



Postmodernism in the Church

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St. Thomas Aquinas is largely regarded as one of the greatest theologians that the church has ever produced, probably outside of the Apostle Paul. And in the 13th century, in synthesizing the mind of the church over the last 1,200 years, Aquinas defined love as *willing the good of another thing or another person*.

In other words, to love someone isn't just to have sentimental feelings for them. Love cannot simply be an emotional thing. It has to be connected to the will, which is connected to the intellect. Love wills the good of another person.

Too often, when people think about God being love, they think about God being a Care Bear in the sky whose only aim is to give us candy and bear hugs. But that's not love. And that's not God. God actually wills good for us, which is why He corrects us and guides us. It's why He gave us His laws to show us how to relate to Him and to others, so that we could flourish – because He wills our good.

That's why the Father sent the Son. He sent Jesus because He willed the good of the world, and the good for the world is that we don't perish, that we are given by His mercy the opportunity to repent and to turn to Christ.

That is the definition of love that people need to understand. So when people say, "What you're doing is unloving," Christians need to respond with, "Well, define the word love for me."

To do so requires a rational approach, but I don't believe that our culture is a rational culture, it's an emotional culture. Everything we do is based on how we feel, and we've moved from a rational culture, thinking things through properly, in a reasonable way, to a culture that is based on the way we feel. That way of functioning is actually animalistic, it's a lower form of operating in life.

And it's not the way that God wants us to think.

The Bible says in Romans 12:1–2 that we are transformed by the renewing... not of our emotions, but of our minds. We're not transformed by good feelings. We are transformed by good thinking. Philippians 4:8 says...

Finally, brothers and sisters, 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.

We're called to be transformed, to have the same mind of Christ. It's why Jesus is called the *Logos*. He is called the truth, because truth affects the mind, the intellect, and the will. And it's by understanding truth that we can properly identify the good through our intellect and then will it into being through our actions.

This brings us to the issue of postmodernism. I believe there are two things that are taking place as a result of postmodernism in our culture. The first is liberalism within the church, and the second is skepticism within the university system.



Liberalism within the church boils down to essentially what C.S. Lewis called “Jesus plus water.” It actually dilutes the gospel. Liberalism is the notion that Christianity as a religion is just as good as any other religion. It relativizes the claims of Christ instead of doing what Jesus Himself did, which was to say, “I am offering you an exclusive way. I am not a way, I am *the way*.”

It’s the C.S. Lewis trilemma. Lewis said Jesus didn’t give us the option of making Him just a good moral teacher, kind of pacifying and defanging him. He’s either a liar, lunatic, or Lord.

The claims of Christ are earth-shattering. They are cosmic claims, and you have to do something with those claims. Liberalism attempts to soften or even do away with those exclusive claims, but Jesus has not given us that option, as Lewis so brilliantly notes.

Therefore, as Christians we need to reinforce orthodoxy and combat liberalism within the church. We need a return to historic Orthodox Christianity. And it’s important to use the word “historic” because orthodoxy isn’t just something we’ve made up in recent years. Orthodoxy can actually be traced through 2,000 years of creedal Christianity and church history.

Take the Apostles’ Creed, for example. It is a bite-sized form of Christianity and the gospel that the church has always taught and has always believed. The Apostles’ Creed has been the test of orthodoxy for 2,000 years. It is the thing that separates us and has always separated us from every other religion.

In order to combat this corruption and decay within Christianity, you have to begin to use meaningful terms that are connected to what the church has always taught.

We believe in the Bible as the primary authority for doctrine, for correction, for living a moral life, for defining an immoral life, and for training in righteousness so that we become perfect. Holding to biblical truth is essential so that we become as Christ wants us to be, His spotless bride.

So as these postmodern ideas of liberalism are infiltrating the church, we’ve also seen a seismic shift in education. In the United States, most universities began as schools of learning to equip pastors and to offer a classical education. They would study philosophers and study the Scriptures. Students would have to know Greek, Hebrew, and Latin to graduate.

Even the term university is an interesting one. It’s singular, yet also plural. Unified, yet also diverse. These institutions offered diverse areas of study unified for the purpose of bringing glory to the Lord. And they would look at the universe created by Him and find this truth that He wanted to reveal to us.

Universities were birthed out of the church in the Middle Ages to show people how everything is integrated, how the diversity of life is actually a unity of life. The aim was to teach people that everything is ordered towards God, the supreme author of all things.

Our nation historically flourished through this educational paradigm. But then something happened. Universities were infiltrated with postmodernism, and they stopped teaching the Bible.

So what we’re noticing now is not integrity of a universal view of life, but actually fragmentation. What we’re noticing is a deconstruction, a destruction of this proper way of thinking about life.

What’s unfortunate is that now we have all of this technology and no moral compass to guide us on how to use it. We’ve come to a point in society where we have wonderful things, but no purpose for them. As a result, we’re witnessing a degeneracy that coincides with technology. So medical technology is not just



used to help people, but also to kill babies. We're using all of these instruments and institutions, like the universities, not to form minds through information, but to deform minds through indoctrination.

The old idea of education was fusion. The new idea of education is confusion. This has even filtered down into our public-school systems – they are a total mess. Public education has not produced an educated public, as G.K. Chesterton said.

Joe Sobran says, "A hundred years ago, they were teaching Latin and Greek in high school, and now, we're teaching remedial English in college."

God comes to build and to bring order. He brought order out of chaos in creation. In contrast, all the left can do is deconstruct. After a while, just like the law of entropy, it's going to reduce everything to the least common denominator.

This dumbing down of society will ultimately lead to our enslavement and our destruction.

We have been given these keys to the kingdom, and we've seen wonderful things happen in our society as it has focused on the Lord. As our Christian civilization is focused on Christ, we have thrived. But when we move into a position that is antagonistic towards Christianity, we move into a position that is not really inventing anything new, but simply destroying the inventions that have been created.

It's time for the church to awaken to its role – to restore the ideas of truth, of order, of rational thinking that will enable our nation to thrive once again.

Take Your Study Further

For biblical passages about reason, instruction, and proper thinking: See Proverbs 1:2-9, Acts 17:17, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Peter 3:15

For verses about deceptive teaching: See 2 Corinthians 10:5, Ephesians 4:17-25, 2 Thessalonians 2:15, Colossians 2:8, 2 Timothy 3:1-5

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