

WADE PEEPLES

October 26, 2019

I have been thinking about the Concerned Moravians and some points that occurred to me. When challenging issues confront us, it is natural to go on the defensive. I wonder if we might be struggling so hard to prove others wrong that we are overlooking *their* obligation to prove themselves right? Are we really asking the right questions?

The only opportunity we will have to influence the Church for God is in the individual churches before the next Synod, which will be here before we know it. In preparation for Synod, it is most important for every Christian to look for opportunities to engage widely in respectful conversations about some vital questions like:

- Is there any such thing as sin? If so, what is it? Is *anything* “wrong”? What? Why?
- How is Jesus’ significance manifested in our behavior within His church? Do we want and try to obey Him, or are we trying to ignore Him and “cherry-pick” His words in order to tailor them to suit our own desires?
- What is *your* basis for claiming that God *approves* of:
 - Christians choosing to engage in homosexual behavior?
 - Christians choosing to ignore, facilitate, promote, endorse, and encourage homosexual behavior in the Church and among its clergy?
- Does the weight of God’s revelation of Himself and His standards in scripture suggest that He *endorses* homosexual behavior or that He *condemns* it?
- Does God force or coerce any of us to choose behaviors and lifestyles that are contrary to His word? Can we find *anywhere* in scripture that God makes accommodating our sex drives a priority? Or doesn’t He instead warn us to restrain them, curb our lusts, and live holy lives for His glory?
- If we do not regard scripture as God’s revelation of Himself and His standards, then what basis do we have for believing in God and Jesus *at all*? If the words of the Prophets and Jesus’ chosen apostles cannot be trusted, then isn’t our faith a sham, since their words are the only true record we have of Jesus? Shouldn’t we heed their words or stop calling ourselves “Christians?”
- Are we claiming to know more about what is right and what is wrong than God does? Do we claim to have authority and power to overrule God? If not, why are we so unwilling and unprepared to restrain our inappropriate desires when necessary to be obedient to Him? Which is more important to us, God’s will for us or our will for ourselves? If we conclude that God says “no” to something, are we willing to yield to His “no?” What does this say about us to others and to God?
- What group will be next to be endorsed by our church? Is there any line we will not be prepared eventually to cross? What do we say when Satan worshippers are demanding tolerance from us by being allowed to merge their “worship” with ours? Will God approve of and forgive our unrepentant willingness to embrace evil in His name?

-Does the consistent record in the Bible of God's wrathful destruction of people and nations who rebelled against Him have any application to us today? Does He hold us accountable for leading others into rebellion against Him?

-Did Jesus mean what He said that "The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13:41-2 ESV). Or can we just ignore those words and pretend He didn't say them?

-Does GOD's *true* will really matter to us any more? Do we really care what He thinks about *anything*? Will He claim us as truly belonging to Him when the smoke clears? Is He real? Or not? Is "Our" church still HIS church? Have we fallen so far that we are now worshipping a fluffy, false Jesus instead of the real one who warned us of eternal consequences for disobeying Him? At the end, only one thing will matter to each of us: What does *He* think of *us* now?

-Ernest T. Bass (Andy Griffith Show) said "I'm kinda mean, but I make up for it by being real healthy." We are becoming very good at helping the poor; but, will God accept that as compensation when we deliberately flout His sovereignty at the same time? How many other gods do we have before Him?

When was the last time anyone talked or even thought about *repentance*? This was the first word Jesus preached. Do we even know or care what He meant by that? Wouldn't it be great if Synod resolved to seek God first and to return the Church to Him to follow in *obedience*? To be faithful to Him above *all* else? To start studying His Word with discernment and carrying our crosses for Him instead of trying to push Him out of the way so we can chase after our own misguided delusions of "happiness?"

Perhaps if we each start insisting on truthfully answering these questions and others like them, and on acting faithfully in accordance with the answers we find (or already know), the Church might start to move back toward the real God instead of away from Him. He is sovereign, whether we admit it or not, and He *will* have His way in the end. We can count on that.

With love in Christ and prayers for His church,

Wade