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TH604: Christian Ethics: OA

Week 11: 5 3 1 Chapter 11

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the Truth Dilemma?
2. What is the Social Dilemma?
3. What is the Privatization of religion?
4. What was the Civil Religion response?
5. What is the Christian theological obligation within the pluralistic milieu?

ANSWERS:

1. In a pluralistic society, their belief is a broad understanding that unifies the people by pacifying them. As a result, many are seeking truth in a variety of things and methods. This stands in stark contrast to the Christian belief that holds John 14:6 as the answer to what truth is. Jesus makes the statement, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (P239-240).
2. The Social Dilemma involves two aspects: first, how would religious ethics be able to relate to a pluralistic society; and second, how is it possible for religion in society to be able to exist within a pluralistic worldview (P240-242)?
3. The Privatization of religion is the belief, within a pluralistic society, that religion should not be in the public arena, but held privately because that world is too evil for Christian engagement and involvement. Many believe that because religion is a moral compass that affects the habits, personal meeting of groups and behavior, that it does not affect or translate into public or secular arenas (P242-244).
4. Those of the Civil Religion agree with the theocrats that religion is necessary within a society and that traditional religions are not necessarily needed to be the religious voice for society. They believe that the only religion that will benefit society must be broad and one that all nations and cultures can adhere to and unite. They want a religion that does not contradict each other but is a benefit on the terms of society for unity sake (p248).
5. The Christian theology has an obligation to speak up and speak out on unethical issues and sanctions within the pluralistic milieu. With the belief that religion is not to be treated like a passive notion, it is the Christian theological obligation to reject any and all aspects of secularism that contradicts the Word of God (p253).

TERMS:

1. **Pluralism**: Is a belief in which people of different social classes, religions, races, etc can coexist in a society, but continue to have their different individual religious traditions and interests.
2. **Secularists**: The belief of separation of church and state. That religion should not be primary in society, but an individual matter.
3. **Law order**: A term coined by, Rousas John Rushdoony, which means that laws is a reflection of and tend to represent a form of morality.

SUMMARY:

In a society that is pluralistic, Christians are often faced with the dilemma of whether the Christian values and ethics they live by make any difference in such a society. Many of the beliefs of the pluralistic society go against the Christian values, virtues and ethics and the voices that are heard wanting their rights and are shouting the loudest seem to sometimes outweigh the voice of the church. Many Christians are left wondering if they are making an impact. However, Hollinger explains that the early church believers were faced with the same dilemma and just like the earlier church believers, it is imperative that Christians stay the course and continue focusing on the Word and work of the Lord and not pay attention to the larger voices of the secular society. It is the Lord who will reward those who diligently seek Him and follow Him. Yes, doubt will creep in at times and the times will get hard, but it is only God who can change a man's heart and a society. All Christians have to do is do is stay committed "to the truth of the Gospel, deep convictions, and consistent living, and by commending to others the "good life" that flows from God" (p255). By doing this God's light will shine through them and in spite of the challenges and opposition they face, they must understand that this is a greater opportunity for witnessing Jesus.