Truth is created by the specific culture and exists only in that culture.”

The New Tolerance, Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler, p. 208

The opportunities of post-modernism:

- Emphasis on personal experience
- Openness to experiences/realities that are beyond the scope of scientific investigation
- Emphasis on the value of community

The challenge of post-modernism:

- Rejection of the notion of absolute (universal) truth
- Rejection of the notion of moral/ethical absolutes
- Rejection of the notion of absolute authority

Postmodernism is spirituality without truth!

e.g., man giving rocks to Betsy at back door of church
girl into Buddhism

The crowds were all around Jesus while the bread and fish were flying—but when He got to the exclusive claims of Christianity, they left Him

To disciples: “will you go too?” “Lord, where else can we go—you alone have the words of eternal life.”

Trends in our culture that create challenges and opportunities:

1. Technology:

Information Age/Highway. Has created information overload

One Sunday NY Times more info than the average person in the 1860s received in their entire lifetime

1. Affected our decision-making process

Eroded our confidence that we can ever know enough about anything

Eroded our confidence in authoritative voices

Placed more emph. on gut decision

2. Has created specialties—

The idea of being a “renaissance man” is no longer practically possible

People aren’t looking for well-rounded individuals so much as a well-rounded team

Gap widening between the educated and uneducated

3. Has affected our attention span

Marketing: have 2 seconds to get attention, will only have for 6 seconds

4. Has created a preference for images over words--

Culture of the Bible—oral culture

Middle Ages—non-literary culture—images for people who couldn't read

Literary age—ability to rapidly and economically duplicate words

Post-literary age

Communications.

Has altered the way we communicate:

1. Has affected the way we “confront”
2. Has created isolation (people can be intimate in electronic communications, but can't muster the courage to be intimate face to face)

2. Transience:

Carole King—*“You're so far away, doesn't anyone stay in one place anymore?”*

Removed an aspect of social pressure:

You have to live with these people as your neighbors for the rest of your life

You're gonna see them every week—at church, at the grocery store, at the cherry blossom festival

Opportunity: People need community
People searching for “traditional” experiences

3. “Tribalism:” Globalization/Multi-culturalism:

Has challenged the notion that Western culture (specifically, American Anglo culture) is superior

Challenge to Christianity where it is overly enmeshed in W. culture?

Missions: Is the goal to make people good Americans, or good Christians?

God wants to return to Gilgal!

- The return of the prophetic ministry

- God will move in Gilgal when spiritual hunger exceeds physical hunger
 - God will move in Gilgal when His people rise above the pull of culture
 - God will move in Gilgal when there is sacrifice (vs 42)
- The administration of truth to the culture
 - God's desire is to use the prophetic voice to neutralize what is toxic in our culture