

Post-Modernism 2

Pre-Modern, Modern, Post-Modern – three periods in the history of humanity.

Pre-Modern is a term that is used to describe the worldview of men in times prior to the Modern era. Historians have assigned dates to this era, but the source of truth and reality was known to be the God of heaven, the creator of the heavens and the earth, who transcends time. The existence of God and what he has revealed were the source of truth and reality. Even in nations and cultures that did not profess to know God, there was a general understanding that some things were morally right or wrong. For example, taking the life of another man or woman was generally known to be wrong.

Scientific discovery was not always welcomed. Galileo Galilei observed that planets seen through his primitive telescope revolved about the sun rather than the earth. The major established religion of the time excommunicated him, force him to recant, and placed him under house arrest for the remainder of his life.

The Modern era was ushered in, and it featured scientific discovery and rationalism. For a time, when scientific discovery seemed to contradict the scriptures, the scriptures were considered to be authoritative. Scientists would attribute newly-found knowledge to the Creator. Penicillin has been and continues to be a major factor in curing disease and infection, But penicillin was not created by man, it was discovered in a mold that had existed for long ages. The several scientists who work on Penicilin and a lab assistant who bought a cantaloupe with a strange mold on it knew that they had discovered rather than created.

The Modern era was not all golden. Efforts to rationalize God out of the picture began to surface, notably with Charles Darwin, and men began to postulate explanations of the origins of everything from species to the universe by means that did not require a divine Creator. But not all involved in scientific research and exploration have or had a foul motive. Hugh Ross subscribes to the “Big Bang” theory – not as a replacement for God, but as an attempted explanation of “how” God created the universe. He sees his views as one more reason to believe in God. When a singular event has

occurred, which cannot be recreated in a laboratory, and could not be observed because we owe our existence to creation, theory which has not been and may never be proven become a breeding ground for theories put forth from any motivation. The only historical account is what the Creator revealed to Moses, who wrote the book of Genesis, describing things that happened before he was even born.

A distrust of the authority of established institutions of government began a shift away from the thinking of the modern era. Science and rational thinking did not keep the world from two massive wars, and they weren't keeping America out of an unpopular conflict in southeast Asia. It was on TV every night for all to see. Science has not yet been able to prevent cancer.

In the present, Post-Modern era, there is no single defining source for truth and reality beyond the individual. Postmodernism simply radicalized relativism and individualism and then applied them to all spheres of knowledge — even science.

In a postmodern world, truth and reality are understood to be individually shaped by personal history, social class, gender, culture, and religion. These factors, we are told, combine to shape the narratives and meanings of our lives. In this sense they are culturally embedded, localized social constructions without any universal application. Postmoderns are suspicious of people who make universal truth claims. Such claims of universal meaning are viewed as imperialistic efforts to marginalize and oppress the rights of others. The most important value of postmodernity is the inadmissibility of all totalizing ways of viewing any dimension of life. Postmodernity, as a worldview, refuses to allow any single defining source for truth and reality. The new emphasis is on difference, plurality and selective forms of tolerance.

Postmodern thinking is full of absurdities and inconsistencies. It is, for example, the worldview that says no worldview exists. It is an anti-theory that uses theoretical tools to neutralize all theories. It demands an imposed uniformity in an effort to resist uniformity. It employs propositional statements to negate truth based on propositional statements.

Dominant postmodern concerns for plurality, diversity and tolerance have not led to a more stable and secure society. Instead, the postmodern era

exchanged one misguided mood for another. Postmodernity was fueled by a shift from the human optimism of modernity (based on scientific certainty and technological progress), to a pessimistic mood of skepticism and uncertainty. One observer noted that, "Modernity was confident; postmodernity is anxious. Modernity had all the answers; postmodernity is full of questions. Modernity reveled in reason, science and human ability; postmodernity wallows in mysticism, relativism, and the incapacity to know anything with certainty."

This mood change was fueled by the devastation and disappointments of two world wars. Philosophies of despair and nihilistic existentialism became popular fare throughout Europe. These philosophies would later provide the ideological framework for the rejection of authority and institutionalism in America.

During the 1960s and 70s, the prevailing attitudes against authority, institution and establishment produced overwhelmingly negative effects on our nation. It was during this same period that we experienced a massive societal shift away from the institution of marriage and family. This involved alarming increases in divorce rates and the widespread acceptance of co-habitation. Anyone who denies these devastating consequences is not living in reality.

As a result of these changes, preachers, pastors, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists are stretched to the limit as they try to help overwhelming numbers of people pick up the broken pieces of their lives and become whole again. Yet many of these helpers are equally lost because they accept the postmodern lie. What is the lie? It is the wholesale rejection of universal reason and absolute truth. It is the delusional mindset that there is no objective goodness and rightness. These prevailing opinions have led to the dismissal of an absolute deity.

God may be welcomed in the postmodern world as long as he doesn't try to "play" God. As one has written, "Postmodernity returns value to faith and affirms the nurturing of our spiritual being as vital to humankind. Unfortunately, with the loss of truth, people will now seek faith without boundaries, categories, or definition. The old parameters of belief do not exist. As a result, people will be open to knowing God, but on their own terms" (Graham Johnston).

Yet the true and living God will not be defined by finite creatures. While postmodern guru-philosophers like Richard Rorty have tried to write the obituary of the "God's eye view of the world," the Creator of the universe still determines the standard of truth, goodness and beauty. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7). If you are lost in the postmodern world, the God who revealed himself through Jesus Christ is your only way out. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). He is the savior who can forgive your sins and the shepherd who can lead you out of the confusion and despair of postmodernity.

Genesis 1:1-5 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.
3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness
5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.