

## **Liberty Commentary July 6, 2009**

We are once again reminded of our never-ending influence with the recent passing of pop music idol Michael Jackson.

Trans World Chief Operating Officer Jim Litwak said, “The awareness of Michael Jackson has been amazing. When you see him on TV and show clips of his performances it’s driving the consumer to get all things Michael.” Sales of the pop music singer’s CDs and DVDs have more than doubled at Trans World’s stores since before Jackson’s death June 25.

With a resolution being introduced in the United States House of Representatives to honor the “King of Pop” as a “humanitarian”, no one can deny that Michael Jackson has been highly influential in this era of postmodern culture where truth has become relative and our own perspective becomes our standard of right and wrong. The postmodern culture that Michael Jackson epitomizes does not like to draw lines of ultimate truth based on the foundation of the Judeo Christian ethic.

Some of the controversies that have surrounded Michael Jackson have been the alleged child molestations charges brought against him in 1993 that he settled out of court with a reported 25 million dollars being paid to the boy’s family. Again in 2003 charges of alleged child molestation were brought against him. Numerous other scandals such as financial problems, marriage problems and questions about the biological parentage of his three children have plagued the pop singer in recent years.

Despite the fact that Michael Jackson has a number of alleged, “character challenges”, he remains a favorite of the current pop culture. Fifty years ago Michael Jackson most likely would have been “washed out” and lost all credibility for having been involved in such alleged sordid scandals and alleged reprehensible criminal activity. Yet in this culture Michael Jackson is idolized and

elevated to a place of prominence as a role model to our young people both in this country and abroad.

The culture of today no longer holds to the Judeo Christian ethic of right and wrong (i.e. the 10 commandments). In this culture all of the traditions are challenged and measured against the subjective standards of tolerance, political correctness and individual preference. In this culture each person is free to determine what is right and wrong for themselves. God is whomever you choose to make as your God. Therefore, the culture of today does not measure their role models and music idols by a code of moral ethics, but rather by how they relate to their own sense of fulfillment and enjoyment. The character of an individual is not the overriding concern in this culture, but what is important in this culture is how I am made to feel.

If the church is to be effective in reaching this culture that has become desensitized to the traditional values and morals taught in scripture, we must live out our faith before them in a real and practical way so that they see Christ living through us each and everyday. This culture will not accept Christ based on our rhetoric of who we say Christ is to us, this culture must see that Christ is real in our lives and that the only way to enjoy true fulfillment is to be in a right relationship with Him.

It used to be that by the time a child reached the age of 17 they had formulated their perspective of who Christ is. If that young person had not chosen to receive Christ as Savior and become a Christian by age 17 the chances of them becoming a Christian was greatly diminished. Today that age has moved from age 17 to age 14. If a young person in today's culture does not make a commitment to follow Christ and become a Christian by age 14 the chances of reaching them are greatly diminished.

The Bible says, “For none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself.” Certainly our hearts go out to the Jackson family in their time of loss. Michael’s life is over, but his influence will live on for many years to come.

Each of us has a never-ending influence. We are either influencing people to become more like the Savior by the way we conduct our lives or we are influencing people to become more like the culture that we live in by our lack of faithfully living out our faith before a skeptical generation of young people.

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