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**The Postmodern Emerging Church**

“Postmodernism”. What is it and what does it have to do with me? Postmodernism is a major intellectual movement that began as a reaction to modernism around the middle of the 20th century. It has gradually infiltrated the major areas of thought; namely, philosophy, literature, music, art, and theology. Here’s a list of some differences in theology.

<b>Modernism</b>	<b>Postmodernism</b>
<i>Absolute</i> moral values and truth	<i>Relative</i> moral values and truth
<i>Language</i> is the highest form of communication	<i>Images</i> are the highest form of communication
<i>Reconstructs</i> authorial intent	<i>Deconstructs</i> author
Meaning determined by <i>God</i>	Meaning determined by <i>self</i>
<i>Truth</i> is of utmost importance	<i>Power</i> is of utmost importance
<i>Nationalism</i>	<i>Internationalism</i>

As a result we have a split culture; culture war has set in and the modern church is rapidly being replaced by the postmodern church. The movement is called “The Emerging Church” and its goal is to deconstruct Christianity and reconstruct it on a postmodern base. The movement is being led by some older, elite intellectuals as well as some younger people who were born in the postmodern culture. Other movements are tied in with “The Emerging Church” such as the home church movement and non-denominational movement. For example, you are observing a symptom of the shift from modernism to postmodernism when a church has two kinds of services: Traditional and Contemporary. The whole movement is characterized by a revolt opposed to the modernist mindset that modernism has become their most hated enemy! They hate absolutes (except for the absolute that all things are relative), they hate language (except when it can be used to increase their power), they hate external authority (because they are caught

in radical individualism), and they hate America (in favor of international structures)!

How does the Modern Church differ from the Emerging Postmodern Church? As an example, take a fundamental doctrine like the Scriptures and note the radical departure. The modern church considered the word of God to be of utmost importance; verbally inspired by God to the letter, inerrant in the original autographs, infallible when speaking to every area of life, implicitly authoritative, faithfully preserved by God's providence in history and necessary for every area of life. When it comes to Bible translations this high view of the Scriptures is reflected in word-for-word translations like the *American Standard Version* (1901), the *New American Standard Bible* (1971), the *King James Version* (1881) and the *New King James Version* (1982).

In radical contrast, the postmodern church rejects the traditional meaning of this doctrine. The Bible is inspired (as a painter is inspired), infallible in some areas and fallible in others (who decides?), authoritative (with respect to what has passed the individuals bar of judgment), tainted by human error and sufficient (for some spiritual things). This low view of the Scriptures is reflected in concept-for-concept translations such as the *Good As New: A Radical Retelling of the Scriptures* (2004), *The Message* (2002), *The New Living Translation* (2004), and *Today's New International Version* (2005).

If, for example, you have homosexual tendencies just purchase the *Good as New* version which interprets the traditional passages that condemn homosexuality as acceptance passages. If you are offended by gender differences in older versions which spoke of God as Father or men and women as "mankind" then just buy *Today's New International Version* a gender-neutral version.

You can imagine where things go from here; emphasis on personal experience over doctrine, emphasis on flashing images rather than carefully articulated doctrine, emphasis on alternative forms of worship (mantra, interpretive dance) rather than traditional respectful forms, emphasis on narrative storytelling and man-made parables rather than exegesis.

May we earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3) and see to it that no one takes us captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ (Col 2:8). Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood...savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them...Therefore be on the alert... (Acts 20:28-31).

[Back To The Top](#)

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