



Rev. Michael Mueller



Questions of Faith

What moral absolutes are there, if any?

George Barna noted in one of his recent studies (2002) analyzing cultural trends and the Christian church that 3 of 4 Americans believe moral truth is relative (higher among teens), but just 2 years earlier the figure was 1 of 2! This—in a post 9/11 world—is very disturbing to a pastor. How in the face of absolute evil can people not discern the difference?

Even more alarming is that not even 1 of 3 Christians believe in moral absolutes. Instead, they substitute feelings, reason or senses for Scriptural truth. These ‘feelings’ are played out in their lives through abortion, homosexual equality, living together and pornography. It is the return—or rather the continuation—of the 60’s mantra, “if it feels good, do it.”

Nationally syndicated religion columnist Terry Mattingly says that nearly all religious bodies in the so-called “Oprah America” are struggling with some version of what is morality and truth. “Part of it is the difficulty we have in condemning anything. That’s the spirit of the age we’re in,” Mattingly says. “The problem isn’t saying that God exists; the problem is saying who God is.”

The Law restrains the pagan (First Use of the Law), points the Christian to Jesus (Second Use of the Law) and is a guideline for the Christian for godly living (Third Use of the Law). But, it cannot save us.

If there are no moral absolutes, if God’s Word is not objectively true, if religion is no more than a private, interior consolation with no reference to a transcendent, universal reality—as today’s culture tends to believe—then Christianity is completely invalid. The teaching of the Church, in this cultural climate, must be more thorough, more intentional, and more wide-ranging than before.

The Word of God—i.e. Jesus the Christ—is truth itself (John 14:6). Jesus did not come here to get rid of the Law, but rather to fulfill it. The moral absolutes of the 10 Commandments (expanded and explained in Deuteronomy and Jesus’ Sermon the Mount) and other such eternal truths (love God and your neighbor, serve the least of these, etc.) are but a picture of what a right relationship with God would look like.

We live under the freedom of the Gospel, so all things are possible for a Christian, BUT not all things are beneficial to us (I Corinthians 6:12; 10:23). Paul in Romans rejects both libertinism (wanton disregard for godly living) and asceticism (self-denial to attain righteousness). We are to focus on being who we are—adopted children of God, heirs to the throne, citizens of heaven—and then live it.