

Four Ways Our Culture Is Brainwashing Us

Forces in our culture want to rip the foundations of Christian faith right out from under America. Here are four lies we must challenge.

This past week I spent four days preaching at Emmanuel College, a Christian liberal arts school in northeast Georgia. I love speaking to college students because they are spiritually hungry, they love passionate worship and I don't have to wear a tie.

On the third night (after a young man got saved and delivered of drug addiction—yeah God!) I told the kids I needed to get brutally honest. They gave me permission to shoot straight. Because I genuinely care about them—and because they will be spiritual leaders before too long—I warned them about four lies they must confront.

Every Christian in this country must learn to dissect these lies using the Word of God. The devil is working overtime today to gain control of our nation's soul. We are in a life-and-death struggle. This is not a time for Christians to be squishy in their faith or spineless in their convictions. We must plant our feet on the bedrock principles of the Bible and oppose each of these lies:

"We must start preaching about hell again instead of worrying about who might leave our church or how it might affect our TV ratings."

1. Hell does not exist. Jesus preached about hell more than anyone in the Bible. His words dripped with love, but He didn't soft-pedal when addressing the eternal consequences of sin. When He began His ministry, he read from the book of Isaiah, announcing that He had come not only to "proclaim the favorable year of the Lord" but also "the day of vengeance of

our God" (Is. 61:2, NASB).

The real gospel is a double-edged sword that offers both the "kindness *and* severity of God" (Rom. 11:22, emphasis added). That's why hell is one four-letter word we should use more often—not to condemn people in mean-spirited judgment but to warn them that mercy has a time limit.

The world rejects the concept of hell because it's too exclusive. Our Oprah-ized culture insists that everyone deserves a warm and fuzzy life free of consequences. "How can a loving God send anyone to hell?" people ask. If we truly love them we will explain that hell is not a metaphor—it is a real place of dreadful separation from God that sinners choose when they reject Him. We must start preaching about hell again instead of worrying about who might leave our church or how our unpopular message might affect our TV ratings.

2. God didn't create the world. 2009 is the 150th anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, so you can be sure the scientific community will bombard us this year with more "proof" of this sketchy theory. The mainstream media and academia insist that evolution is pure fact. Anyone who dares to challenge it is considered a religious idiot.

What people don't realize is that Darwinism, besides being laughably lacking in scientific basis, has roots in spiritualism. Welsh naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace shared many of Darwin's beliefs and encouraged him to publish his book. Wallace believed in spirit guides, participated in séances and was intrigued by all things paranormal. He promoted the "science" of evolution because it supported his anti-God views. Is it any wonder, then, that this doctrine he and Darwin propagated has been used to undermine Christianity ever since?

The world does not want to believe in a Creator because if He

is real, then He has ultimate authority over His creation. On the flip side, man has no moral responsibility if he crawled out of a primordial soup, grew fins, then legs, and then became a talking ape. Evolution is not really about science at all—it is about rebellion against God's rule over us.

3. All religions lead to God. This isn't a new lie, but it is enjoying a revival today. President Bush has obviously flirted with the idea, since he has told reporters that Muslims and Christians worship the same God. Barack Obama attended a church for 20 years that teaches that Jesus is not the only way to salvation—and he has publicly acknowledged that he believes this.

The doctrine of universalism—which states that all people will ultimately gain salvation and enjoy heaven—has become the religion of the masses. Even some charismatic and Pentecostal preachers such as Carlton Pearson of Oklahoma and D.E. Paulk of Atlanta have abandoned biblical orthodoxy to embrace this heresy. They are now on a crusade to rewrite Christian theology—and they have allies in some mainline denominations (such as the Episcopal Church) where the authority of Scripture is denied.

Christians who embrace universalism are like the prophets of Baal in Jezebel's court who had been neutered. They preach a powerless message that cannot change anyone. We must arise in the spirit of Elijah to confront this deception and prove to the world that the one true God answers by fire.

4. Man can redefine morality. This is perhaps the most deadly lie of all. Everywhere we look today, leaders in media, politics, education and entertainment are plotting the virtual overthrow of conventional morals. They want a hedonistic world with no rules and no guilt. This was most obvious last month when *Newsweek* published a cover story brazenly claiming that the Bible approves of same-sex marriage.

A lying spirit has invaded many mainline churches and is convincing weak Christians to change their views about homosexuality, abortion and fornication. Evil is called good while those who stand for the biblical values of purity and traditional marriage are labeled bigots.

If we ignore these lies they will engulf us. We need a zero-tolerance policy for spiritual compromise. While we must demonstrate overwhelming compassion and love for sinners, God requires us to oppose cultural brainwashing. We cannot be silent on the issues the devil is attacking.

If you are wavering in your faith on any of these four fundamentals, get honest about your doubts, repent of your lukewarmness and dig in God's Word until your mind is renewed. Don't become a brainwash victim.