

Why the Battle: Different God, Different Gospel?

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Outline for
Module Four: Anthropology
The Rev. Dr. Kendall Harmon

- I. How do we know what we know and how shall we understand who human beings are?
- II. Definition of Epistemology: what does it mean to say that someone knows, or fails to know, something?
- III. A broad historical tracing of the subject
 - a. The Ancient World – from the outside in
“For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue. For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men...” (C.S. Lewis)
 - b. The Enlightenment – shift from God to Man
Whether thinking or feeling, it goes from the inside out
 - c. The Modern period in the 20th century
 1. The triumph of the therapeutic
 2. Loss of mediating structures
 3. The rise of expressive individualism
 4. Climax in the Supreme Court Casey decision
“We are no longer bowling alone, we are virtual bowling at home alone. We in the 21st century have nothing less than the free right to define everything, including the universe and the mystery of life itself.”
- IV. How to understand humanness in the light of how we know
 - a. The book of Scripture and the Book of Nature
 1. Our bodies matter
 2. Human Beings are a psychosomatic unity
 3. Men and women are complementary but different
 4. There are two states of humanness: singleness and marriage
 5. Marriage is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, signifying the relationship between Christ and the church
 - b. The perspective of 21st century American expressive individualism
 1. The self has become the arbiter of sexual identity
 2. Now “birth sex” and “biological sex” are different from, and able to be in conflict with, gender identity
 3. A person’s sexual identity is no longer the product of nature or creation; the new language suggests every aspect of it is socially constructed
 4. The all determining self can declare all sorts of sexual identities into being, a 2014 article noted Facebook gave 51 “gender options”

5. This radical new understanding of humanness in the church was enshrined by the Episcopal Church in its 2012 General Convention

6. "Between this approach and the understanding of Scripture and the Christians who have come before us a great gulf is fixed. WE in the diocese of South Carolina stand on the side of the book from God and the world God has made as they are given to us. In C.S. Lewis' words, we will not seek to subdue reality to our wishes, rather we will seek to conform ourselves, souls, and bodies, to reality. We can do no other, so help us God."

Module 4 Buzz Group Questions: Knowledge, Reality and the Self

1. How do we come to know anything? For example, what is the source of human life, identity and meaning? How has the way our culture seeks answers to these questions changed over time?
2. Do you believe there is an objective, or even absolute, reality "out there," and how do you know?
3. Can "reality" be changed? Talk about a time when you tried to create a different reality.