



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of
Niles

Volume 2/Issue 11

WHAT WE ARE DOING? AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME

Welcome to Volume 2 of the FBCN Newsletter or the “current new normal” editions.

This week’s reading will be Psalm 87, Titled Glorious Things of You Are Spoken

A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. A Song.

On the holy mount stands the city he founded; ² the LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob. ³ Glorious things of you are spoken, O city of God. *Selah*

⁴ Among those who know me I mention Rahab and Babylon; behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Cush— “This one was born there,” they say. ⁵ And of Zion it shall be said, “This one and that one were born in her”; for the Most High himself will establish her.

⁶ The LORD records as he registers the peoples, “This one was born there.” *Selah*

⁷ Singers and dancers alike say, “All my springs are in you.”

Our guest speaker this month has been Rev. Ebi Perinbaraj. He has been bringing a series he entitled “Gospel Church.”

I encourage join us this last Sunday as he concludes his series. You to can catch up on his previous sermons on either First Baptist of Niles Facebook Page or on the website.

We invite you to Join us for a virtual prayer meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00pm.

Wednesday Bible Study ([Click Here](#))

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807

One tap mobile

+13126266799

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807

Make sure you view the updated prayer list. There are so many needs.

**"We are the Bibles the world is reading; We are the creeds the world is needing; We are the sermons the world is heeding."
— Billy Graham**

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2 ESV

If you spend any time reading, listening or watching any form of media whether posted by individuals or news outlets, the overriding theme these days is personal freedom. And in every instance a reference to the Constitution or the Bill of Rights is mentioned. So, here's my question this week. Can you recite more of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights than you can the Sermon on the Mount? The U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights are the legal framework for America. The Sermon on the Mount serves essentially the same purpose for the Kingdom of Heaven of which followers of Jesus are citizens. If you're a Christian and are more familiar with our country's founding legal documents than with Jesus's foundational teachings, your religion may be Americanized. And from what I heard expressed, reciting and knowledge of what they mean are far apart.

What I am witnessing today is a blending of our cultural outlooks, sociopolitical beliefs, preferences and "Christianity", (note the air quotes). This is the practice of making Christianity relevant to a culture and it affects a change in the styles or expression of worship.

People are often surprised to learn that some of their deeply-held tenants of faith aren't really biblical, but rather, spring from American sociopolitical and cultural origins. Metaphorically, mixing "worldly values" into Christianity is like blending mud into ice cream. The mud isn't affected much, but the ice cream is ruined.

We need to resist allowing American cultural influences to subtly creep into our Christian beliefs. When we fail to confront it, all we are doing is fostering the belief that Christianity essentially consists of being a good "conservative" American.

The teachings of Christ should not be corrupted by ideologies not found in scripture. As Christians it is our obligation to question and research everything that comes across our purview and not let it influence our lives in ways that are opposite of Christ's teachings and life.

As I started out, the expression of one's opinions is becoming the focal point of influence in our culture that is turning out to be the narrative of many Christians. In their quest to preserve personal freedoms, they are unknowingly advancing the cause of postmodernism which is irreconcilable with Christianity.

In the struggle to maintain one's personal freedoms, scripture is used as a crutch to advance the concepts and classification of ideas of our current culture or worldview. A worldview is a view of the world, used for living in the world. A worldview is a "mental model" of reality —

a comprehensive framework of ideas and attitudes about the world,

ourselves, and life; a "system of beliefs", a "system of personally customized theories" about the world and how it works — with answers for a wide range of questions. A person's worldview is affected by many factors: by their inherited characteristics, background experiences and life situations, the values, attitudes, and habits they have developed, and more and these vary from one person to another. Therefore, even though some parts of a worldview are shared by many people in a community, other parts differ for individuals. Therefore worldviews (of different people) are shared yet unique. Or, could it be useful to think about an individual's worldviews (plural) instead of their worldview (singular)?

In her book "A Worldview Approach to Science and Scripture," Carol Hill says, "By 'worldview' I mean the basic way of interpreting things and events that pervades a culture so thoroughly that it becomes a culture's concept of reality — what is good, what is important, what is sacred, what is real. Worldview is more than culture, even though the distinction between the two can sometimes be subtle. It extends to perceptions of time and space, of happiness and well-being. The beliefs, values, and behaviors of a culture stem directly from its worldview."

This is in contrast to the worldview of Jesus which is that people need knowledge of God in order to make sense of their life. It is therefore, without question that the Son of God states that the knowledge that people need is that which not only comes from Him but is Him. For He is the revelation of the perfect God in

human flesh; and by the triune essence of the Godhead, the Father as well is made known to be the only true God. This knowledge is vital if the world is to comprehend, then apprehend a life that culminates in an ethical quest which Jesus calls "eternal life". It is important to remember that a worldview is comprehensive. It affects every area of life, from money to morality, from politics to art. True Christianity is more than a set of ideas to use at church. Christianity as taught in the Bible, is itself a worldview. The Bible never distinguishes between a "religious" and a "secular" life; the Christian life is the only life there is. Jesus proclaimed Himself "*the way, the truth, and the life*" (John 14:6) and, in doing so, became our worldview.

Accordingly, as postmodernism has become the prevailing worldview, practically every aspect of contemporary culture has been subjected to and in many cases completely redefined by the influences of postmodernism. Two very important examples of new culture norms, that until a generation ago were never identified with Western culture but have now been legitimized and institutionalized by a postmodern worldview, involve abortion and homosexuality. The impact in popular opinion and public policies related to these two vitally important issues, suggests the operations of a force that is both pervasive and effectual, as well as, alien to the beliefs of our ancestors. Needless to say, that force is contrary to Christianity.

I am going to turn to Dr. Gene Veith to provide some insight and to explain this idea of postmodern

worldview in an understandable context. Dr. Veith is an author, scholar, and Professor of Literature emeritus at Patrick Henry College. He received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Kansas. Additionally, he holds honorary doctorates from Concordia Theological Seminary, Concordia University California, and Patrick Henry College. I will use six of his characteristics held by most postmodernists and hopefully this will provide an understanding to this sometimes complex concept as it applies to today's culture.

1. **Social Constructivism.** Meaning, morality and truth do not exist objectively. This is at the heart of the postmodernist worldview. Truth, with its attendant concepts of meaning and morality, are "constructed" by society. Everything centers around the story that the community has created to establish its validity. The community in which a person places himself creates their own versions of these things. Thus, what is truth for one group is not necessarily truth for another. Rewriting history for the good of the "story" is the basis of truth.

In other words there is no absolute truth - Postmodernists believe that the notion of truth is a contrived illusion, misused by people and special interest groups to gain power over others. We see this played out today in regards to the wearing of masks where it's a case of personal freedoms vs. personal responsibility. Or respect for others vs. disregard of others

"Be the change that illuminates the lives of others. Be the change that causes others to follow behind you

in your footsteps. Be the "somebody" that starts. One person stepping forward to do what is right, because it is right, can change the world. For if nobody starts, who then can follow?"

— Matthew Roland

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4 ESV

Truth and error are synonymous - Facts, postmodernists claim, are too limiting to determine anything. Changing erratically, what is fact today can be false tomorrow.

John W. Ritenbaugh clearly states, "*Truth* indeed does mean 'factual,' something that is right and good. However, we need to understand it in a slightly different way. The Greek word that is translated as 'truth' is also equally well translated into 'real' or 'reality.' God's Word is reality. Another English equivalent is the word "genuine"—God's Word is genuine."

Let us consider a few contrasts at this point. God's Word is factual as contrasted to flawed. Man's word is flawed; some of it is true, some is not true. Man's word is corrupted by the fact that, even though he may have good intentions, even though he may be sincere in wanting to tell the truth, his experience just does not support his ability to give us the whole truth. God sees all things, hears all things, knows all things. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal, "*having neither beginning of days nor end of life*" (Hebrews 7:3). He is the sum total of everything, and if *He* tells us something, it has behind it the weight of everything that *He* is. His Word, then, is not

flawed because it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). Thus, God's Word is factual, as contrasted to the flawed word of man.

In addition, God's Word is pure (Psalm 119:140; Proverbs 30:5; 1 Peter 2:2), as contrasted to that which is contaminated. God's Word is genuine in contrast with what is hypocritical. The word of man may look good on the outside, but it is not all that good all the way through. God's Word is reality, as contrasted to fantasy or vanity.

It is good to understand this because, if we are going to use the Word of God in the right way, we have to believe it. We not only have to believe it, we must *trust* it. When Jesus says that God's Word is truth, and that we are sanctified by that Word, we need to understand it from the point of view, the perspective, of God: that His Word is pure, genuine, factual, and reality—and all these are contrasted to man's word. Despite having the best of intentions and sincerity, man cannot even begin to come close to ultimate truth of the Word of God.

Whose word will we use as evidence on which to base our lives if we desire to live by faith, by trust?"

2. Cultural

Determinism. Individuals are shaped by their culture. Culture is created by language, and we are trapped in a "prison of language." We are trapped because language does not communicate; it obfuscates. This is one reason that some philosophers consider postmodernism to be only the logical end of modernism, for in modernism, language began to

change. In modernist theology, for instance, terms that had one meaning historically began to be used to mean something else. Washington, DC, language has a long history of obfuscation.

Language changes lives by changing minds, shaping thought, and making worlds of difference merely by what is said and not said. It embodies the rules of a culture and the aspirations of those who live in it. The language we speak, hear, and read, and with which our minds ponder our place in the world, shapes our reality. The word that Dr. Veith uses is *obfuscates*, which means to confuse, to muddy, to make dark. In looking at the word, "dark" used in this context means without a moral or spiritual light. This is the second time morality comes into play it was first mentioned in the first point Social Constructivism. Meaning, morality and truth do not exist objectively. Language incites and is used to rally individuals as part of a group around a message. We continue to see the power of this during the unrest in our cities where groups come together under a set of united banners.

3. Rejection of Individual Identity. People exist as members of a group, not as individuals. This is a major distinction between postmodernism and modernism. The individual has no place in postmodernism.

Potent persuasion is steeped in a blend of social context and emotion. Putting together an organized group effort translates into power.

"the collective capacity of a group of people to create influence"

The group is a composition of individuals that have shed their individualities to form an identifiable collection of people. This could be formal or informal. The important thing is they have a clear identity. The members of the group need to identify with the other members. Without identity and identifying, the group cannot collectively exert influence. There's no more powerful way of liberating ourselves than simply detaching from the perception of identity. Yet in doing so we become the tag-line of the group that we attach ourselves to.

4. Rejection of

Humanism. The modernistic concepts of human creativity, autonomy of the individual, and the priority of humans over all else are rejected as wrong values. The problem is that creativity, autonomy, and human priority are values that exclude and oppress other humans. Postmodernists argue that *groups*, not individuals, must empower themselves and assert their own values.

The word *influence* means there is a focus, something to be achieved. What and who does the group want to influence? Group power is pretty pointless without it having something to do. What are the factors that influence beliefs and values (ideology). What is the dominant ideology in modern American culture today? How are they challenging the status quo? The movements we see today across our nation, for example, offer an alternative ideology—one that assumes that the entrepreneurial system is fundamentally unequal and that those who have amassed the greatest wealth are not

necessarily deserving of it. This competing ideology asserts that the power structure is controlled by the ruling class and is designed to impoverish the majority for the benefit of a privileged minority. How did the group empower themselves to take “necessary” action against the perceived impoverishment? By influencing the group through social media, by encouraging and instructing people to grab instruments and prepare to loot downtown businesses. Creating a shared identity and a purpose, individually they will each bring their personal power (capacity) to help the group meet its objectives. The power of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts — provided the whole has a clear identity and purpose.

5. Denial of the

Transcendent. There are no absolutes in postmodernism. This is the result of the previous tenets. If history can be rewritten, if truth is flexible, then any claim for a truth that transcends culture or the group must be rejected. While there is a postmodern “church,” most of these “churches” argue against a Christianity based on biblical truth. This is why someone like Rob Bell, (*American author, speaker and former pastor. Bell founded Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville, Michigan, and pastored it until 2012. Under his leadership, Mars Hill was one of the fastest-growing churches in America.*), can argue that in spite of biblical claims that Jesus alone is the way to salvation that God’s love will end up taking all (or least the vast majority of people) to heaven.

Rob Bell was then asked by Oprah when the church was going to embrace same-sex “marriage,” to which he responded, “We’re close,” with Kristen, his wife, adding, “I think it’s evolving.” Rob then explained that, “Lots of people are already there. We think it’s inevitable, and we’re moments ...,” at which point Oprah chimed in with, “Moments away from the church accepting it?” “Absolutely ... I think culture is already there, and the church will continue to be even more irrelevant when it quotes letters from 2,000 years ago as their best defense. When you have in front of you flesh and blood people who are your brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and coworkers and neighbors, and they love each other, and they just want to go through life with someone.” So, according to Rob Bell, the church of Jesus should follow worldly culture and deny the plain teaching of God’s Word in order to be “relevant.”

Postmodernists speak out against the constraints of religious morals saying traditional authority is false and corrupt. They wage intellectual revolution to voice their concerns about traditional establishment. Believing ethics to be relative, postmodernists subject morality to personal opinion. They define morality as each person’s private code of ethics without the need to follow traditional values and rules. Valuing inclusive faiths, postmodernists gravitate towards New Age religion. They denounce the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ as being the only way to God. Today, “social consensus” is competing against biblical morality. In other words, our morality is shaped and changed by the culture around us. It should be easy to see

that if social consensus is our moral compass, then we have built our morality on a foundation of shifting sand. Social consensus is just that, a consensus. It’s a picture of the general social mores of the day. Seeking common experiences, interests, and values as the defining characteristic of a population or a society. A generation or two ago, homosexuality, divorce, and adultery were not accepted, they were even considered sinful. Nowadays, both homosexuality and divorce are normal and adultery isn’t as stigmatized as it once was. Basically, what we have with social consensus is what happened to the Israelites a couple generations after conquering the Promised Land: “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6). The people abandoned God, and within two generations they were doing what was evil in the sight of God.

So why should the Bible be our source for morality? Because without it, we are like ships adrift at sea. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord said these words: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built His house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock” (Matthew 7:24-25). The Word of God, the Bible, is the only rock upon which to build morality.

6. Power Reductionism. All institutions, human relationships, and moral values are masks for power. All the person holding a modernist worldview wants to do is control others. Likewise, postmodernism rejects reason, because reason is simply an

illusory mask for cultural power. Logic is simply a means of control.

As Christians we can use logic and the Bible as tools because logic itself finds its supernatural basis in the nature of the Creator of all things. In term of its nature, a particular principle of human logic is valid if it reflects the Mind of God as revealed in Scripture. Logic thus has a supernatural basis and is not to be reduced to a relative and cultural psychology.

Man was made in the image of God, and part of this image is his capacity for logical thought. A close study of Scripture reveals that logic conveys, clarifies, and defends revealed truth because it finds its own validity in God's nature. For example, the "law of non-contradiction" rooted in the very Being of the God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2). When Paul said that God cannot both be God and a lying God at the same time, he was actually saying eternal life is a "promise", and so of free grace, and not by the works of the law, which is inconsistent with a promise: it is the promise of God, who is faithful to His word, and "cannot lie"; being the God of truth, that can neither deceive, nor be deceived: this does not contradict His omnipotence, but argues the perfection of His nature, which cannot admit of anything that implies weakness and mutation: and this promise was made before the world was, as early as the choice of God's elect in Christ, and the gift of grace to them in Him; as early as the covenant was made with Him, and He was set up as the Mediator of it; who was present to receive this

promise as their head and representative for them, and to whom it was made as federally considered in Him, and in whom it was secured for them.

In such places, Paul did not hesitate to argue:

If someone is in union with Christ, then he will be a new creature. If someone is not a new creature, then he is not in union with Christ. The Apostle Paul had no problem whatsoever "reasoning" from the Scriptures (Acts 17:2; 18:4, 19, etc.). In all his writings, Paul constantly used logically valid forms of argumentation to demonstrate from the Old Testament that Jesus was the Messiah. We must also remember that although human logic can tell us if the structure of an argument is *valid*, it cannot tell us if it is *true*. Indeed, an argument can be logically valid and materially false at the same time!

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. Romans 13:14ESV

For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not from the Father but from the world.

1 John 2:16





PRAYER LIST

- ✓ ✓ Continuing Prayers for loss: All the families that have lost loved ones this past year. Remember those who have recently lost loved ones due to COVID 19.
- ✓ ✓ Continuing Prayers for physical needs: Rita McManus, Maria Hatfield, Erwin and Elizabeth Lickman, Gloria-Lynn Fernandez, Betty Matson, Ronaldo Claveria
- ✓ ✓ Continuing Prayers for our Ministry Needs: The Pastoral Search Committee, Pulpit Supply, Our Deacons, Financial support
- ✓ ✓ Continuing Prayers for our Sister Ministries: BIEM Ministries, Orchard Church, Pastors Davis, Billow, Eddy, Vitel. The Perinbaraj's as the continue their studies preparing for the mission field of India.
- ✓ ✓ Continuing Prayers for Spiritual Needs: Leonard Hatfield, Carol Pelfrey's family, Daniel Ruehlman, George Bizadellis
- ✓ ✓ Continuing Prayers for: The spread of the Gospel, Our Government, Our Nation, Our Community, Our Neighbors, Our Families, pray for our members that have lost employment and for those who still have jobs and need to interact with others on a daily basis. Pray for those still working that God will protect. Lift up all our health professionals and their families who are on the front line of this pandemic especially Mylin and Errol Lardizabal and Liza Mitchell.
- ✓ URGENT Erwin Lickmann is requesting prayer for finalizing decisions regarding the future living arrangements for himself and Elizabeth. This is an urgent need as Elizabeth's health and mental faculties are quickly deteriorating.
- ✓ Alex Figueroa, (relative of Al Nuzikowski) Is undergoing treatments on his eye. Pray for a full recovery.
- ✓ Several requests from Carol Riemer
 - Her granddaughter's husband died of a massive heart attack at age 41.
 - Her daughter's ex-husband recently attempted suicide.
 - Through all of this her son, Rudy, just moved to Colorado with his family.
- ✓ Norma Weinthal – Herb Weinthal went home to be with the Lord early Wednesday morning. Pray for the family as they mourn his loss.

If you have prayer requests or updates on your family, we encourage to submit them to the Newsletter email address at the end of this newsletter.

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