

What Kind of Light?

Dub McClish

Paul described the Philippians as “lights in the world... in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Phi. 2:15). In Paul’s time I suppose there was only one kind of light, the light that provided useful and necessary illumination. However, there are many kinds of lights in the world today and it seems that we sometimes become the wrong kind of light.

There are the **flashing signal lights**. While they serve a useful function, they hardly provide illumination. They are constantly going on-off-on-off. They don’t stay on long and they don’t stay off long. The “signal-light” Christian runs hot, then cold. He is unsteady and unpredictable. He may readily, even zealously accept a responsibility, then quit suddenly with no warning. The good he does while he is on is offset by the harm he does when he goes off.

The **red light** is a stop signal. There is surely a place for its function, but, again, it provides no real light. The Christian who has a “red light” complex will always be trying to stop someone or something. This fellow is totally negative, looking for flaws. There is a time and place when, we must be red lights or betray the Lord, but not all of the time.

The **green light** says, “Go ahead.” There is an appropriate function served by this light, but it is terribly unbalanced. Likewise, the “green light” Christian would throw away all restraints, emphasizing freedom and ignoring false teaching and sin as though they were innocent matters. Christians ought to be generally positive, but one is wrong to remain positive about things that God has condemned.

Neon lights are often used to make that which is unattractive and base appear to be wholesome. The liquor and gambling interests probably use them more than all other users combined. Such is utterly hypocritical. It is sad that some of the Lord’s people are sort of “neon Christians,” pretending to be something on the outside that they do not intend to be on the inside. This is surely not the kind of light Paul urged us to be in the world.

The light this world needs for the darkness of sin and error is not just one that produces a signal or advertises, but one that gives a **steady, bright, illuminating light**. Such a light produces, positive and negative illumination as they are needed. This is the light that will help our world.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in The Lighthouse, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, May 28, 1987, of which I was editor.]

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