

Thermometer or Thermostat?(How to face Contemporary Cultural Challenges)

Presented to Youth meeting.

St Verena Church, Toronto, Canada

Friday May 13,2011

A. Introduction

1. What is Culture? Civilization, Customs, Values, Way of Life.
2. The challenge of moving from culture to another(Place- Time).
3. The globalization- The global culture.
4. The cultural challenges in the early Church.

A. Introduction

- Acts 6:1-3 “Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. “Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business”

A. Introduction

- Acts 15:23-29 “They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”--to whom we gave no such commandment-- it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

1. The Dictatorship of Relativism
2. The Sexual Rebellion
3. The Culture of Death
4. The Age of Fear

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

The Dictatorship of Relativism.

Story of Monica and her daughter Sherry

Monica was raised in a non-Christian but loving family, with fairly strict rules and guidelines. A good student-and, according to her parents, a "good girl"-- Monica went off to College at the age of 18. She made excellent grades, was involved in respectable campus activities, and faithfully visited her parents during every school break. Then, in her senior year, she shared her dorm room with a glowing Christian, who patiently answered Monica's many questions until finally, one Friday afternoon; Monica surrendered her life to Jesus Christ. She became involved in a nearby church, where she soon met and married a fine Christian man named Jack. A year later she presented her parents with their first grandchild, Sherry. Life couldn't have gotten any better.

But when Sherry became a teenager, things began to change. The signs were subtle at first, but eventually Monica and Jack had to admit that their daughter seemed to be rejecting many of their values. They were disturbed but continued to pray for Sherry and to believe she would "outgrow this phase" and return to the things they had taught her.

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

They were relieved that, in spite of their differences with their daughter, she never got involved in the drug or alcohol scene as did many of her peers. Sherry graduated from high school with honors and went off to the same college her mother had attended. That's where she met Tony.

"You'll love him, Mom," Sherry declared on her first visit home from college. "He's so sweet-- not to mention brilliant. He's already excelling in every class. Everyone respects him. And he treats me like a queen!" Monica smiled. "I'm so happy for you," she said. "So when do we get to meet him?"

"Actually, we were hoping we could both come here for Christmas break- not for the entire two weeks, of course. We want to spend part of it with his parents too. But at least long enough that you can all get to know each other."

"That's a wonderful idea, honey. Your dad and I would love it. Just let us know ahead of time which days you'll be here, and I'll have a guest room ready."

Sherry hesitated. "Sure, Mom, although." She took a deep breath. "Well, like, is the guest room really necessary? I was thinking we could just stay in my room together."

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

Monica's eyes opened wide. "Don't be silly. You can't do that. It wouldn't be right."

"I thought you'd say that," Sherry responded. "I explained to Tony how you and Dad feel about that sort of thing, but I promised to talk to you about it anyway. But don't worry. We'll respect your feelings and sleep in separate rooms while we're here"

Monica's heart pounded like drums in her ears. "While you're here? What do you mean, while you're here? Are you trying to tell me that you intended to sleep together when you're not here?"

"We already do, Mom," Sherry explained patiently. "We're in love. You don't really expect us to--" Monica interrupted. "I expect you to respect the morals and values we've taught you all your life."

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

"I do," Sherry countered. "That's why I agree that we would sleep in separate rooms while we're here. But at Tony's house or at school, it's different." Monica shook her head. "Are you trying to tell me that Tony's parents have no problem with your sleeping together at their house?"

"No, Mom, they don't. After all, not everyone shares your views on that sort of thing, you know." Monica shook her head. "I know that," she said, wiping a tear from her cheek. "But I certainly thought you did."

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

Sherry moved from the rocker and sat on the couch beside her mother. "Mom, in many ways, I do share your views. You and Dad have taught me a lot. But there are some things I have to decide for myself. For you and Dad living together before you got married would have been wrong. But I don't feel the same way. That's why I wish you could understand you have your value system and I have mine. The fact that they're different doesn't mean one is right and the other wrong, and it doesn't mean we can't respect each other's opinions. In fact, that's the whole point. We need to respect and honor differing value systems-- yours, mine, and everyone else's- just as we honor and respect our own. Anything else would be intolerant. We can't force our values or beliefs on other people. It's just not right. Can't you please try to understand that?"

Monica stifled a sob. "I don't know, honey," she said. "I just don't know."

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

What is Relativism ? What are its challenges ?

- Morals: relationships, lifestyle, what is sin?
- Faith: Universal religion, Who is God?, materialism: Do we need Him?
- Intellectual: What is the Bible: Biblical Criticism, Creation versus Evolution
- What is the Truth? Relative or Absolute

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

God is the TRUTH..... Satan is the Liar

John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the TRUTH, because there is no TRUTH in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

- The devil is a liar, his resources are deception and lies. He does not stand in the **TRUTH** and there is no **TRUTH** in him.
- Lies are the weapons of the devil (i.e. Adam & Eve)

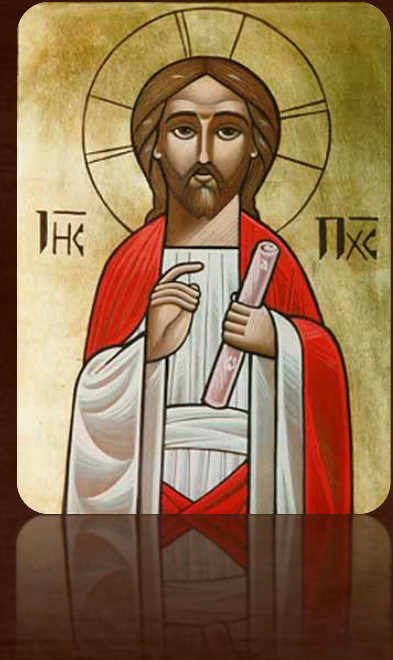


B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

The Truth is,

Our Lord Jesus Christ (God Incarnate)

- I am the **TRUTH** (John 14:6)
- The Son shall make you free (John 8:36)
- The **TRUTH** shall make you free (John 8:32)
- Sanctify them by your **TRUTH** (John 17:17)
- By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:10)



B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth

John 15:26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of TRUTH who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”



B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

God is the TRUTH

- No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (John 1:18)
- The Spirit of **TRUTH** who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me (John 15:26)



GOD THE
FATHER

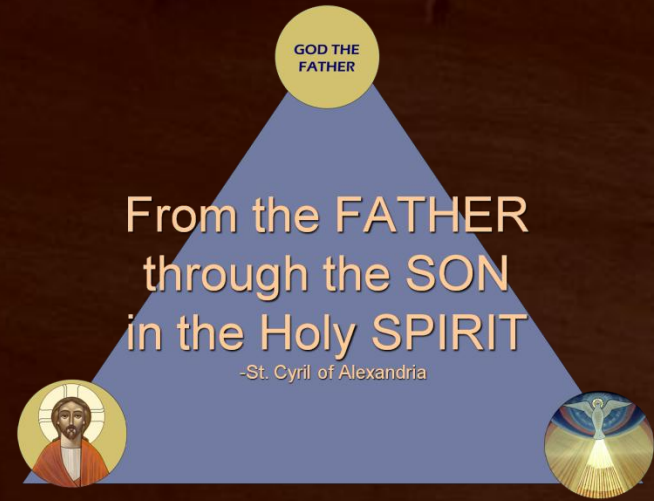
From the FATHER
through the SON
in the Holy SPIRIT

-St. Cyril of Alexandria



B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

- We know the **TRUTH** from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit
- The **TRUTH** revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures in the Church Sacraments, in the Church Teachings.



B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

2. The Sexual Rebellion.

- a) Premarital sex, Cohabitation, Civil Marriage, Divorce Infidelity, Polygamy, Group sex...
- b) Prostitution, escort service, massage...
- c) Adult movies, Pornography...
- d) Homosexuality, definition of marriage ...
- e) The influence of the sex rebellion on the church.
 - Tolerance: divorce and remarriage, fornication versus adultery, do not ask Policy
 - Sexual Scandals.
 - Ordination of homosexuals.

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

3. The Culture of Death

a) Abortion

b) Stem cell research

c) Euthanasia

d) Life termination

B. The Contemporary Cultural Challenges

4. The Age of fear

- a) Human Bombs (suicide bombs)
- b) Terrorism, Fanatics, Religion, New technology
- c) War on terror: suspicious behaviors, Civil Rights
- d) Preventive War: to preclude a future threat from emerging
- e) Preemptive War: to face an immediate threat
- f) Shooting in the schools, gangs, drugs, Legalization of using guns

C. How to be prepared to face the cultural Challenges?

1. Faith

2. Reason

a) Harmony or contradiction.

– Romans 1:19-20 “because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse”

C. How to be prepared to face the cultural Challenges?

1. Faith

Trio logue of Faith:

- The Holy Scripture
- The Patristic Heritage
- The Liturgy (Worship)

C. How to be prepared to face the cultural Challenges?

1. Faith

a) To refer to direct verses

- John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”
- Galatians 5:19-20 “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies”
- Exodus 20:13 “You shall not murder.”
- Mathew 14:27 “But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

C. How to be prepared to face the cultural Challenges?

b) Discernment.

– 1 Corinthians 6:12 “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”

– 1 Corinthians 10:23-24 “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.”

C. How to be prepared to face the cultural Challenges?

2. Reason

a) Metaphysics: Meta = after or beyond.

- It is the “Science of Being” The study of what makes a thing a thing.
- Examples: a Pen, a Pilot, a Triangle.
- Accidental attributes | Essential attributes

C. How to be prepared to face the cultural Challenges?

b) What determines the essence (the nature) of an object? The end or goal of the object?

- The end is the starting point to determine the essence of an object.

C. How to be prepared to face the cultural Challenges?

c) What is the essence of the human being?
What is the goal or the end of the human being?

– *To seek and serve God. To do good works*

– To do evil is accidental not essential for being human.

– However, Man not always does good works and seeks God. Man has free will to do good or to do evil.

C. How to be prepared to face the cultural Challenges?

- To be really human, to be really happy and to find satisfaction, Man should seek God and do good works.
- **Eternal Law**: The all- encompassing plan devised by God, according to it (this Plan) all created things act.
- **Natural Law**: The part of Eternal that man can know by means of reason. It includes: Scientific laws and Moral Laws.
- When scientists apply their reason to discover physical aspects of the eternal law, we end up with **the Laws of Science**.
- When theologians apply their reason to issues of right and wrong (to question human behavior), we end up with **the Moral Law**.

C. How to be prepared to face the cultural Challenges?

- How to apply our reason to know what are right and what are wrong (Moral Law).
- Example: Human Sexuality.
 - What is the goal of human sex?
 - » Procreation,
 - » To strengthen the marriage of the couple,
 - » And to protect.
 - The right behavior is the one which helps to fulfill the Goal of Sex.
 - Why are fornication, adultery, homosexuality, masturbation, prostitution, pornography, wrong?
- Other examples: Eating; hunting; authority; war.