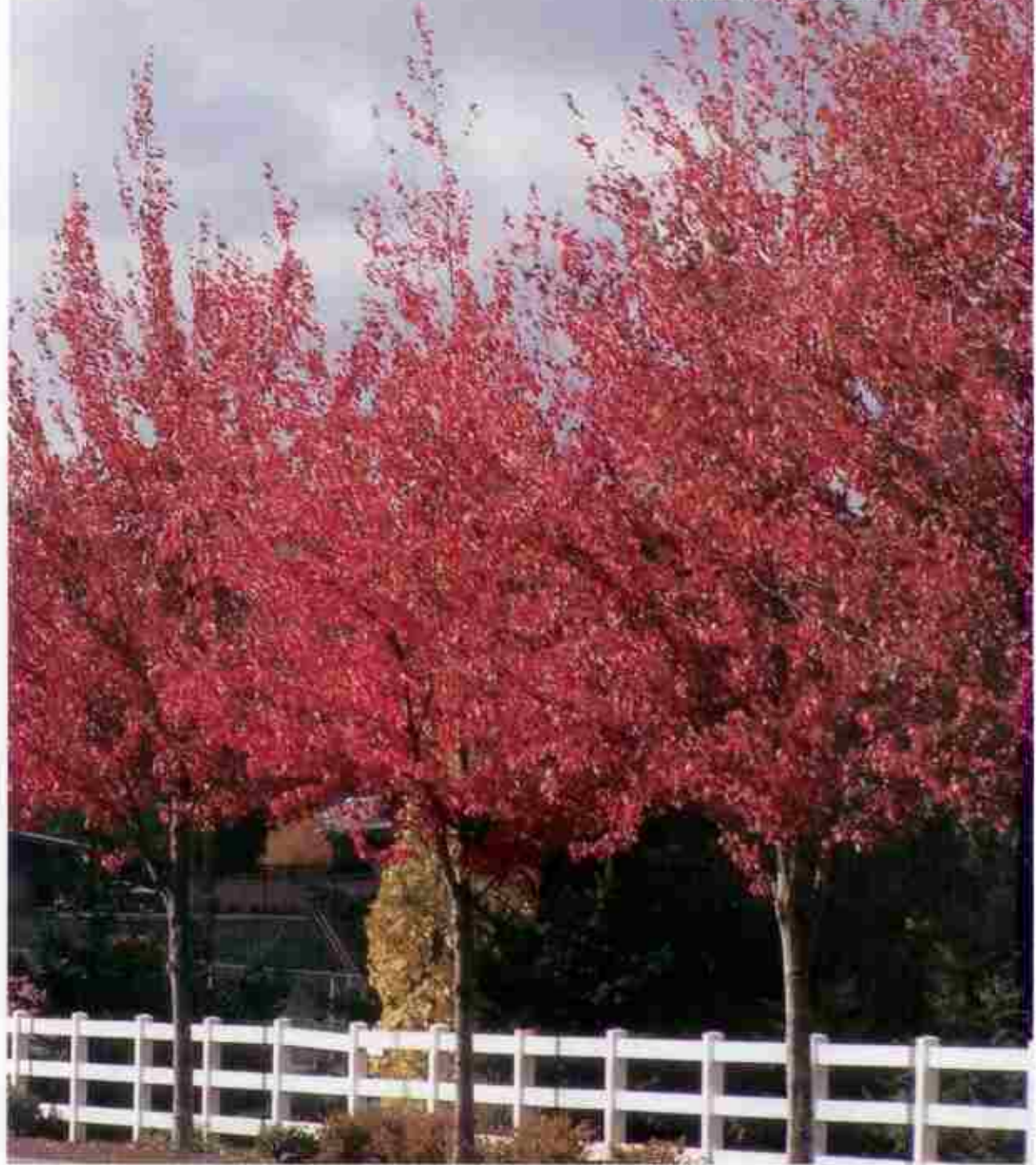


# THE PENTECOST

ISSUE #67 OCTOBER 2012



# THE PENTECOST



In our last issue of The Pentecost we looked at Charles Spurgeon and the great battle that he was in over theological truth, which became known as the Downgrade Controversy. This issue, of October, 2012, will bring the Downgrade Controversy closer to home as we look at this battle as it exists and as it rages, today. We will also discuss the controversial topic of same-sex marriage and the same-sex lifestyle. God bless you.

Stawn Stevens

The pursuit of truth is a great task that is deserving of extra time and energy. Join us as we continue on this journey and take a focus on the truth of marriage.

Ramona Stevens

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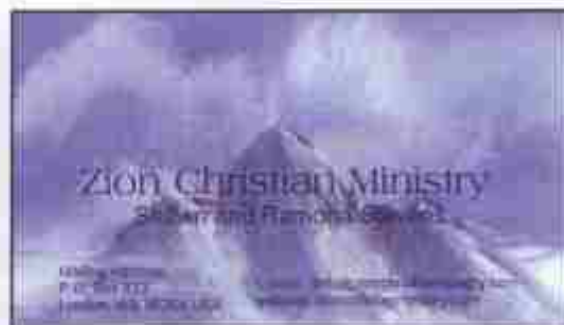


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## THE DOWNGRADE CONTROVERSEY AND FAITH FOR THE UPGRADE - PART 2

In our last issue, we discussed Charles Spurgeon and the *downgrade controversy*. Our day is seeing an attack upon our faith which is just as great as the one that Spurgeon saw in his day.

While Spurgeon defended Christianity against the influence of modernism, Christians today are called upon to defend the faith from attack by a new world-view known as postmodernism. The term "postmodernismo" was first used by Frederico de Onis in the 1930s. However, the concept that is, today, understood as postmodernism was probably first laid out in "The Journal of Postmodern Literature and Culture," which came out in 1972.<sup>1</sup> Prior to this, the beginnings of postmodernist thought can also be found in the writings of the philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>2</sup>

There are many thoughts within postmodernism, the central thought being that there is no absolute truth. Postmodernists believe that truth is formulated by societies for practical purposes and that truth changes along with the changes within society. Postmodernism rejects the concept of absolute and universal truth. Postmodernism reacts against all ideologies and dogmas, believing them to be nothing more than clever inventions. How are ideologies and dogmas invented? Postmodernists would say that they are invented through the use of language. Language becomes the great inventor, or constructor, of reality. Reality is said to be linguistic. Because postmodernists believe that societies construct truth and reality in much the same way as literary authors would narrate a story, recorded concepts of reality such as historical records are said to be narratives. Ideologies, world-views and religions that claim to be universally true are referred to as "grand-narratives," "metanarratives" or "master-stories." Postmodernism challenges grand-

narratives by trying to give voice to the different or dissenting "alternative stories" of minorities, most notably women.

The object of much postmodernist writing is to "deconstruct" other pieces of writing. This means uncovering internal differences, contradictions and inconsistencies in a piece of writing. Postmodernist deconstruction is based on the assumption that no text of writing has a singular, knowable meaning.<sup>3</sup> Deconstruction goes further in attempting to break down whole systems of belief.<sup>4</sup>

So we see that postmodernism is relativistic, deconstructive and feminist, viewing all reality as linguistic reality. Postmodernists have a replacement theology for the 21<sup>st</sup> century Church.

Some postmodernists have a "postmodernist Christianity" to replace conservative evangelical belief. I know that some of you are thinking, "Those two words don't go together." I agree. There are, however, many within mainline Churches who consider themselves postmodernist Christians. Let us examine this strange creature. Watch your footing, this is a downgrade. At the outset, I want to refer to two kinds of supposed postmodernist Christians. Because no one that I know of, or have read of, has made this division, I must create the terms myself.

A "Class A" Christian postmodernist has fully accepted the concept that there is no universal truth. This invariably leads to a liberal theology. The modernism of Spurgeon's day spread through mainline Churches and became the foundation for neo-orthodoxy, or theological liberalism. Today, postmodernism is popularized in some Church circles and, as a foundation, it produces the very same result, theological liberalism. To establish relativity within Christianity, they begin by pointing out that

truth. Hear Jesus' voice today and come to Him seeking His mercy. You will find Him to be full of grace and truth. God bless you.

**Shawn Stevens**

**ENDNOTES:**

1. Gavin Hyman, *The Predicament of Postmodern Theology – Radical Orthodoxy or Nihilist Demolition?* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 13.
2. Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay – Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 37.
3. Gavin Hyman, *The Predicament of Postmodern Theology – Radical Orthodoxy or Nihilist Demolition?* 27.
4. Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay – Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism*, 29.
5. Stuart Suss, ed., *The Routledge Critical Dictionary of Postmodern Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 222.
6. *Ibid.*, 340.
7. Gavin Hyman, *The Predicament of Postmodern Theology – Radical Orthodoxy or Nihilist Demolition?* 5.
8. *Ibid.*, 3.
9. *Ibid.*, 29.
10. George Lindbeck, quoted in John W. Rigg, *Postmodern Christianity* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 92.
11. Philip Kenyon, "There Is No Such Thing As Objective Truth, And It Is A Good Thing Too," in *Christian Apologetics In The Postmodern World*, Ed. Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 155-172.
12. John H. Cobb, Jr. and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology – An Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 3-6.
13. Mary Daly, "Beyond God the Father: Teresa's Philosophy of Woman's Liberation," quoted in: John W. Rigg, *Postmodern Christianity*, 43-46.
14. John W. Rigg, *Postmodern Christianity*, 49.
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16. *Ibid.*, 123.
17. *Ibid.*, 123.

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## NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

What is a needle exchange program? Sometimes called "Harm Reduction Programs," needle exchange programs are government-funded and run programs where drug addicts are provided with clean needles for injecting drugs. The rationale for such a program is that it reduces the risks that addicts take, for diseases, every time they use dirty needles.

Many communities do have a significant drug problem and those voicing support for a needle exchange program say that such a program will reduce the harm and the risk that drug addicts are exposed to. However, I, personally, doubt that supplying needles to addicts does enough to protect their health. The fact remains that illegal drug use is very risky and does much damage to a person's health, in many ways, whether or not they contract an infectious disease from a used needle. Addicts are still at great risk of overdosing, having their veins collapse, being poisoned or losing their lives through the violence associated with the drug trade.

Needle exchange programs increase danger within the communities which host them. It is known that drug dealers like to operate close to needle exchange program areas. To set up such programs draws them to these neighborhoods. As well, the set-up of a needle exchange program in a neighborhood likely results in the streets of that neighborhood being littered with dangerous needles, which, ironically, had been acquired from the program. Discarded needles become a danger to the general public that uses the streets on a daily basis. Needle exchange

programs bring more crime and harm into the communities where they exist.

As well as bringing danger and harm to the communities that host them, needle exchange programs encourage drug use, rather than discourage it. It is illegal for individuals to use narcotic drugs. Yet, the laws of our land are ignored when public funds are used to supply utensils for breaking these laws. How can we expect people to take seriously prohibition against narcotics if communities supply people with the means of breaking the law? Yes, the spread of infectious disease is a serious problem in our communities, however, the increased participation in illegal drug use is a larger problem. The battle to discourage illegal drug use is undermined by needle exchange programs and we cannot afford to undermine such a critically important cause.

In conclusion, illegal drug use is risky and damaging to one's health whether or not one uses a clean or infected needle. Needle exchange programs bring more crime and danger to the communities that host them. Lastly, needle exchange programs encourage illegal drug use. For these reasons, I am opposed to adopting needle exchange programs. God bless you.

**Shawn Stevens**

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