

## DEFINITIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON MULTICULTURALISM

### PREPARATION FOR THE LSTC FACULTY RETREAT

JUNE 10, 1992

Walter L. Michel

June 5, 1992

---

#### **GLOBALIZATION**

is the awareness of multiculturalism within all nations and peoples on a global scale. Once the essence of "The Gospel" is understood and grasped it is not very difficult to exemplify it in any culture.

#### **MULTICULTURALITY**

must not be limited to the pluralism of cultures within the USA. Multiculturalism is a global phenomenon. A distinction between globalization and multiculturalism is difficult to maintain.

#### **THE HEBREW BIBLE**

The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament is an ancient, oriental, and for **ALL** modern peoples, an exotic collection of diverse literary products. The HB/OT is, of course, not an American, European, Chinese or Israeli book.

#### **TRANSLATIONS**

A translation of the HB/OT into ANY modern language obscures and distorts (sometimes beyond recognition) the power of the message of the HB/OT.

A trained expert in Hebrew and Semitic studies is necessary in order to explain the words, concepts and ideas in a way which is appropriate for any particular modern language and culture.

Every comment, which I make about the HB/OT in my classes is a clash with any present modern culture. **IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE HB/OT ONE MUST ENTER THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF THESE DOCUMENTS.** In order, then, to be able to interpret and explain the message of the HB/OT in a modern language one must be fluent in that language and culture.

The **BASIC** issue is this: seminary students **MUST** learn Elementary Hebrew and Elementary Greek. There is no other way to enter the world of the Bible in any meaningful way. They also **MUST** learn, at least, one other modern language than their own in order to begin to understand the multiculturalism of the USA and of the world.

Multiculturalism **BEGINS** with such elementary knowledge of the Biblical languages. Only then does the teacher/preacher have a chance to build on this foundation and move to an intermediate and, may be, even to an advanced understanding of the world of the Bible and its message.

**WITHOUT SUCH A FOUNDATION ALL OTHER THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IS BUILT ON SAND. WITHOUT THIS BASIC, ELEMENTARY KNOWLEDGE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BECOME AN INTERPRETER OF OF THE BIBLE OR "THE GOSPEL" IN ANY MODERN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE.**

---