

American Decency

Update

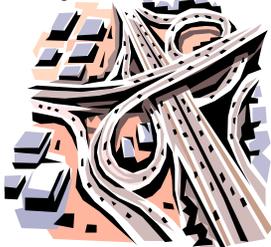
American Decency Association
P.O. Box 202
Fremont MI 49412

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

February 2009

... Perhaps the most fundamental value that drives our lifestyles and decision making is whether or not we believe that absolute moral truth exists.

The Route to Relativism and Beyond



... Perhaps the most fundamental value that drives our lifestyles and decision making is whether or not we believe that absolute moral truth exists. Few perspectives in life have a more significant impact on who we are, how we live and what we believe than our personal conviction about moral truth.

The constant retooling of our core values can be largely traced to a seminal shift in our thinking regarding our perspective on truth. In short, most Americans have chosen to reject moral truth in favor of relativism. That single change has opened the

door to a wholesale revision of our entire set of values -- and the resulting behaviors.

The result has been a wholesale revision in people's thought patterns and behaviors based on the notion that a person is the center of his/her universe and is, therefore, responsible for determining what is right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, useful and useless, significant and insignificant. In this system, without any grander vision of truth, meaning and value, each person thereby dictates the standards and principles that will rule his/her world, regardless of anyone else's standards and principles.

At the start of the third millennium, America is a nation in which only one-fourth of all adults and just 1 out of every 10 teenagers believes that there is absolute moral truth. The majority of America, therefore, either believes or yields to the belief that all moral truth is relative to the individual and his/her circumstances.

... What happened? How did Christians, the very people to whom God entrusted the substance of

truth and morality, arrive at this vapid posture? As best we untangle, the route was circuitous. The teaching that people receive from their churches--the place where, hopefully, the truths asserted by God are clearly, consistently and convincingly expounded--has generally been ineffective at helping them comprehend the moral truth. Our studies show that few churches use their teaching time--sermons, Sunday school, VBS, small groups, membership classes--to intentionally and relentlessly communicate a coherent and cohesive worldview in a systematic fashion. ...

... Chuck Colson has argued that the dominant American worldview of young adults can be summed up in one word: "whatever." Without the clarity and consistency of absolute moral truth, we are reduced to doing what seems right, what feels good, what produces the least resistance and what provides the greatest fulfillment.

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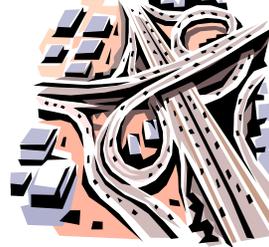
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Churches, like the people within them, seem to have lost a sense of why they exist.

Truth and our Worldview

One of the signs of spiritual vitality in a culture is when people commit themselves to becoming more Christlike. This would be exemplified by a meaningful and growing commitment to prayer, Scripture and meditation on God's Word, resulting in a desire to seek greater personal holiness. ...

Several million Americans are striving to live consistently with their spiritual values by putting pressure on corporate America through economic boycotts. (The high-profile efforts are those against corporations that distribute, produce or otherwise support pornography or abortion; but millions of people are boycotting organizations that produce, distribute or promote a variety of immoral media products or corporate policies.) This direct response to immorality is related to the sizable increase measured in the proportion of people who say their religious faith is very important to them.

But cracks in the spiritual armor are evident when we evaluate the most serious or significant problems and challenges people say they are facing in life only to find that few individuals cite the need for a better relationship with God, the need for God's forgiveness, the need to grow spiritually or a desire to achieve eternal salvation or acceptance. In a recent survey we even asked people to identify their goals in life and discovered that less than 1 percent mentioned anything related to holiness, righteousness or purity.

While prayer has become a more significant ministry in churches during the latter half of the '90's, the fact remains that only a small number of Christian churches have any type of ongoing prayer for the souls of nonbelievers. ... The result we have found in study after study is a nation of churches filled with people who are dispassionate about evangelism, theologically incapable of accurately representing God's principles and standards, and relationally and methodologically unable to lead a person to Christ. One way of evaluating the evangelistic commitment of churches is to note that



they will spend more money on buildings and maintenance this year than on evangelism and follow-up-by a factor of 4 to 1! ...

And when someone shares his/her faith in Christ with a nonbeliever and the person makes a decision to follow Christ as his/her Savior, we also discovered that most of them become nominal believers -- they do not become truly devoted followers of Christ because there is not an effective follow-up ministry to help them grow mature in their faith. ...

Cohabitation, divorce, sexual promiscuity and deviance and birth outside of marriage are increasing. Sales of pornographic material on the Internet surpass the cumulatives sales of all other products sold online. ...

Much of this can be attributed to the heart condition of Americans. ...

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