



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church

CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

It is the objective of warfare to exert superior power to achieve some advantageous outcome over against an enemy or adversary - or defensively speaking, to prevent such an outcome. We are used to thinking about wars that centrally involve military conflict. This has certainly been the case as we think of significant wars that established our nation (the Revolutionary War), preserved our nation's union (the Civil War), and protected it from significant military aggression (e.g. World Wars I, II).



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

Not all wars involve military conflicts, however. For several decades, our nation has experienced a cultural sort of warfare. It has involved a conflict over what norms and standards should govern acceptable social discourse within our society. They have been called culture wars. The term culture is a rather nebulous term. It can refer to the temporal affairs of the life of an individual, a group, or a whole society. It can embrace a people's language, habits, beliefs, customs, social organization, and technologies. Culture expresses a people's values, especially what is understood as good and important in the temporal and material spheres of life.



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

Culture involves a uniting of plural values and endeavors. Within the history of our nation, culture has included the cultivation of religion and eternal values largely shaped by the Christian worldview. These cultural foundations are reflected in our nation's founding documents, countless memorials, statuary, and plaques. They are confessed in the Pledge of Allegiance (one Nation under God) and declared on our currency (in God We Trust). Currently, culture warfare is being waged against many of our country's founding values, ethical standards, and the importance of the exercise of faith. The cutting edge of this conflict has been over acceptable social discourse and the enemy is understood to be the influence of Christianity.



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

There is common agreement about the symbiotic relationship between language and culture. Language shapes culture and culture shapes language. It is commonly held that language exerts the greatest influence over the shape of culture. Yes, the pen is mightier than the sword. Change how people talk and you will eventually change how they will think and act. The power of language to shape thought and behavior is the greatest in the initial formation of social discourse in small children. In today's culture wars, Post-moderns have weaponized language to transform and reshape our culture, especially targeting our children.



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

Post-modernism holds that all meaning of legitimate language is only a function of its usage. Words mean what we choose them to mean and nothing more. Therefore, language is abused when employed to convey alleged truth, goodness, or beauty in any universal or absolute sense. Meaning in language is relative to its usage within a culture. Truth, goodness, and beauty are therefore multi-cultural – none superior or inferior to others. Taken as a whole, language constitutes a story or narrative of a given people's view of what things mean and their significance. There is no such thing as a meta-narrative. There is no timeless trans-cultural meaning or significance of things as reflected, for example, in language shaped by the Christian worldview.



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

Are the contours of our contemporary culture wars beginning to come into focus? Progressive and radical Post-moderns have weaponized language to eliminate from social discourse all elements of meaning, purpose, and value traditionally shaped by Christianity. Their target population is especially the young, including our young. They conduct their warfare by engaging in three interrelated strategies: deconstruction, marginalization, and identification.



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

Deconstruction: associating unacceptable words, and meanings with commonly understood negative and repulsive designations. The goal is to eliminate their usage.

Deconstructed language is associated with bigotry, hate speech, racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc. Such words are then replaced with ways of speaking that are deemed appropriate. Deconstruction began some decades ago where Merry Christmas s/b replaced with Happy Holidays. Today deconstruction efforts have greatly intensified including the demand that sexual and gender designations (including adjective and pronouns) be disconnected from biology to reflect individual personal choice. To do otherwise is condemned as hate speech.



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

Closely related is the strategy of marginalization, a tactic that exerts social pressure to conform to the program of language deconstruction. Those who use deconstructed language are stigmatized as bigots, haters, racists, Nazis, homophobes, etc. Additional social pressure has tended to follow the advice of behavioral studies expert, Cass R. Sunstein (*Nudge, How Change Happens*). For desired social change (including matters of language usage), some people need to be given a *nudge*. If a nudge does not work, they need a *push*. If a push does not work, perhaps a *shove*. Today many lose their job or some other important affiliation. The radical demonstrations and riots of late fit well into this strategy and have instilled fears in many of poverty, pain, and even death.



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

How should Christians respond? The Church has well understood its pedagogical task to teach the baptized appropriate language for the confession of faith and the confession of sin. It has molded language formation for worship, prayer, and personal devotion. However, our families and churches have largely ceded the formation of acceptable social discourse to public education, social media, entertainment, temporal authorities, etc. As these have been taken over by socialist and marxist ideologies, our people (especially our children) are being taught and influenced to engage in everyday language that is devoid of and increasingly antithetical to the faith into which we are baptized. The threat to spiritual health cannot be minimized.



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

When the habitual use of anti-Christian discourse and thought categories conflict with the faith, a tension develops that can work to call into question the meaningfulness of life in Christ. Faith life can become progressively hollow, disconnected, and irrelevant to the experiences of daily life and what seems important. Is it not time that our Christian homes and churches become more proactive in counteracting our contemporary culture war adversaries and their strategies to transform the language and thinking of our people, especially our children?



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

In the old days we challenged our young people to walk it like they talk it. Today we need to promote almost the reverse – to talk it like they walk it – the knowhow and courage to engage in social discourse that reflects the truth of God's revelation. Because the surrounding culture will not, parents and church servants of the Word need to develop ways and means to translate the faith into appropriate social discourse and urge its use. Will our people including our children have to pay a price for doing so? Probably so, and more so probably up the way. Thus, we also need to make the case. We need to teach our people why doing so and paying the price are worth it. *What profit does a person have to gain the whole world and yet lose his soul (Mark 8:36)?*



CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY

LIFE IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD

OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE WAR – THE CHALLENGE

Proponents of atheistic, progressive, and socialist ideologies dedicated to transforming American culture have employed Post-modern strategies to reshape our language into a reflection of their philosophical and social values. Their focus is especially to transform and replace social discourse that traditionally has been shaped by the Christian worldview. Language shaped by the faith of Christ's Church is their enemy.

