

SUMMARY: The “speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent” motto of the Churches of Christ harken back to the first century attitude and should yield a religious belief system which is not impacted by contemporary popular thoughts.

The world all around us is impacted by the changes in methods of thinking and basic presumptions. Recognition of these changes can better equip us to teach the word. These thinking systems affect the way many people approach the Bible, including what they choose to follow and what to disregard.

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IN THE FIRST CENTURY

The letters of the Apostles (which became the New Testament) were considered by most to be the inspired word of God.

MIDDLE AGES

The Bible was generally held aloft as the universal authority in all fields of knowledge.

MODERN AGE

This era can be characterized by the Francis Bacon's (1561-1626) conviction that humans could exercise "power over nature by means of discovery of nature's secrets". It elevated human reason above, and freed it from God's written revelation. Promoted faith in the rational capabilities of the human being. It assumed that knowledge is certain and objective. Knowledge is not revealed to mankind, it is determined by mankind.

These attitudes produced the optimistic illusion that empirical science, coupled with continued education, somehow would eventually free us from our vulnerability to nature, as well as all social bondage. This age provided a fertile bed for the promotion of atheistic evolution concepts.

POST-MODERN AGE

For the first time in many years, people of the emerging generation were pessimistic that they could solve the planet's problems or that they would be better off economically than their parents.

There can be no abstract, universal statement of truth that applies in every circumstance, or to everyone. Rejects the idea that any particular ideology or religious claim is intrinsically superior to another. As a result, every religious system is viewed as one of many equally valid alternatives.

This time can be characterized by the saying "I'm O.K., you're O.K."

Much of the above was taken from an article titled "What Has Happened to Truth" in Reason & Revelation, Vol. XVI, #6, 1996.

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The following are statements from this issue of Wineskins:

We are willing to worship, study, and pray with anyone who makes the same confession we do that Jesus Christ is Lord - believing that our differences in our worship, organization, and the like are less important than our common affirmation that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Rubel Shelly, p. 5.

"I still don't know much about the Assemblies of God, but, in Bob (an Assembly of God Preacher), I have found a baptized believer who evidences a passionate love for the Lord and his Word and whose life is characterized by those beautiful qualities Paul calls 'fruit of the spirit'." "I extend the same grace of acceptance to him...." Mark Henderson - a 1986 convert from the Baptist Church now telling us what to believe.

"Attempting to provide an alternative to Christian sectarianism, ultimately the Churches of Christ became one of the most highly sectarian groups within American Christianity." "Clearly, many within the Churches of Christ are ready to enter the mainstream of evangelical Christianity." "If they retreat into sectarianism and refuse to cooperate with the larger world of evangelical Christianity, they face ultimate extinction." Marty G. Bell, a current Baptist preacher writing an article for a "church related" magazine.

Clearly the editors of Wineskins (a premier church of Christ publication) have bought into the Post-Modern philosophies. What is of more concern is some of our universities support of such philosophies.