

The Rector's Reflections

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In previous *Rector's Reflections*, I have written briefly summarizing Premodernism, Modernism, and Postmodernism. Over the past several months, I began to develop these world-views in a deeper manner. More specifically, as we continue the process of rebuilding Christ Church, understanding Postmodernism is of the essence.

There are no laws of logic which serve to guide Postmodern discourse. Logical reasoning is basically irrelevant and non-existent. Individuals and groups will hold views which are inconsistent; in fact, contradictions are normative. "Postmodern culture is obdurately oxymoronic: and/also, not either-or or even both/and."

How do Postmoderns learn? First, interestingly enough, "Postmoderns want to know: Why does there have to be a reason for everything?" Once again, reason is not central to Postmodern discovery and the gaining of knowledge. Second, Postmoderns have little interest in the amassing of data or material using the conventional cognitive linear approach. "Postmoderns don't want their information straight." As a result, learning anything for Postmoderns involves intuition, the visual, and the "Experiential, Participatory, Interactive, Communal." Finally, Postmoderns equate "deep feeling is as important as deep thinking." One cannot underestimate, in other words, the value of feelings in Postmodern learning. This is the case because "reality for the

postmodern is what they experience and feel, particularly at this moment. Everything else is secondary."

Postmodern culture values relationships. First, Postmoderns hunger for an intimate personal relationship with God. They want to daily experience a participatory journey of faith with the living Lord. Leonard Sweet explains:

Postmoderns have had it with religion. They're sick and tired of religion. They're convinced the world needs less of religion, not more. They want no part of obedience to sets of propositions and rules required by some "officialdom" somewhere. Postmoderns want participation in a deeply personal but at the same time communal experience of the divine and the transformation of life that issues from that identification with God. George Gallup, in his 1988 study of *The Unchurched American*, recommended as his number one advice that the church stress religious experience over the institutional model of church by helping people experience God in their everyday lives.

Second, strong personal connections are essential for Postmoderns. Authentic community is a must. Simply put, "the Postmodern, post-Christian world is

relational to the core.” Finally, Postmodernism is extremely complex and confusing. For example, Premodernism, Modernism, and Postmodernism developed in a sequential and organic manner. Proponents of each worldview, however, continue to exist simultaneously in today’s culture. Second, Postmodernity cannot be clearly identified with any specific people group, generation, demographic situation, or age. Thus, Postmodernism is fluid, it permeates all segments of society. Third, Postmodernism is an approach regarding human existence, which is dismissive and void of any one theory or explanation for humankind’s ultimate purpose.

John Dominic Crossan puts it this way: “There is no lighthouse keeper. There is no lighthouse. There is no dry land. There are only people living on rafts made from their own imaginations. And there is the sea. The modern era began with Columbus setting out to sea. He seemed to have had at least some idea as to where he was going. As that epoch ends and a postmodern era begins we find ourselves again at sea. But this time we have

no navigational assistance and no direction. We are alone, adrift in a postmodern world.”

A few major features of Premodernism and Modernism were shared these past few months. Postmodernism, moreover, is partly a result of the global, pluralistic, and secular standards which are so prevalent in the culture. On the other hand, the eclectic world view of Postmodernism is, in many respects, a direct reaction to Modernism’s heightened emphasis on reason.

If the church is to be faithful to Jesus Christ’s mandate to make disciples (Matthew 28:16-20) in this complex Postmodern day, the evangelization of Postmodern pre-Christians will naturally (Mark 4:26-28; Acts 2:47) occur in holistic cell groups of 3-12 people who live together the Upward, Inward, Outward, and Forward values of God’s kingdom.

Faithfully in Jesus Christ,

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