



EFCA Hedonism's Impact on the Worldwide Church March 2011

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Dear Pastor and Mission Leader,

At the Lausanne conference last fall in South Africa, six issues were listed that will have a major impact on the world wide church in the next ten years. One issue that I want to address this month is the Impact of Hedonism on the church. Here is what was written about this subject.

**The Impact of Hedonism.** We are bombarded everyday with images and messages that serve to undermine our moral and biblical foundations. The church is being impacted by nominalism, superficiality and the troubling consequences of the prosperity gospel. We must respond with a prophetic critique of the church which calls us to AUTHENTICITY and INTEGRITY. We must call Christians to a deeper level of repentance, renewal, and discipleship.

**Nominalism:** Jason Mandryk from *Operation World* says that one of the greatest challenges is evangelical nominalism in the USA, Canada, Western Europe and in New Zealand. He also says that one of the massive challenges for the church is the need of discipleship. There is a low level of understanding of the Bible and living the Christian life. The greatest challenge for the church in Africa is also the need for discipleship. It has been said that the church in Africa is called a mile wide and an inch deep. You can read more about this topic in the new *Operation World* book that was released this past fall.

**Prosperity gospel:** In Africa the greatest challenge facing the church is the prosperity gospel. For those who would like to read more on this topic. The Lausanne Theology Working Group has written a good statement about the prosperity gospel.

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/prosperity.gospel.teachings.distort.bible.says.lausanne.group/24926.htm>

**Our response:** For the mission team, this might be a good topic to discuss at one of your mission team meetings. Each of these six topics that came out of the Lausanne conference could easily be a sermon or a Sunday School series. This topic of hedonism might be a good topic sometime to cover in a Sunday School class for teens and in adult classes. We might ask in our North American context what is the greatest challenge that we are facing as North American Christians in relation to hedonism? As we consider this topic we need to consider the Western European Church. What are they facing and how are they responding to this issue? The focus on the prosperity gospel would also be a good discipleship tool to teach in your church. After all, it was the western church that brought this teaching to Africa.

Blessings,  
Steve Austvold