

TRUTH AT RISK

By

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“What is truth?” asked Pilate at the end of an interview with Jesus (Jn.18:38). His question was not meant to evoke an answer. Rather it was meant for a statement: “Don’t tell us that you know the truth. There is no such thing” (John 18:38).

Today this same cynical attitude is found in public schools, in universities and even in churches. For decades children in public schools have been told, “You must not be judgmental; what is wrong for you may be right for someone else: what is true for you may not be true for another. After all, truth is relative.”

Why should anyone be shocked to hear that such teaching has produced people with no moral foundation, no ethical standards and no conscience? We hear the perpetual whining: “Why are children so involved in drugs? Why are they killing each other? Where did we go wrong?” Where have these bleeding hearts been while truth, the very foundation of our culture, has been under attack in education, in the arts, and in religion?

With the loss of truth our nation has lost its ideology. The mainframe upon which a moral society is structured has been systematically removed from all the institutions of communication: the schools, the arts, the media, the family and the government. People now are saying, “What difference does it make if the President lies, so long as the economy is good?” Which translates: as long as we can prosper and be entertained, forget about truth.

The church is not far behind in this philosophy. It says, “Don’t give us a prophet in the pulpit. Give us a smiling face, someone to help us feel good and love everybody. Don’t bother us with truth.”

There was a time in days gone by when denominations lambasted and debated one another and churches divided over trivial differences. We were glad to see those fighting days end, but the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. The cult of tolerance dominates the religious scene and truth is denigrated.

Examples are everywhere. Billy Graham has said “I respect other paths to God,” and Leighton Ford said “preach the gospel, but don’t be so negative as to refuse to endorse or work with those who belong to a group that proclaims a different gospel.” If there are “other paths to God” than Jesus, and if there is a “different gospel” than his, then like Pilate, we ask, “What is truth?”

Other examples of tolerance which defy the truth are: Jerry Falwell’s commendation of sun Myung Moon; Robert Schuller’s endorsement of the Muslim religion; many “evangelicals” who joined Chuck Colson, Roman catholic Cardinal Cassidy and other Roman Catholic leaders in signing documents which promote a false gospel in the name of unity. Such well-known names as Dobson, Van Impe, Hinn, Crouch and Robertson were among those giving credence to doctrines which flagrantly oppose Biblical truth.

This dogma of tolerance springs from the wrong concept of love, the idea that if we but love enough, nothing else matters. But love, to be authentic, must be grounded in truth: in fact, truth is so vital that Jesus declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:7). It is the love of God that matters most, and that love feeds on His truth. Where love is not united with truth it simply becomes a sentimental emotion.

It is truth that enables us to think God's thoughts after Him. The truth God has revealed is to be embraced by the mind and enthroned in the heart, with each facet of truth in its proper place. This requires a certain amount of concentration, a focusing of thought on each segment in order that the whole can be made to fit together in a harmonious and logical way.

Such concentration is discouraged in all of our society. In the elementary public school room one may find posters and pictures plastering the walls, and a variety of ideas portrayed in symbols or written on the chalkboard. The thought process is interrupted every few minutes by a different exercise or activity, so that a child has no chance to concentrate on any complex thought, and may grow up to have little regard for objective truth, since he is trained to allow images to convey ideas without ever having to think through the logic of truth.

Modern churches have scuttled the old hymns with their deep historical and spiritual meaning, which required some mental activity as well as the energy to read, and in their places the people sing short and shallow choruses, repeated over and over. Focusing the mind to contemplate on the rich and challenging truth God has revealed is too much for the modern congregation. Expository sermons are seldom heard and the busy schedule of entertainment for all ages allots precious little time to Bible study!

Concepts known as the New Age Religion are now embraced by many Christians who seek a "feeling" or an "experience" rather than seeking to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" as Peter exhorts (2 Pet. 3:18). Others are victims of traditions which were not born of God's commands or teachings; traditions which have grown to be entangling vines of steel that choke out the light of truth and freedom

Our Lord once said that. "Everyone that does evil hates the light" (John 3:30). To the Thessalonians Paul spoke of men who "received not the love of the truth" and who "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10-12). It is clear that *truth is unwelcome to evil*, and where truth is neglected, evil of all kinds will thrive.

Jesus connected evil with the rejection of truth when he said o the Jews, "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stands not in the truth, because there is no truth in him...But because I say the truth you believe me not. Which of you convicts me of sin? If I say truth, why do you not believe me? He that is of God hears the words of God: for this cause you hear them not, because you are not of God" (John 8:44-47).

All truth has its roots in God, for God spoke the world into existence through His word, which is truth (Heb.11:3). Truth contains God's entire plan and purpose, and without it man is without purpose or hope. In God's truth there is perfect harmony and without it there is discord.

We are told not only to love truth, but to hate evil. "You that love Yahweh hate evil!" (Ps. 97:10). One who loves God and righteousness loves truth: one who loves evil despises the truth. Like Eve in the garden he chooses to reject God's word: "In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die," and, instead, believes Satan's lie. Even if only a whisper: "You will not surely die" (Gen. 3:3-4). This lie has always been the foundation of pagan religion. But today it is embraced by the majority of Christian leaders as well.

That which is known as Christendom today is in chaos. Every possible pagan thought can be found somewhere, taught by a so-called pastor or evangelist. In a Christian book store you can find a book to support any false religious theory or practice. It is strikingly strange that the "church" should expect to make believers of all nations when the truth to be believed is either absent or conscientiously ignored.

Yet, nothing could be more gloriously satisfying than to hold these truths: Jesus, God's Son, born of a virgin, died to meet the penalty of sin for all who are obedient to the gospel.

He arose from the dead assuring us that we also will be resurrected to be made immortal like Him.

At judgment all wrongs will be righted and the enemies of God will be destroyed forever, that God's people may live always, in a new creation where all is righteousness. Knowing these things should fill every believer with abounding joy and make him or her a courageous and aggressive messenger to those yet in the darkness of ignorance and superstition.

It is not enough to hear and know truth. It must be acted upon. According to Paul, truth is to be obeyed (Rom. 2:6-10).

Today we are in the same warfare which the apostle Paul described in which it is our task to cast down the strongholds of Satan and all the theories and philosophies which are exalted against God, and to turn men's thoughts to truth, to the point of obedience to Jesus, God's anointed Son (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

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