

CHRISTIAN CARETAKERS OF CULTURE

Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

A Changing Culture

Webster defines culture as a “specific stage or period in the development of civilization.” Culture, like time, is never static. It’s always on the move. According to Christian standards, our current culture is gradually moving from bad to worse. From every angle, religious, social, political and economic, signs of anti-Biblical tenets are evident. A cultural revolution began among college students in the 1960’s. Past moral standards were challenged then regarding sexuality, marriage, parental and governmental authority, educational issues and Biblical truths.

Our Current Culture

Our current culture, called “Postmodern”, rejects all forms of authoritative truth including the absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures. It espouses tolerance without Biblical moral appraisal. To a greater or lesser extent, it includes Humanistic Secularism, Pragmatism, Individualism, Pluralism, Relativism, Materialism and Hedonism. For definitions of these heady subjects go to: www.selc.lcms.org - Stewardship - Personal Stewardship: Culture: “Current Cultural Isms”.

Cultural Influences in the Church

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) recently endorsed same-sex marriage. It enabled itself to do so through the adoption of the Higher Critical Method of Biblical Interpretation which negates the absolute authority of Scripture. The method, which has filtered into most denominations, considers certain portions of Scripture “myth”. As a result, instead of changing a declining culture, many denominations have accommodated themselves to it. Recent surveys indicate that about 75% of the US adult population identifies as Christian. Deeper examination, however, would indicate that many of those who call themselves Christians are under the spell of manipulating Scripture to suit themselves with their own brand of Christianity.

Atheism on the Move

The number of those who claim no religion is growing to about 18% of the US population, 6%

of which claim themselves as “atheists” (deny God’s existence) or “agnostics” (not sure of His existence). An article in the Christian Post (Feb. 9, 2014) reports: “A godless congregation in Nashville, TN, has expanded to two services to accommodate growth in just three months. The plan is to have forty “Atheist Churches” up and running by the end of 2014.” The Freedom from Religion Foundation, consisting of atheists, agnostics and skeptics, currently has 20,000 members with a goal to influence government.

Christian Stewards of Culture

As Christian stewards of culture, there are two things we can do. Speak up! Write! A hot topic on the current cultural agenda is sexual orientation and same-sex marriage. When the subject comes up, share your Christian views in a loving, kind way. For example, you could say: “In my Biblical opinion, I believe marriage is a union between a male and female. Historically, this has been the definition of marriage among non-Biblical societies as well.” You could also write. Below is a Letter to the Editor printed in the Cleveland Plain Dealer (April 23, 2014) in response to a newspaper article and photos of heron nest building describing how a male heron, upon searching about and finding the right twig,



flies back to the female, places it in her beak which she in turn inserts into the nest. The Letter to the Editor states: “The sight of a male

and female heron, mated for life, harmoniously building a nest provides an excellent message for our current culture in transition. Ultimately, marriage is the union of a male and female. Insisting on this is not about discrimination. It is merely standing on the truth of human anthropology. Men and women were made for each other.” Letters to elected officials are also an effective way to influence cultural trends.

Sexuality & Marriage Bible Verses

Gen. 2:22-25	Gen. 19:4-11	Lev. 18:22
Lev. 20:13	Matt. 19:4-6	Rom. 1:26-27
1 Cor. 6:9-10	1 Cor. 6:15-20	1 Tim. 1:9-10