

i'm very glad to have a diverse blog readership. it's probably a 50/50 crowd: half of you reading are followers of christ and half of you are not. it's great to have this diversity of thought and perspective. much like the publishing world, good blogs should take into account not only what the blogger wants to write about, but what the reader wants to read. certainly, i am the first person to say that i am pretty hard-headed about writing what i want to write. after all, this is my blog. but, i am always thoughtful about who is reading my blog and what their response might be.

given the diverse readership, i am aware that a blog full of "jesus stuff" isn't completely relevant to some, while many other readers visit purely for that type of content. some enjoy my views on music, some skip those posts. some like the hilarious and goofy stuff, while others feel their intelligence is lowered when reading that crap.

in the end, though, i try to walk the line of connecting to both audiences. in the case of theology, i like to believe that my posts, by and large, are engaging to jesus people and non-jesus people alike. religion is so pervasive in our society (especially here in the bible belt) that everyone has some impression of the church and christianity, be it good or bad. often, my forays into theological matters take the form of critiques of the american church. i believe these critiques do two things:

1. challenges jesus followers to examine their inherent beliefs and presuppositions (therefore examining the way we live out christ and "do" church), and
2. offer a more hopeful and christlike depiction of what the church ought to and could look like (as opposed to some of the prevailing public perceptions of mainstream christianity).

this post is no different. i think my discussion here will speak to both groups. admittedly, i think this leans more toward christians, but i hope that i can expose some truths that will show those who do not follow christ that what is constantly seen as mainstream christian thought does not represent all christianity and more importantly, christ.

enter mark driscoll. driscoll is the pastor/founder of mars hill church in seattle. it's a megachurch that has experienced exponential growth since its start more than 10 years ago. he quickly rose to become one of the major voices in the "emerging" church movement (although i believe he has bastardized that term to simply refer to church styles...) and has been quite the lightning rod for controversy. for most, the controversy stems from the fact that he is brutally honest and blunt. he doesn't sugar coat his language and doesn't apologize for the way he colorfully preaches. frankly, this is the thing i like about him. if you've been a reader of my blog for any amount of time, you know that i am a fan of just saying things like they are. i don't like when people tip-toe around issues and i like to just be real about things. i also appreciate the fact that at mars hill, they are always creative and concerned about visuals that push the message.

and that's about where my appreciation for mark driscoll ends.

many of his theological points really bother me. one of my values in life and in the church is that we don't have to agree to be friends. we can disagree on a number of things and we can

still get along and model the diversity of the kingdom. the problem with mark driscoll, though, is that he is militant with his ideas and condescending/judgmental to those who disagree with him. he has a set of issues of which he has a theological agenda and even in times when the sermon has nothing to do with anything related to these issues, he has to somehow work it in to make his point and make another tick on the mark driscoll theological tally board. even as he has admitted in various public forums, he has no humility whatsoever and he reverts to line-in-the-sand-drawing and sarcastic superiority.

the main issue i have (and many, many others) is his persistence on male chauvinism and female denigration in the name of god. he is insistent that the man is the boss and the woman should just trail behind the husband, cleaning, cooking and ready to put out at any drop of the hat. obviously i exaggerate the point, but the frightening thing is that my exaggeration is barely exaggeration. like i said, even in a sermon about giving to the poor (who he would call lazy and irresponsible), i could almost guarantee that he would somehow work into his sermon something about how women should not be pastors or that women should stay at home or that men should be the sole decision-maker in the family. it's really sad, but moreover, it distorts and falsely presents scripture.

while i've thought these things for a long time, i've not really wasted my time in worrying about it. but, this afternoon, i just happened to come across a video from a mars hill's sermon series called a peasant princess which looked at the raw truth of the song of songs (which, in reviewing the series material, it looked like it was probably very honest and candid). apparently, each week, driscoll and his wife would answer some questions submitted from the congregation. much like his soapbox issues that he has to push in peoples' faces, this clip is one that they specifically pulled out and posted.

the reason i'm showing this is two-fold and goes back to my two purposes of theological critique:

1. i have many friends who treat mark driscoll as if he were jesus incarnate and i would like for those people to start taking a serious look at what this guy is saying, and
2. i want those who do not follow christ (whether you are opposed to the idea, have never thought about it or are considering it) to understand that when you hear christians say absurd things like these, it does not necessarily offer a true representation of jesus and the scriptures. (the key, though, is that you don't take my word for it. maybe you think he's correct. maybe you don't. go find the truth for yourself. read scripture. engage people who have biblical wisdom.)