

## *Smoky Mountain Reflections, March 2013*

What is truth? Is there such a thing as truth? In a free and prosperous society, if there is a truth, does it really matter? These are not questions one can answer in a simple little one-page article. However, for the sake of brevity, let me start with Yes, Yes, and Yes to each of the three somewhat rhetorical questions I just asked. Take a little walk with me as I ponder and make assertions on each of these questions, but more importantly, as I consider how one might communicate these answers to a world that does not really care about truth. We live in a society that not only does not care about truth, it gladly sacrifices it on the altar of personal rights every day.

First what is truth? The word has many definitions, but for this discussion, let's go with two: the body of real things, and transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality. There is really very little real modern debate on the first one. For example, gravity is a universally accepted truth. Truth of course is not subject to our acceptance of it, but the point is that there are truths that everyone accepts and on which there is no disagreement. The second definition is under a state of great debate. Transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality is a truth that is equally unaffected by our acceptance of it. However, many act as if it does not exist. If you identify yourself as a Christian, your understanding of transcendent truth is in conflict with over two thirds of the world's population. While within biblical Trinitarian Christianity, there is a great divergence of understandings of that truth, the truth is not divergent—sinful beings are.

Is there such a thing as truth? This is a philosophical question, so I will offer a philosophical answer. Plainly I would state that since truth is a concept that is definable and observable, and since definable and observable concepts exist, then it follows that truth exists.

In a free and prosperous society, if there is a truth, does it really matter? This is where the rubber meets the road. Truth matters, and more importantly, transcendent spiritual truth matters. Any student of history can tell you that time and time again throughout history, every society that has ever existed which upheld and lived by the transcendent spiritual truths that are contained in God's word or even if their truths mirrored God's word, those societies enjoyed decades or even centuries of peace and prosperity. On the flip side of that reality, the clear decline of every society that has ever existed was accompanied by their denial of clear transcendent fundamental truths. Truths, like all aspects of society, need to foster and support the family unit as the basic building block. Killing unborn babies and same gender relationships are an affront to that truth and are a reality that preceded and accompanied the fall of all societies in history. When we choose to define truth to suit our own desires, this leads to departure from truth and is the sure road to destruction.

Communicating this truth and the fact that it matters is difficult in a post modern society that specializes in dismissal of truth, avoidance, diversion and appeasement at the cost of truth and reconciliation. In our society, the rights of the individual trump all truth claims. This leads to illogical statements that defeat themselves and positions in life that are known as happy inconsistencies.

Judge not..... Is not the one who says this making a judgment?  
Be tolerant of all..... except of course those who are not tolerant enough.  
There is no absolute truth..... except of course that statement.

Here are some examples of happy inconsistencies: "You do not have to go to church to be a Christian" even though that violates one of the commandments. Over 80% of Americans claim to be Christians and over 60% of Americans think Christ is one among many paths to God. This means that at least 40% believe themselves to be Christian while not believing Christ when He clearly said, "I am the way the truth and the life; NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME!" If I say I am a tree....that does not make me a tree? The truth is that to be a tree you must have roots, a trunk, and leaves and you cannot talk. In the same way, just saying you are a Christian does not make you a Christian. You must have saving faith in the Son of God, and if you have that faith, then your life will not be full of happy inconsistencies that ignore truth. Your life will reflect your appreciation of the free gift of Grace, and you will not hold on to your favorite sin and deny God's truth by saying it is not sin. You will love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul and strength, not because you can or you have to.....but because through Grace, He equips and enables you to respond in the most God-pleasing way possible and where you fall short....Christ has you covered. Have a blessed Lent.

In Christ, Pastor Portier