

## WHAT IS HIP?

One of my all time favourite groups, Tower Of Power, had a famous song in the 70's called "What Is Hip". One of the lines in that song goes, "What's hip today might become passé". Basically what that means is that the things that we deem modern, cool or hip today will be meaningless, non essential or obsolete tomorrow.

But in terms of spiritual things I am puzzled by the Church's concern about this thing called post-modernism. In what some claim, post-modern culture is challenging the truths that we, Christians, hold on to. Post-modern mindset espouses the idea that truth is the "creation of the individual" and therefore truth is relative. Since this is so, post-modern attitude is repugnant to anyone who claims to possess the truth.

First of all, this is nothing new. Didn't Pontius Pilate ask Jesus, "What is truth?" Post-modernism has been a part of the evolution of civilization. In every age, culture or civilization, especially in the west, there has been what is called, modern times – an embracing of new ideas, attitudes and philosophies. And consequently when what is "modern" is no longer hip then obviously what comes next is post-modernism – the challenging of those ideas, attitudes and philosophies in order to give way to more modern ways. This has always been the cycle ever since.

And because of this post-modern challenge the Church has been trying to create "strategies" in order to "convince" the world of the validity of the truths that we claim. This is their way of winning the lost so that they can be "plugged in" to the church. One "strategy" that is making waves right now is The Way of the Master or the popular Purpose Driven Life.

Now please don't get me wrong...I am not criticizing these "strategies". God is too great to be limited to a particular program, method or strategy. I am absolutely sure He can use all these to get people saved. But if we become too conscious of this post-modern culture that we try to "create" ways and means just to get people "saved" then we might be in danger of trusting in these methods or strategies rather than trusting the timeless "strategy" of God.

What I am saying is, if St. Paul were alive today – or for that matter, Jesus – would they be drawn into this debate? Would they try to concoct a cunning method or strategy to convince people of the good news? I don't believe so. Because the "strategy" (ie: the message) that both Jesus and St. Paul will still be engaging in today – in this post-modern world of ours – will still be the same. And that is the message of The Kingdom of God – bringing Heaven down here on earth – by implementing and enforcing the will, authority, purpose and plan of God here on earth *as it is* in Heaven.

I just received a 12 page paper about 10 "paradigm shifts" toward community transformation. But upon reading it I found out that these were not new ideas at all. As a matter of fact this paper that suggests these paradigm shifts uses scripture verses to back it up. A paradigm serves

as a pattern. To shift is to change. The paper suggests a shifting of pattern – because what they are doing is obviously not working - in order to reach out and transform a community. But this has always been the paradigm of the Kingdom. It has never changed throughout the centuries because the strategies of God which is based on His Word are timeless. The message of the Kingdom doesn't become passé. The paper about the 10 paradigm shifts is actually a going back to what God has said from the beginning.

That has been the message of Jesus from start to finish. When He started His ministry, He said, “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4: 17). And before He went back to Heaven He said that the “gospel (good news) of The Kingdom will be preached in the whole world *as a testimony* to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24: 14).

Notice the words “as a testimony”. What that means is that a person who has entered – or truly experienced – what it is like to be in God's Kingdom will have an irrefutable testimony. People will see something so amazing in that person's life that the world will say, like the Philistines in Isaac's time, “We *saw clearly* that the Lord was with you...And now you are blessed by the Lord” (Gen. 26: 28a & 29b). This is why God, when He told Isaiah of the wonders He is going to do, said that the purpose is “so that people *may see and know, may consider and understand* that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it” (Isaiah 41: 20). This is why St. Paul says that the Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power (1 Cor. 4: 20). And this is basically what the Kingdom of God has come to offer – a transfer of power that manifests a change in someone's life. But sadly, this message of the Kingdom has, in the words of one preacher, been buried in the graveyard of religion. Hence we now have this paper encouraging us to consider these 10 paradigm shifts – to go back to the basics.

If God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, if from everlasting to everlasting He is God, and if His Word is unchanging, should we be overly concerned about what the post-modern world thinks? Should we try to continue and find new concepts and strategies to convince the post-modern person that we are of the truth? Should we change the message of Jesus? If we do, what is hip today might become passé 20 years from now should Jesus tarry.

Maybe one of the reasons that this post-modern world is not convinced of the “truth” we declare is because they don't see a testimony of the power of God in our lives. We cannot debate a person into the Kingdom. The person must see something incredible so that as St. Paul says, they will not rely on us but on God who raises the dead.