

Autopsy of the end-times culture

1 Chron. 12:32

“Of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times,
with knowledge of what Israel should do...”

Over this last week we learned of two suicides: Anthony Burbain, 61, and Kate Spade, 55 – both by hanging.

Kate Spade left this letter to her 11-year-old daughter, “I have always loved you. This has nothing to do with you. Ask your father.”

Anthony B. left behind a 13-year-old daughter. In a letter he wrote: “I have never seen my body as a temple, but as a fun house.”

Both of these people were very successful and yet chose to end their lives. What is it that has taken away significance in our day, where there is a fundamental question that has come to the surface in a world without answers. “What does it mean to be human?”

To understand our times, we must look through the lens of a biblical worldview. Paul’s letter to Timothy gives us many keys to comprehend why our culture continues to experience such horrific difficulties.

2 Timothy 3:1-6

¹But realize this, that in **the last days**,
difficult times will come.

²**For men will be**

lovers of self, lovers of money,
boastful, arrogant, revilers,
disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy
³unloving, irreconcilable,
malicious gossips, without self control, brutal,
⁴treacherous reckless conceited,
lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

⁵holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power;

Avoid such men as these.

⁶**For among them** are those who enter into households
and captivated weak women

weighed down with sins, led by various impulses,
always learning and **never able** to come to the knowledge of the truth.

I. The Dilemma:

The cause of our dying culture:

The Problem of Dangerous Times (Verse 1)

Paul's point was that in the last days (between Christ's first and second coming) dangers would come and remain.

They would come like 'birth pangs' – with greater frequency and intensity. Paul wrote,

“But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (vs. 13)

In the third century with the advent of Roman Catholicism came sacramentalism. -mechanical means of grace – prayer beads, masses, confession and formulas of prayer for paying for sins, praying to the saints, candles, etc.

The dark ages (1000 years of ignorance that followed) of the Roman Church lasted until the Reformation, in which believers were brought back to the Bible and salvation by faith alone, not by any other means – the church, sacraments, liturgical services in Latin, or the sale of indulgences – (certificates of forgiveness which could be purchased in order to bail someone out of purgatory).

1500's brought the Reformation

The Reformation's key doctrine, justification by faith began a surge of genuine Christianity and revival, as people responded to the gospel.

There was great progress among believers as the Bible was made available for all people to read in their own language.

As believers were founded in the faith and grounded in the doctrines of the reformers, however, the problem of dead orthodoxy also entered. As the church became more established they began to function out of duty, without love, conviction or passion.

13-1400's Rationalism began developing

17-1800 Empiricism (rise of Science- 'discerner of all truth')

1900's industrial revolution

Thomas Paine's book, "*Age of Reason*" – swept through academia

...Denied the existence of God

Darwinian Evolution in the mid 1800's

Rise of Atheism – Nietzsche proclaimed "God is dead"

Christianity is no longer the dominant influence in the West.

Immanuel Kant – skeptical being

Scientism – science is the final judge of truth.

“Since God is dead, traditional morality is dead as well;

Even truth is dead.”

Nihilism = no truth, no morality, no meaning.

Existentialism – we have to will to find meaning.

Results: a society and a reality without answers.

Winston Churchill said,

“Truth is the most valuable thing in the world,
so valuable that it is protected by a battery of lies.”

Some of the results...

Liberalism – theological rationalism beginning the 1900’s

Dominating affect – denied the inspiration of Scripture,

Destroyed most major denominations

– (which are spiritually dead today)

During **the 1900’s Politicism**

- the gospel is set aside to promote social improvements, or governmental changes.

In the **1950’s Ecumenism** belief that doctrine and truth didn’t matter,

- Just that we love each other.
- Unity without Dogma.

In the 1960’s Experientialism

Truth comes through experience.

The problem that resulted was ... **experience became authoritative.**

“I don’t care what the Bible says, I know what Jesus told me.”

The net result of experiential theology is an undermining of the Word of God

1970’s brought the advent of **Psychology** in the church.

Development of self-esteem gave rise to narcissism.

Psychology took the place of the expository preaching.

The subjective church – moved away from expository preaching.

1990’s Mysticism – energized by rationalism. – move toward eastern Hinduism.

-Things are coming faster now –

Contemporary Thought (confusion)

- **Pantheism** – denial of reality - belief that God is in everything.
- **Pragmatism** – means of ministry with what is most popular with people.
- **Syncretism** – All worship the same God – forget about differences.
- **Materialism** – this life is all that matters. – acquiring things
- **Existentialism** – living for the moment, feelings ahead of the future.
- **Post Modernism** – Denial of truth
- **New Tolerance** – all beliefs are equal.
- **Political Correctness** – deletion of the individual

America has lost its way!

These philosophies shape and mold the people of the last-days.

I. The Dilemma;

II. The Problem - (Root Cause: People)

Characteristics of the end-times people. (Verses 2-9)

Paul lists savage behaviors

2For men will be

lovers of self, lovers of money,
boastful, arrogant, revilers...

lovers of self – this list begins describing a deeper level of self-love that mere selfishness or narcissism.

- Lit. “to kiss oneself”
- To have a worldview that sees everything only as it affects them.

Swindoll writes,

“They skew their perception of every event to bolster their own sense of superiority, significance, or safety. Furthermore, they seek the comfort and promotion of self above all else.”¹

Lovers of money

Materialists – people driven by greed

Temporal value system with no thought for eternity

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's New Testament Insights*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), p. 206.

Materialists seek wealth and possessions as a means of power, control, personal worth, and even love.

Looking at two of Paul's nineteen descriptions of the people of the end times, we see that these people will be the major cause of the savage and dangerous times, as evil accumulates like a toxin, and then corrupts.

:4 "...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God..."

- "pleasure lovers" - living for pleasure has a narcotic effect and becomes an idol in place of loving God.

:7 "...always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

- Ineffective learning – unable to grasp the truth.

:13 "But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

- Gk. {prokopto}

– a verb expressing the idea of making headway or advancement

– so the phrase gives an ironic picture of evil people "*advancing backwards*," away from the truth.

Dr. Phil Fernandes, noted that

"...the 19th Century brought the death of God to the West; and the 20th century brought the death of truth, morality, and meaning to the West²

Both C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer argued that the death of man would follow.

- Death of God = death of truth, morality, meaning, & man.
- R. J. Rummel in *Death by Government*, wrote that between 170 million and 320 million people were killed by their own governments in the 20th century³
- 55 million babies have been aborted in America since 1973

² Dr. Phil Fernandes, his paper and presentation of "The Coming Death of Western Civilization" at the Apologetics Conference in April 2018.

³ Through his undergraduate term papers, MA Thesis, Ph.D. dissertation, and academic career, R.J. Rummel has focused his research on the causes and conditions of collective violence and war with a view toward helping their resolution or elimination.

The birth pains of the world without God

If there is no such thing as “good”,
then there is no “good” direction in which to lead mankind.

Hug me or mug me – no difference!

God’s morality

No morality

New morality: good=evil; evil=good (Is. 5:20)

The main idea:

The signs of Christ’s coming are all around us.

Jesus said,

“...when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:28)

Dilemma, Problem,

III. The Solution

Conclusion: God’s provision of truth is good in any time and for any culture.

The Bible – Truth

“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction...”

(2 Tim. 3:16-17; 4:2-3)

Positive declaration of the power of the Word of God.

Powerful command to Preach the Word.

Revival will prevent the death of Western Civilization.

We all want revival, but no one wants to repent,

Without repentance, there can be no revival.

A great revivalist once said,

Repentance begins by drawing a two-foot circle on the ground.

Commit that circle to the Lord completely and say,
“Everything in this circle I give wholly to You.”
And then, step into it with your whole self.

If Western Civilization dies in the near future, will you stand for Jesus?

If you don't live for Jesus when days are good,
what makes you think you will be able to die for Jesus when things get bad?

Are you spending time in vital Bible Study to have the mind of the Lord?

If we don't renew our minds, then we will be conformed to the world.

What are you doing to prepare your sons and daughters to face to coming crisis?