

Mechanics of Divine Guidance, 6

The sixth mechanic of divine guidance is by comparing of what you observe with what you already know.

Acts 11:13 - And Cornelius reported to us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, “Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here;

Acts 11:14 - and he shall speak words to you by which you will be saved, you, and all your household.”

Acts 11:15 - And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as He did upon us at the beginning.

On entering Cornelius’s home, Peter had no idea what he was supposed to do. He had instructions from the Lord on a principle of not rejecting that which God had cleansed.

He was in Caesarea. Now with this piece of information, he knew what to do. Evangelize Cornelius and his family!

NOTE: Commentary on the problem of pluralism and deconstructionism in the pulpit with reference to the Gospel.

Kohl, Herbert. “From Archetype to Zeitgeist.” Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1992; 161-62, s.v. “pluralism”:

Cultural pluralism consists of accepting the existence of many cultures of equal value in the same society. It is the opposite of the notion that a society needs a dominant single cultural self-definition that all members must adhere to no matter what their cultural origins.

Williams, Lin M. (ed.). “Book Reviews.” In Bibliotheca Sacra, Oct.-Dec. 1996, pp. 491-92; 505-06:

The Gaging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism by D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.

This lengthy work by Carson confronts the philosophical pluralism that has become common in today’s world. Philosophical pluralism, however, presents a real danger to the gospel by opposing the idea that objective truth can be known.

Many Gods, Many Lords: Christianity Encounters World Religions by Daniel B. Clendenin. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995.

Clendenin argues that both atheism and pluralism are ultimately self-defeating. Atheism assumes a philosophical naturalism that it cannot adequately defend, while pluralism is intolerant of intolerance. He observes that a pluralistic belief in the common essence of all religions undermines the pluralistic ideal of dialogue.

Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, s.v. “dialogue”:

Conversation between two or more people, either verbal or written. Among the literary and stylistic values of effective dialogue are these: (1) it advances the action; (2) it is consistent with the character of the speakers, their social positions and special interests, thus adding realism; (3) it gives the impression of naturalness; (4) it presents the interplay of ideas and personalities among the people conversing.

The Fall of the Ivory Tower by George Roche. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing Co., 1994.

Roche claims political correctness is virtually the core curriculum of the 1990s and it has three main doctrines.

First, “there are certain ideas, issues and actions that simply are unacceptable within the academic community, and it is the educators’ prime responsibility to ‘reeducate’ students so that they will automatically eschew the ‘incorrect.’” Second, “all differences in ideas, values, and lifestyles are equally valid, and any attempt to prefer one over the other or to devote more attention to one than to the other is an act of prejudice. Moreover, the differences between people--between blacks and whites, men and women, rich and poor, Westerners and non-Westerners—are more important than the qualities they share in common.” Third, “truth does not exist, and it cannot be taught. What is being passed off as ‘truth’ are merely the collective prejudices of the dominant ruling class and culture. Students must be shown how to ‘deconstruct’ what they think is ‘true.’”

Kohl, Herbert. “From Archetype to Zeitgeist.” Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1992; s.v. “deconstruction”:

The literal meaning of deconstruction is the undoing, piece by piece. According to ... the developers of deconstructionist criticism, all texts and works of art say something other than what they are appearing to say, regardless of the artist's intention. There is no single meaning to be extracted from a text. Every text, through interpretation, can be shown to contain a multiplicity of meanings, and the job of the critic is to deconstruct the artist's intended meaning and expose the multiple meanings contained within the work.

The techniques deconstructionist critics use to expose the inconsistencies within a work are:

- *comparing that work to other works by the same artist;*
- *analyzing internal contradictions in the work;*
- *using statements made by the artist in interviews, reviews, and so on to expose inconsistencies between the artist's claims and statements in the work;*
- *analyzing the actual language used and its relationship to the attitudes, emotions and ideas that the artist is communicating in the work.*

... when taken to extremes, deconstructionist positions border on the absurd, claiming as they do that no meaning can be found in a text, that authors’ intentions can never govern a work, and that at bottom ... no truth can be found in [a] work of art.

Kirk, Russell. Decadence and Renewal in the Higher Learning. South Bend: Gateway Editions, Limited, 1978; pp. 18-19:

... the Academy, if it is to enjoy rights, must acknowledge some principles of truth, and not constitute itself as a mere sophisticated debating-society, doubting everything, sneering at all old convictions. The Academy sins if the Academy places falsehood on the same platform with truth. And when college or university offers instruction in a subject, this implies that some truth may be found in the discipline.

The objects of a decent society have been known for a great while, within and without the Academy: they are order and justice and freedom. But the ... “ritualistic liberals” had dropped those objects, and so were decadent, and involved the Academy in their decay of reason.

Once Peter began to speak in Acts 11:15 something phenomenal began to occur. The Holy Spirit began to indwell these Gentiles as He had the Jews on the day of Pentecost.

Peter uses the clause, just as He did upon us at the beginning. “*Us*” are the Jews of:

Acts 2:1 - When the day of Pentecost had come, they (Jewish believers) were all together in one place.

Acts 2:2 - And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:3 - And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves and they rested on each one of them.

Acts 2:4 - And they were filled with the Holy Spirit ...

Peter has communicated the Gospel to a family of Gentiles, people whom he had never assumed would be included in the Royal Family of God. Just as he had assumed that the laws against eating certain animals was still in force under the ritual plan of God so also, he assumed that only Jews were involved in the new dispensation of the church. Never had either been so. All food is for nourishment. Restrictions were designed to teach doctrine.

Never had Gentiles been excluded. The Jews had simply failed in their evangelistic duties toward them. Now through the stimulus of the “*Pentecost Vector*” Peter understands the Lord’s admonition in the vision.

Upon witnessing the same event at the home of Cornelius that he did at Pentecost, Peter realizes that what used to be unholy—the Goyim—are now made holy by God. This explained the vision noted in Acts 10:11 and Acts 10:12 and our Lord’s comments to Peter in Acts 10:13 and Acts 10:15.