

# The Gospel and Postmodernism

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A comment that is often heard in missiological circles is that Europe and even the United States is becoming post-Christian. Some go so far as to state that Europe is already post-Christian. I think this statement carries a lot of truth. However, I think this statement tends to mask the real issue. I would suggest that the real issue is not post-Christendom but postmodernism. The western world is undergoing a rapid cultural shift away from a previously held worldview. This shift is affecting the way religion and Christianity are perceived by those who have undergone this shift of worldview or hold some aspects of the new worldview. It is this shift in worldview and the Church's failure to understand and adjust to this new way of perceiving reality that is to a large measure, causing the rejection of organized religion and more specifically Evangelical Christianity in Europe and to a lesser extent in the United States.

One of the difficulties of this shift in world view is that it has caused significant cultural change that does not have the usual earmarks of a different culture. Western postmodernists look, dress, and speak just like western modernists. They eat in the same restaurants, work in the same offices, and their children go to the same schools. In other words they seem to be just like us yet at the level of values and how they perceive their world they are very different.

Because of this difficulty to easily discern this subtle yet profound cultural shift, we may very well be missing a tremendous opportunity. While this shift in worldview may tend to leave those of us with the old worldview bewildered and even angry, it has some elements to it that bode well for the Christian faith if we deal with these elements strategically and wisely. One of the great strengths of Christianity has been its ability to adjust to different cultures and worldviews without losing its essence. I would suggest that we need to look at the new worldview of postmodernism from a strategic point of view and ask ourselves, how can Christianity be expressed in this new culture without losing its fundamental essence? We also need to ask ourselves, where are positive points of contact within the postmodern worldview that God can use to make contact with these people for Christ?

## A Discussion with Paco

On Saturday February 26, 2000 I had a conversation with Paco Lledo, a non-Christian friend of mine in Madrid which started me thinking about postmodernism and its strategic ramifications in the preaching of the Gospel. Paco was telling me about a book he had just finished about Mani the founder of the ancient religious movement that later became the Assassins. Paco related how Mani did not use his political privileges, given to him by the Persian King, to teach his "truth". He mentioned that Mani did not teach his doctrine as exclusive but as inclusive. He never belittled other religions, but rather portrayed himself as one who could give further truth. He talked about how Mani tried to get people to "find the light within". I asked Paco how he felt personally about these things.

In general Paco related that he was favorably disposed towards Mani because he was not argumentative, but was humble, inclusive and tried to put people in touch with the "light

that was within". I asked Paco how he responded to modern day religion. He said he was a non-practicing Catholic. He did not like the history of the Catholic Church in Spain, particularly their abuse of power and the use of coercion to make people conform to their belief system. He did not believe they had an exclusive spiritual truth that was unavailable to others apart from the Catholic Church. He related that he believed that his own experience told him that there was "something more" and that whatever it was, he wanted it. This something more should impact his life in practical ways. I asked him how he would find it? He said that when he saw someone who was displaying something spiritual in his or her life "that person can be a spiritual guide for me." At that point I summarized what I had heard to make sure I was getting the fine points. I expressed his views as being postmodern. He was familiar with this term and agreed with me that his point of view was postmodern. He also agreed with my summary of his views. Following is my summary of Paco's views:

- He does not appreciate the abuse of power or influence in the name of religion.
- He is sensitive to the hypocrisy of those who claim religious truth.
- He does not believe in exclusive truth.
- He does not believe that one religion has all the answers.
- Argument against another religion, no matter what it is, offends him.
- He defines himself as a non-practicing Catholic. However "Catholic" is still part of his cultural heritage and his religious definition for himself.
- He believes that there is something beyond what we normally experience.
- He believes this "something more" is spiritual.
- He believes that he can find this something more by looking for the light within.
- Spirituality must have practical application in life.
- He would be open to someone being his spiritual guide.
- One gains the right to be his spiritual guide by invitation.
- One also gains this right to be his spiritual guide by demonstrating an undefined spirituality in their own life.

### **Bad News and Good News**

For me as an Evangelical there are some disturbing concepts in Paco's understanding of truth. His understanding of reality does not fit my Biblical or cultural worldview. Among some of the elements I find disturbing are:

- He does not believe in exclusive truth.
- He does not believe that one religion has all the answers.
- Argument against another religion, no matter what it is, offends him.
- He defines himself as a non-practicing Catholic. However "Catholic" is still part of his cultural heritage and his religious definition for himself.
- He believes that he can find spirituality by looking for the light within.

As an Evangelical I believe in both objective and exclusive truth. I believe the Bible is God's revelation to mankind; it is true and furthermore Jesus is the ultimate expression of truth. He said I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. I believe this truth to be exclusive, because as Jesus said, no one comes to the Father but by Me. Since no one comes to the Father but by Jesus I believe we have exclusive answers to ultimate questions. If this is true, then other religions are by logical deduction not true. Like most Evangelicals I have concerns about some of the Catholic Church's doctrines which are part of Paco's cultural

and religious self-definition. To look for the light within sounds very much like New Age thought which I find dangerous and uncomfortable.

What this tells me is that given Paco's worldview, if I were to preach to him that my Bible, my faith and my understandings were true and even more, exclusively true, I would lose my hearing with him. He would probably not "hear" the core of my message because my exclusivity and rejection of others would render me as an unfit messenger of light.

However there is some good news. Many of Paco's affirmations have positive strategic implication for the preaching of the gospel.

- He believes that there is something beyond what we normally experience.
- He believes this "something more" is spiritual.
- Spirituality must have practical application in life.
- He would be open to someone being his spiritual guide.
- One gains the right to be his spiritual guide by invitation.
- One also gains this right to be his spiritual guide by demonstrating an undefined spirituality in their life.

Paco is not an atheist. He believes that there is something more and that his very nature testifies to this. He might as well have quoted Romans 1:19-20. He is seeking spirituality. He wants a spirituality that has practical application in his life. He is willing to listen to someone who he perceives as having demonstrated spirituality in his or her own life. Jesus Christ has exactly what Paco is looking for. If one has a good testimony with him they can gain the right to become his spiritual guide. But this will probably not come by quoting the Bible or by sharing doctrinal truths. It comes by showing Christ alive in one's life.

## **Postmodernism**

In many ways Paco is quite typical as a postmodernist. I found it interesting that Paco was familiar with the term and willing to include himself in this group. Paco is a well-educated man. He is an engineer working for an aeronautical firm designing helicopters. Yet he openly discusses spirituality and his desire to find it. I did a web search on the concept postmodernism and found an article by Dr. Mary Klages, who is an Associate Professor of the English Department at University of Colorado, Boulder entitled Postmodernism, which I have found helpful (<http://www.colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/pomo.html>). In this brief article Klages defines Postmodernism both from a literary perspective and from a historical/sociological perspective. While these points of view are interrelated, it is the sociological implications of postmodernism that have strategic implication for the preaching of the Gospel in modern western society.

*"... the second facet, or definition, of postmodernism comes more from history and sociology than from literature or art history. This approach defines postmodernism as the name of an entire social formation, or set of social/historical attitudes; more precisely, this approach contrast "postmodernity" with modernity," rather than "postmodernism" with "modernism." (Klages p. 2).*

I have tried to extract some of the tendencies of postmodernity. However it should be noted that we do not live in a completely postmodern society, but rather in a society that is moving rapidly from a traditional society to postmodernity. Social change on this scale

takes generations. Francisco Andrés Orizo, a Spanish sociologist, in his book *Sistemas de valores en la España de los 90* writes:

*Y no es una casualidad que muchas de estas manifestaciones que rompen los esquemas de la modernidad se lideren dentro del escenario español, cuando aún no habíamos completado las prescritas etapas de un proceso de modernización. Nos hemos hecho posmodernos sin haber ejercido antes de modernos.<sup>1</sup>*

(And it is not a coincidence that many of these expressions that shatter the preconceptions of modernity may have come upon the Spanish scene, when we haven't even completed the prescribed stages of the process of modernization. We have become postmodern without having previously practiced modernism.)

According to Orizo the prevailing worldview in Spain before postmodernism was the traditional worldview. So Spain has jumped from a traditional (or premodern) worldview to a postmodern worldview without having gone through modernity. While we may encounter people in Europe or the United States who are thoroughly modern in outlook; most Spaniards are either traditional in their worldview or postmodern. It is probably much more common to find people who have many postmodern values, some having more than others. However this is the direction in which Western society is moving, and each succeeding generation will have a higher percentage of postmodernists and be more thoroughly immersed in postmodern thought. It should also be noted that in reality Europe is much more postmodern than modern. Also in this age of rapid and powerful communication, social change occurs more rapidly than it did in past generations. So it would be reasonable to expect a more rapid shift from modern or traditional to post modern than from ancient to modern or even from one modern expression to another, for example from Renaissance to Enlightenment.

While this monumental change takes time Orizo's research seems to indicate that in general, Spaniards who were born before 1945 tend to be traditional in outlook, those who were born after this date have a stronger tendency for a postmodern outlook. The younger a Spaniard is the more likely their value system will reflect postmodernism and their postmodernism will tend to be more ideologically pure.

## **Tendencies of Postmodernity**

Taken from the Klages article:

- Subjectivity
- Rejection of rigid distinctions
- Local, personal and specific truth
- Rejection of absolute truths
- Rejection of "grand narratives" which explain reality such as capitalism or communism. These grand narratives are seen as old and simplistic and don't adequately explain the world's complexity.
- Practicality
- Inclusiveness or tolerance

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<sup>1</sup> Francisco Andrés Orizo, *sistemas de valores en la España de los 90*, (Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1996). Page LV-LVI.

- Diversity of morals and lifestyle
- Tendency to perceive information that does not fit their worldview as “noise”.
- Tendency to see conservative religion or politics as the enemy.
- Language is fluid and subjective (the hearer brings as much to the conversation as the listener).

Other tendencies not specifically mentioned by Klages:

- Desire for spirituality
- Desire for community
- Rejection of negativity

### **Tendencies of Modernity**

- Rationality
- Autonomy
- Objectivity
- Science as the objective arbiter of truth
- Knowledge produced by science is “truth” and is eternal
- Value of progress and perfection
- Order
- Language is rational and transparent (it means exactly what it says)
- Rejection of that which does not represent order
- Rejection of that which is considered “other” i.e. lack of tolerance

### **Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism as Expressions of Modernism**

What struck me as Klages described modernity was that Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism are modern expressions of Christianity. I do not in any way mean to disparage either of these expressions of our faith. I merely mean that they are an expression of their historical/cultural context, a context that is rapidly changing. Protestantism itself started with the Renaissance, which was the first cultural expression of modernity. The various expressions of Protestantism developed as modernity developed. Evangelicalism and Christian Fundamentalism as we now know them are the fullest expressions of the modern worldview brought into the Christian faith. These expressions have a distinctly American flavor, although each country will have its own variations.

Orizo’s observation that Spain has passed from a traditional society to a postmodern society without having fully passed through modernism goes a long way in explaining why the Evangelical Church expressing itself in modernist forms has never been able to make strong inroads into the Spanish culture. This paper will focus on the contrast of modernism and postmodernism because the modernism of the Evangelical Church and the postmodernism of the Spanish society has become a critical strategic issue.

Following are some ways in which we express our modern cultural underpinnings. I do not in any way want to imply that these are wrong, merely that we have expressed our faith from a specific worldview.

**A scientific view of the Bible.** The Bible is our book of theological facts. We investigate this book to extract these facts. Our hermeneutic could be metaphorically described as putting the Bible under a microscope. The evangelical hermeneutic is highly objective. We

want to know exactly what the text means by what it says. In other words the language of the Bible is transparent.

**Emphasis on doctrine.** Doctrines are our theological facts. We have a tendency to disagree and even argue over these facts because to get the facts right is of very high value to modernists. We have a low tolerance for ambiguity in doctrine because the modern mind wants everything clearly explained.

**High value on rightness.** The modern mind wants everything analyzed and put in order. Whatever does not fit our order must be rejected. What fits the order or scheme is right; what does not must be rejected. Thus modern Evangelical scholarship places high value of systematic theology and on schools of systematic theology, for example Calvinism.

**Low tolerance for mystery.** I am not using the word mystery in the Pauline sense of the word as “a previously unknown truth which is now revealed” but in its more generic sense of something that can not be easily explained or understood or perhaps isn’t completely explainable or understandable.

**High value on Truth.** We often state our faith as a series of “truths”. This is as old as Christianity itself. It goes back to the first Christian creed which is Jesus is Lord and continues through the various other creeds such as the Nicene and the Apostles Creed. However, these creeds are relatively simple and brief compared to the systemization and expression of doctrine common in modern Christianity (think of Chafer’s Systematic Theology in eight volumes). We have systematically tried to extract every truth from the Bible and have tried to express each truth doctrinally.

**Low tolerance for aberration.** Modern Christianity has a fairly low tolerance for aberration in doctrine and lifestyle. We highly value lifestyles that reflect our doctrines and feel we need to confront those lifestyles that do not fit Biblical/Doctrinal norms. This is one of the differences between Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism. Evangelicalism is more tolerant in doctrinal aberration than is Fundamentalism. Two moral issues which are currently important to most expressions of the Christian faith are homosexuality and abortion. Doctrinally, most Christians would affirm their love of those who practice these lifestyles, while expressing abhorrence for the practice itself. Often though, we are perceived by outsiders as hating both of these lifestyles and those who practice these lifestyles.

**Proclamation of the Gospel as Doctrine.** One of the great strengths of modern Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism is our ability to proclaim the truths of the Gospel in clear concise ways. We do this in a number of ways: The Four Spiritual Laws, Steps to Peace with God, The Bridge Illustration and The Roman Road, among others. Our very ability to be concise and clear reflects our modern worldview. The Gospel itself is viewed as a doctrinal truth to be accepted and believed as fact. More ancient forms of Christianity such as Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy struggle with this. This is because their worldview tends more toward an ancient mindset. Thus, the Christian faith is viewed as a series of mysteries, symbols, creeds and paradoxes to be meditated on. In contemplation of the symbols, mysteries and creeds one might come into communion with God.

**High value in teaching and preaching.** Because we tend to view our faith doctrinally and we so highly value truth, we feel a high expression of Christian maturity is to be doctrinally and Biblically knowledgeable. Therefore there is a high value put on teaching. This is

particularly expressed in the large proportion of time devoted to preaching and teaching in the typical Evangelical or Fundamentalist service. Among many, there is a very high value put on expository Bible teaching. In other words, what exactly does the text say and therefore how does this doctrine apply to our lives. It is quite common for churches to systematically go through a book of the Bible or even the entire Bible itself. This is a fairly recent phenomenon in the Church. Thirty or forty years ago in Evangelical or Fundamentalist circles most sermons were topical sermons. Three or four centuries ago they were homilies.

**Low value in personal discipleship.** Because there tends to be such a high value on teaching in the church service, there is a correspondingly lower value placed on strong personal discipleship. When personal discipleship is expressed it is often focused on teaching Biblical and doctrinal knowledge or Bible memorization. Often there is even a failure to distinguish between personal discipleship and teaching such as in Sunday School (another modern expression). This is not to say that discipleship is non-existent but that it is fairly uncommon and when expressed it is often highly doctrinal in nature. Compare modern forms of discipleship with more ancient forms which were much more personal, intimate and intense such as spiritual formation.

**Autonomy in church practice.** There is a strong sense of the autonomy of believers and of individual churches. The priesthood of all believers was one of the foundational principals of Protestantism. This high value on autonomy is a tendency of modernism. Because there is a high value also placed on truth and because we can not agree on the fine points of doctrinal truth, there is also a tendency for the fragmentation of the Church into denominations and even individual church bodies holding firmly to their specific doctrines.

These practices are not necessarily right or wrong, they are expressions that have grown out of a specific cultural/historical context. Some very good things have come out of these modern expressions of Christianity, for example the ability to clearly and simply express the gospel and a deep and exhaustive understanding of Biblical truth. However, like all cultural expressions of Christianity, if exposed to another worldview or culture without contextualization there will be a tendency to reject the message because of the way it is communicated. We have to also realize that, as in all cultural expressions of Christianity, there will be weaknesses which others can clearly see but to which we are insensitive or even blind.

## Barriers and Bridges

As modern Christianity moves into this new worldview or culture of postmodernism, it will encounter barriers of understanding. These barriers of understanding become one of our two chief strategic stumbling blocks. At the same time there may very well be bridges of natural affinity to our message that we will not recognize because they are so foreign to us or are expressed in ways that make us uncomfortable. This becomes our other chief stumbling block.

### Barriers

Some of the potential barriers we will face:

**Truth and Subjectivity.** Modernism puts a high value on exclusive truth. Postmodernism places a high value on subjectivity. To a postmodernist it is truth if it is true for me. This could be expressed as this is my truth; you can have your own. It is true for me. This resonates with me. You believe what you want to, I will believe what I want to.

**Rejection of rigid distinctions.** Postmodernists tend to not like rigid distinctions made about themselves or others. Even more so, they will bristle at negative judgements made about different opinions or lifestyles. They may not agree with these opinions or lifestyles themselves but they would uphold the right of others to hold different views or practice different lifestyles. This may be expressed in the following ways: How dare you judge someone else. I believe in tolerance. The only thing I am intolerant of is intolerance. I believe in diversity of lifestyles.

**Local, personal and specific truth.** As stated above, postmodernism places a high value on subjectivity. This is true to the point that there is a tendency to view truth as personal and specific. Everyone can have his or her own truth. Postmodernists also tend to take on as truth what their peer group or community believes. If a group to which they identify has strong value structures they will also tend to hold these values.

**Rejection of absolute truths.** Klages in her work titled Postmodernism refers to Francois Lyotard's concept of the "grand narrative",

*Totality, and stability, and order, Lyotard argues, are maintained in modern societies through the means of "grand narratives" or "master narratives," which are stories a culture tells itself about its practices and beliefs. A "grand narrative" in American culture might be the story that democracy is the most enlightened (rational) form of government, and that democracy can and will lead to universal human happiness. Every belief system or ideology has its grand narratives, according to Lyotard; for Marxism, for instance, the "grand narrative" is the idea that capitalism will collapse in on itself and a utopian socialist world will evolve. You might think of grand narratives as a kind of meta-theory, or meta-ideology, that is, an ideology that explains an ideology (as in Marxism); a story that is told to explain the belief systems that exist." (p.4)*

Klages goes on to explain:

*Postmodernism then is the critique of grand narratives, the awareness that such narratives serve to mask the contradictions and instabilities that are inherent in any social organization or practice... Post modernism, in rejecting grand narratives, favors "mini-*

*narratives,” stories that explain small practices, local events, rather than large-scale universal or global concepts. Post modern “mini-narratives” are always situational, provisional, contingent, and temporary, making no claim to universality, truth, reason, or stability. (p.4)*

Christianity by its very nature is a grand-narrative which claims to be absolute truth. Most postmodernists would reject out of hand ideas and concepts presented in this way.

**Inclusiveness or tolerance.** As stated above postmodernists have a low tolerance for intolerance. This may seem a logical contradiction to a modernist, but like it or not this is their tendency. This becomes a strategic barrier when we express low tolerance or lack of tolerance for other religious expressions, lifestyles or morals.

**Diversity of morals and lifestyles.** Postmodernists desire the freedom to express and live their own personal morals and lifestyles. Initial hostility to these lifestyles, opinions or morals will create an almost insurmountable strategic barrier.

**Tendency to perceive information that does not fit their worldview as “noise”.** In the modern conception the opposite of knowledge is ignorance, but in the postmodern worldview it is noise (Klages p. 5). Postmodernists have just as much trouble understanding ideas which are not formulated in their paradigms as do other worldviews. By communicating with postmodernists in modern paradigms we risk our ideas being classified as having no value (noise). At this point, this is the chief barrier we are encountering in the preaching of the gospel to postmodernists. We tend to start at the wrong points, and present our truth in the wrong ways and we immediately get turned off as noise, just like someone switching the channel to static.

**Rejection of negativity.** Postmodernists do not appreciate statements that are perceived as negative or lacking in appreciation of personal freedom. To express hostility to another religious expression would tend to create a barrier of communication. To express hostility to a given lifestyle or value would be perceived as negative and would also create a barrier of communication. It would not only be noise, but it would be viewed as intolerant. This does not mean that the postmodernist personally holds these views, but rather he or she upholds the rights of other to have different views, values or lifestyles.

**Tendency to see conservative religion or politics as the enemy.**

*...the desire to return to the pre-postmodern era (modern/humanist/Enlightenment thinking) tends to get associated with conservative political, religious, and philosophical groups. In fact, one of the consequences of postmodernism seems to be the rise of religious fundamentalism, as a form of resistance to the questioning of the “grand narratives” of religious truth. (Klages p.5)*

There are natural and inherent conflicts in the encounter between the modern worldview and the postmodern worldview. There are also inherent conflicts in the encounter of modern expressions of Christianity as it encounters postmodern culture. Postmodernists feel this keenly and tend to view us as the enemy.

## **Bridges**

However, there are several bridges into the postmodernist's life which have encouraging strategic potential.

**Tendency for spiritual sensitivity.** One clear characteristic of postmodernists is that they have a tendency to be spiritual seekers. Newsweek magazine reports that people are buying more books on meditation, prayer, and spirituality than on sex or self-help.<sup>2</sup> Of course not all postmodernists are spiritual seekers, but many are. This bodes well for those who wish to preach the gospel to them. However, this spiritual search is a search for something experiential, personal and practical in nature. They are looking for their own personal spirituality. Thus we see the rise of Eastern religions in Western societies. New Age thinking, for example, is becoming more and more popular. We should think of New Age as an expression of postmodern spirituality because it is experiential, personal and from the practitioners point of view practical.

**Experiential Spirituality.** One of the major advantages we have as Christians in dealing with postmodernists is that we have a God who is real and who is active in our lives. Unfortunately, this personal interaction has been somewhat downplayed in our modern expressions of Christianity. Many postmodernists are looking for a real spiritual encounter. They want to make actual contact with spiritual forces. They can make contact with Jesus who is real and very powerful.

**Personal Spirituality.** While at first this looks like a disadvantage it can be turned to an advantage. Those postmodernists who are spiritually minded want to have personal interaction with spiritual forces. Christians have a personal love relationship with Jesus Christ. We encounter Him through abiding, Christian meditation, Bible study and prayer. He is interested in every detail of our lives and is willing to become involved in the most intimate and minute details of our lives. He answers our prayers supernaturally. This is a very positive message for a postmodernist if we can communicate it to them in their cultural language.

**Practicality.** Postmodernists want answers to the real problems they are facing in their daily lives. They don't want grand narratives, they don't want doctrinal answers, they want results. We have a God who can meet their needs. We have a God who has spoken to mankind in practical ways about their significant needs. He continues to interact with mankind through meditation of the Scriptures, the body life of the Church, and the Church's interaction with society. We have a God who has given us practical guidelines on marriage, child rearing, family, lifestyle, relationships, and dealing with problem areas of our lives, among others.

**Social needs.** Postmodernists, while rejecting the grand narratives, do want answers to local problems. If we were to talk to most postmodernists about the large sociopolitical problems that cause world hunger they would turn off the noise. However, if we were to send food and clothing to flood victims they would respect us for having a social conscience. They want to see action that is doing something about real problems. This will be perceived as showing spiritual light, we call it having a good testimony.

**Shalom.** Postmodernists are looking for a better life. But the improvements they are looking for are not merely material. They have the benefits of modern technology and they appreciate them, but they want something more. They want emotional comfort, happiness, peace, joy, and love. They may not know how to express it in our terms but they are looking for shalom. This is good news because Jesus wants to give them shalom.

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bruce Demarest, *Satisfy Your Soul: Restoring the Heart of Christian Spirituality* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1999), p.44.

**They are willing to break out of former norms.** Postmodernists are willing and even anxious to break out of modern forms including and even especially religious forms. However, religion expressed in modernism is something they are adamantly against. They would be willing to try new religious forms if they were practical, spiritual and spoke their language. In Spain we need to keep in mind that Catholicism is viewed as part of the social fabric of life; it is part of being Spanish. They may not like Catholicism as it now exists as a religious practice but they don't want to lose their Spanishness. Any expression of spirituality that looks, tastes and feels Spanish will be greatly appreciated.

**They are looking for spiritual guides.** My first reaction to Paco's statement that someone could be a spiritual guide for him made me think of New Age spirituality, which concerned me. However, once I could get past the language I realized that this is exactly what a witness is, someone who points a non-believer to Jesus. Witness needs to come from relationship not from proclamation. Their idea of a spiritual guide is not someone who points them to the right trail but rather someone who says, "I have experienced the trail. I love the trail. I am on the trail. Come with me." Furthermore, they need to sense that indeed we are on a spiritual trail and that that trail could be good and practical for them. Proclamation of the doctrinal truth of the gospel as a theological fact to be believed will be turned off as noise. In fact, that is what most of us are experiencing as we preach the gospel to postmodernists. We need to find ways of making relationship and then inviting them join us on the trail.

## **Moving In the Direction of Solutions**

How do we get past the cultural and communication barriers between modernists and postmodernists and cross the bridges that exist so they can meet Jesus? Following are some ideas to ponder. I don't claim that I have concrete failsafe solutions but as we work together and experiment together perhaps the Holy Spirit will guide us to ways to make contact and allow us to be spiritual guides to our postmodern friends.

**Lead with Jesus.** Those postmodernists who are spiritually minded want encounters with a personal spiritual force. This of course can be a very dangerous desire if it is focused in the wrong direction. However, if focused on Jesus it can lead to an encounter with the loving, gracious God of the universe. We might consider talking with our friends about what Jesus is doing in our lives. We need to talk about Him just as He is, personal and spiritual.

We also need to be careful. Going too fast or too aggressively will be perceived as noise and we will be turned off.

**Be practical.** Postmodernists want to hear practical solutions. How is Jesus affecting our marriage? How is Jesus helping me overcome bitterness? How is Jesus helping me raise my kids? What is Jesus leading me to do for my neighbors who have needs?

**Be spiritual.** Our modern tendency is to avoid being too spiritual. To the point that we often view mysticism with skepticism. Christian mysticism is as old as the Church. Postmodernists who are looking for spirituality are probably much more open to personal spiritual encounter than a non-Christian modernist would be.

**Think of introducing them personally to Jesus.** Our modern tendency is to preach the gospel as a doctrine to be accepted and believed as truth. It might be wise to consider

introducing our postmodern friends to a spiritual Jesus who offers practical solutions; one of the most important of which is that Jesus wants to cleanse us spiritually. He wants to offer grace, love and peace to those who formerly didn't know Him. Then we can go to the cross as a highly personal act that showed the extent to which He would go to meet us and spiritually cleanse us.

George G. Hunter III in his book *How to Reach Secular People* suggest that instead of trying to convince someone of the rightness of our point of view and then ask for a decision or conversion as we do with modernists we should look for a series of mini-conversions. He suggests that we should do this from relationship looking for changes of perspective in these following six points in the following order:

- awareness
- relevance
- interest
- trial
- adoption
- reinforcement

In other words first we help our friend become aware of our relationship to Jesus (mini-conversion #1). Next we show how Jesus can be relevant in their personal life (mini-conversion #2). We then try to cultivate interest in their investigating a relationship with Jesus (mini-conversion #3). We challenge our friend to see if Jesus won't respond to their felt need such as in helping them heal a broken marriage or dealing with children (a trial). We can do this through introducing them to what God has said in his Word and through their own prayer to Jesus (mini-conversion #4). When they have an experience with Jesus we tell them of other things that Jesus offers especially forgiveness of sin, or spiritual cleansing (mini-conversion #5). We then need to encourage our friend that he or she has made the right choice. One way to do this is through introducing them to other Christians so they have a sense of community and they can begin to adopt the values of that community (mini-conversion #6). All of this comes from relationship and must be done over time. It is not something that can be done in one conversation, one week or probably even in one month.

**Think about spiritual formation as a model.** As discussed before, most postmodernists have an aversion to doctrine, but this does not mean they would be disinterested in spirituality and spiritual growth. One ancient model that would probably appeal to new postmodern Christians would be spiritual formation. In this model the spiritual director works through practical and spiritual problems with the disciple by directing the disciple to pray through and meditate on certain scriptures. He may give the disciple a specific spiritual task to accomplish or a question to answer; he may even strongly confront the disciple. This is intense biblical discipleship but it is not based on doctrinal knowledge but rather focused, deep, practical spiritual growth.

**Look for an invitation to be a spiritual guide.** Postmodernists reserve the right to invite us into their spiritual world. They don't want us to invite ourselves. However that doesn't mean that we have to sit around and do nothing. I like the analogy of fishing. We need to put out the concept of what Jesus is doing in our lives as "bait". If they respond, we give them a little more. If they don't, we build relationship and give them some more bait later. We can even tease them with the bait. But we should be very careful of coming on too hard. The second we are perceived as coercive we become noise to be switched off.

**Look for discipleship relationships.** We tend to think the gospel comes first, then introduction of the new Christian to a church, then discipleship through teaching. When the

new Christian enters the church he will meet new Christian friends. We might consider changing the order of this model. Friendship comes first. In the process of friendship comes opportunity to become a spiritual guide. It is at this point that discipleship really starts. In the process of discipleship (or spiritual formation) we introduce the person to Jesus. We continue to guide this person in their relationship with Jesus. In the process as we begin to see spiritual growth we introduce the new disciple to others who know Jesus and who enjoy worshipping Jesus together. When the disciple is ready we introduce them to corporate worship in some sort of group or even church setting.

**Look to the Creeds.** Postmodernists tend to be allergic to systematic doctrine, but that does not mean that they do not need doctrine or shouldn't be introduced to the foundational truths of Christianity. One way to do this would be to have them meditate of the basic creeds of the Church such as the Nicene and Apostles Creeds. This is also an opportunity to show wholeness of the body of Christ. We can say that different churches have different customs that comes from different periods of our rich history, but we all agree on these foundational truths.

**Focus on the disciplines.** The cardinal Christian disciplines of prayer, meditative Bible study, Christian meditation, fasting and scripture memorization would be something a new postmodern Christian might be drawn to as long as they were presented as spiritual exercises to draw closer to Christ and to gain practical solutions in ones spiritual life.

**Focus on abiding.** One of the key Christian disciplines that has tended to be de-emphasized in modern Christianity is abiding in Christ. Perhaps it is because abiding can be so mystical. Postmodern Christians will probably warm up immediately to the concept of Christ's spiritual control and guidance in our life as we abide in Him and He abides in us.

**Focus on prayer.** Prayer is something that many non-Christian and new Christian postmodernists can relate to, after all, it is highly spiritual behavior. It would probably be wise to emphasize fully orbbed Christian prayer. By this I mean that in modern Christianity we have tended to focus on supplication, thanksgiving and confession; down played worship and almost completely ignored meditative prayerful Bible study, Christian meditation, ecstatic prayer and prayers of silence. Some of our Pentecostal brothers have tended to focus on one specific style of ecstatic prayer (tongues) at the expense of other forms of prayer. We all have tended to do much more talking than listening in prayer. Postmodernists would be just as drawn to these other forms of prayer as they would supplication or tongues.

**Find ways to express Spanishness.** To be Spanish is to be Catholic. It will be hard to convince most Spaniards of anything else. The older a Spaniard is the more likely they are to hold to their Catholicness. Until we give them reason to believe otherwise they will view Protestantism as noise to be turned off. But if we can invite them to Church sponsored events that are very Spanish they will feel more at home. These need to be celebrations or social activities not teaching services. It becomes our burden to show one can be an Evangelical Christian and still be very Spanish. One way might be to avoid the words Protestant and Evangelical. We have the right to use the word Christian just as much as Catholics do. Use of this term, if done well becomes inclusive rather than exclusive. This may avoid an unnecessary barrier. We need to remember that any negative statements about the Catholic Church will not only be seen as intolerance but as anti-Spanish. We need to look for ways to build bridges of friendship to the Catholic Church without losing our own spiritual heritage; particularly to those in the Catholic Church who are truly born

again. This does not mean we are in agreement with all the doctrines of the Catholic Church, but that we are trying to avoid a serious strategic barrier to the preaching of the gospel.

**Find ways to express culture.** Spaniards are very interested in their own cultural/historical/literary heritage. This is probably true of other expressions of European postmodernism. We might explore different ways of expressing and celebrating Spanish cultural and artistic events in the name of Jesus.

**Offer shalom.** Postmodernists are looking for wholeness, particularly emotional and spiritual wholeness. The biblical word for this is shalom. This is what Jesus is offering his people. This would be a concept that postmodernists could warm up to.

**Meet real needs in the community and the world.** Postmodernists want mini solutions to real problems. They are much more likely to warm up to giving blood at the blood mobile than to a march against world hunger. We can use these small events to make contact and to build a reputation as spiritual, socially conscious people. We can invite them to give clothing to our clothing drive to clothe Rumanian immigrants. We can bring the blood mobile to our Church and invite them to give blood too. Ask them if they would like to contribute to our relief aid to help flood victims. Offer to provide written financial accountability because they see the organized church as dishonest. Offer to allow one of the members of the community to help in the finance committee to show accountability. Ask them to participate with us in these events at almost every level. We don't need to lose control of these events, but we can offer opportunities to rub shoulders with some gracious people who know Jesus. But don't set up a stand and preach the gospel to them. It will be noise and they will turn you and it off, perhaps permanently.

**Present the Bible as a spiritual book where we can encounter Jesus.** It will be hard for a postmodernist to relate to the Bible as merely a book of doctrine, although it is that. It is also much more. The Bible is the spiritual book where the postmodern Christian can encounter the Triune God and abide in Jesus as they meditate and pray through scripture.

**Talk about love, joy, peace, patience...** The fruit of the Spirit is the emotional result of shalom. To tell a postmodernist that to be a follower of Jesus is to begin to experience these things should be very attractive. Furthermore these should be the parameters for the postmodern Christian worship service. Modernism focused on teaching in corporate service, postmodernism should focus on experiencing the fruit of the Spirit in community. A corporate worship service should be where one experiences love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness all done with a spirit of self control. Teaching comes in brief focused practical homilies, in small groups and particularly in discipleship relationships.

**Emphasize the community of believers.** Postmodernists like community, they like relationship and they like events. While they are highly personal in their desire for personal spirituality they can also find the community of the saints to be attractive if that community is done in a postmodern way. They will also tend to absorb the values of a community they identify with. See above.

**Don't be afraid of symbols, mystery and metaphors.** As modernists we have stripped the Church of much of its symbols, mystery and metaphors. We do this because we have a scientific mindset. Many postmodernists will warm up to symbol, mystery and metaphor.

We can do this both in our introducing them to Jesus and in our corporate celebrations of worship.

**Avoid spiritual language.** One of the quickest ways to turn off a non-Christian postmodernist is to try to communicate to them in modern Christian jargon.

**Avoid quoting the Bible.** This does not mean avoid the Bible. The word of God is living and active and sharper than any sword. It can cut right through to the thoughts and intentions of peoples hearts. If we really believe this, we can allow it to do its work with out citing verse references or quoting the Bible in obvious ways. Just let it be what it is, the supernatural Word of God. Postmodernist non-Christians do not have a lot of faith in the Bible, but the incredible wisdom and power of the contents of the Bible may powerfully impact them. New postmodern Christians will need to be lovingly introduced to this powerful, spiritual book, filled with the very wisdom of God Himself. (See: Present the Bible as a spiritual book where we can encounter Jesus.)

**Avoid being doctrinal.** If there is a quicker way to turn off a modernist than using jargon it is to become doctrinal. To them it is just noise, noise, noise. That does not mean that they do not need doctrine or that they can never learn doctrine. Rather it means that that they need to learn doctrine as they study and meditate on the scriptures, meditate on the creeds and particularly as they are personally disciplined in their spiritual walk as they deal with practical spiritual issues.

**Avoid coercion.** Postmodernists do not like to be coerced. They view being preached at, as being coerced. Their view of organized religion is one of abuse of power, force and coercion. Ministry needs to come from relationship. This means in towns were there is no gospel witness, strategies may need to be explored to send Christians to live there rather than trying to start churches by proclamation of the gospel. This will have little success and further it would probably brand even the new Christians as “noise” to be avoided rather than establishing an effective beachhead.

**Avoid strong doctrinal teaching in the service.** (See Avoid Being Doctrinal). Rather keep it focused on practical life issues.

**Avoid Being Critical.** Postmodernists do not like intolerance and do like inclusion. To criticize other expression of the Christian faith or other religions is highly counter productive. They may not like them either but they will defend their right to personal opinion and lifestyle etc. It is best to find ways to say things as positively as possible. It would be better to be evasive than to be critical though better still to be open and positive.

## **Postmodern Christianity**

Just as the shift from ancient Christianity to modern Christianity was inevitable, so is the shift from modern to postmodern. Postmodern Christianity will happen anyway, in fact, it already is happening. It will have its own strengths and weaknesses. It would be best to reflect strategically now to help the building of this postmodern Christianity and help it avoid inherent weaknesses. We need to think about the legacy we are going to leave the postmodern Church. We don't want to have a destructive split in the church like at the beginning of the modern era. We have a lot to offer postmodern Christianity but we also need to realize that this cultural shift in Western society is so profound that we will not be able to hold it back any more than ancient Christians could hold back the Reformation. Even less so, because we will be unwilling to use violent tactics to stop postmodern

Christianity. Their new wine won't fit in our wine skins, but we can help them become salt and light as they begin to minister to a culture we will never completely understand.

First we need to recognize that postmodern Christianity, if nurtured well, can have some tremendous strengths.

## **Potential Strengths of the Postmodernist Church**

- **Strong tendency toward personal spirituality.** If properly disciplined postmodern Christians could avoid one of the unhealthy tendencies of late Ancient Christianity and Modern Christianity, being nominal Christians. Postmodernists want a personal spirituality not just a doctrine or rites that guarantee access to heaven.
- **The potential to become deep, thoughtful Christians.** Because of this desire for personal spirituality, there can be a tendency to direct them to a deep walk with Jesus. I suspect that postmodern Christians will have a stronger tendency to desire and tolerate much more intimate and directive forms of discipleship.
- **Strong emphasis on abiding.** One of the weaknesses of modern Evangelicalism has been its lack of emphasis on abiding. The emphasis on abiding in the early church was replaced by doctrinal knowledge in the modern church. Since for many modern Christians maturity meant doctrinal/theological/biblical knowledge, there was much less emphasis placed on actually developing an intimate relationship with Jesus, or intimacy was redefined as knowing and living biblical doctrine. I suspect that postmodern Christians will be less likely to fall into this weakness.
- **Stronger tendency to live out their faith in society.** Postmodernists want to make a difference in the problems they see around them. They will be much more socially conscious than modern Evangelicals have tended to be. This gives them many more ministry opportunities and allows them new ways to be salt and light in their communities.
- **Desire for community.** If church life is developed with postmodernists in mind they may very well have more of a desire to express body life than have modernists. This is because while looking for individual spirituality they desire community. They would also have less of a tendency to dichotomize their "church life" from their "secular life". However, if church practice was formed along modernist lines they would have very little desire to attend church activities.
- **Less tendency to fight with other Christians over doctrine.** One of the sad legacies of modern Christianity is our tendency to fight with our brethren over minute doctrinal issues. Of course, each of us feels that the issues we fight over are major. This is because of our modernist desire to have exclusive truth. In doing this we have sometimes strained out gnats and swallowed the camel of Jesus' desire and prayer for His Church to be one. I don't foresee the postmodernist Church becoming one worldwide organization, but I do see them being much more tolerant of doctrinal differences, and much more willing to live in peace with each other.
- **More openness to the realities of spiritual warfare.** Postmodernists will be more open to the realities of the spiritual realm. Some modernist Christians have struggled

with this even though it is a clearly biblical issue because their modern mindset would not allow them to accept what they could not measure or sense with their five senses.

## Potential Weaknesses of the Postmodern Church

- Like many human situations the postmodernists greatest strengths can be their greatest weaknesses. The very things that bode well for the emerging expression of the Christian faith also have the seeds of destruction sown within it.
- **Desire for individual spirituality.** There may very well be a strong tendency to seek individual spirituality without real biblical and doctrinal moorings. This is an incredible danger. Our postmodern brethren may have the tendency to be like the Children of Israel in the time of the Judges, everyone doing what was right in their own eyes. One of the great legacies we have to give our brethren is well thought out biblical theology. In other words, doctrine. This is the very thing they are going to want to resist. We need to find ways to give them biblical parameters without expecting them to be doctrinaire.
- **Desire for individual truth.** This is very similar to what is mentioned above. Postmodernists may very well have the tendency to say it is truth for me so that is good enough. Yet Jesus is the embodiment of truth, and if we are not connected with that Truth we have no truth at all.
- **Potential to get enamored with spirituality itself.** It would be very easy for postmodernists to get excited about the peripheral issues of spirituality and miss the biblical Jesus. To miss the biblical Jesus is to miss the real Jesus. They will need to learn that it is not prayer that is important, nor the feelings of peace that comes with prayer, it is connecting with the real God of the Universe and developing an abiding relationship with Him that is important.
- **Tendency to not reflect biblically about social issues.** It would be very easy for postmodernists to make social stands without reflecting biblically and asking the question, what has God already said about this?
- **Potential to be pragmatic.** Practicality is good; pragmatism without biblical reflection is dangerous.
- **Tendency to hold personal doctrine above biblical doctrine.** Postmodernists may tend to say that Jesus told them something in prayer so it doesn't matter what the Bible says. Or they may make decisions based on their own non-biblical values without significant biblical reflection; both are dangerous.

I am sure I have not touched on all of the potential strengths of the postmodern church, nor have I plumbed the depths of where the devil may try to steer them off course. But I am convinced that postmodernism is here and it offers a great opportunity and challenge to modernists who want to evangelize postmodernists. I am also convinced that the postmodern church will exist, in fact it already does. Jesus promised that the gates of hell would not withstand us. There will always be a Church to be breaking down the gates of hell. But that Church may not look like what we are used to.

Two examples of emerging postmodernism are the seeker churches in the United States and the Alpha Movement coming out of England. Saddleback Community Church in

Saddleback, CA is the second largest church in the United States. It has specifically designed its models to reach postmodernists. In 1980 Rick Warren, the pastor of Saddleback started with a church of three: himself, his wife and his daughter. By the end of 1999 Saddleback was a church of 19,000 people and claims a Christian community of over 25,000. Warren has specifically designed his strategy for conversion growth, not transfer growth.

The Alpha Movement coming out of Holy Trinity Church Brompton, England has some very healthy signs of life. Their Alpha Group model is attracting new believers in great numbers on both sides of the Atlantic. What is clear is that both models are attracting postmodernists in tremendous numbers. Some Evangelical Anglican churches in England are packed to standing room only with postmodernists seeking and finding Jesus. The same can be said for the seeker churches in the U.S., especially Saddleback.

There are at least two movements in Spain which have intentionally adapted their models to postmodernism. The Asembleas Cristianas denomination founded by Manolo Espejo has grown to 14 of churches and four mission points in 22 years. The mother church in Jerez de la Frontera has 575 adult members and 130 children. Manolo was the first person to explain to us the strategic importance of postmodernism. The Amistad Cristiana movement founded by Gregorio Jacob has also intentionally adapted its strategies to postmodernist realities. God has blessed both of these Christian movements with significant growth in what has traditionally been considered a resistant culture; how exciting.

God is at work among the postmodernists and it will become our responsibility to understand what He is doing among them so we can be used by the Holy Spirit to do the same in Spain. I do not mean by this that we should copy the Saddleback model or the Alpha model. I mean we should understand what they are doing to minister to postmodernist and why. We need to understand the principles, not copy the forms. We need to understand the postmodernists, and in specific the Spanish postmodernist and offer to them the blessed truth of the gospel in a way they can understand so they don't turn off the noise. We need to give them opportunities to worship and fellowship in ways that minister to their souls. We need to make sure they are discipled in ways that help them develop a deep and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ. And we need to leave them a legacy that helps them along their way to a powerful, spiritual and biblical faith without causing them to stumble over our own cultural issues. Frankly, I'm excited by the challenge.

## **Annotated Bibliography**

1. Jimmy Long, *Generating Hope A Strategy for Reaching the Postmodern Generation* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1997).

Long uses the analogy of the two types of winds encountered in a hurricane as an analogy for understanding Generation X. The intense winds inside the hurricane are Generation X, the steering current that determines where the hurricane will go is postmodernism. Long gives a sociological Analysis of the Church, Generation X and postmodernism. He gives a theological foundation for dealing with Generation X and by proxy postmodernists. Finally he gives a framework for ministry in dealing with Generation X. He has an extensive bibliography.

2. George G. Hunter III, *How to Reach Secular People* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992).

Hunter uses the term “secular people” but he is touching on the issues of postmodernism. He wrote his book in 1992 before the term postmodernism became readily known. Hunter discusses the broad issues of western cultural change through six watershed events in the last 550 years, and how that affected the Church. He profiles secular people, gives themes and strategies for reaching them, talks about communication with them, and discusses what kind of Christians and churches reach them. Hunter also has an extensive bibliography.

3. *Mars Hill Review* (Bainbridge Island, WA: No. 12, Fall 1998), Dan Allender, Ed.

This entire issue is dedicated to postmodernism. It has eleven essays and studies on postmodernism’s encounter with Christianity. These issues touch on presenting the gospel in postmodernism, the philosophy of postmodernism, postmodern hermeneutic, postmodern counseling and theology. The cross-disciplinary essays give a fuller understanding of the profundity of the cultural shift from modernism to postmodernism. Brief annotated bibliographies in the margin.

4. Dr. Mary Klages, *Postmodernism*  
(<http://www.colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/pomolhtml>).

This is a five-page essay on postmodernism as a literary phenomenon and as a sociological phenomenon. I have quoted extensively from this article.

5. Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.1996).

This is one of the best books written on postmodernism from a Christian perspective. Grenz clearly understands postmodernism, its dangers and its potential advantages for Christianity. He does not fall into the trap of condemning postmodernism because it is different. I suggest reading the introduction through the end of chapter 3 then read chapter 7 which is the last chapter. The section in the middle is only those who are highly interested in a history of philosophy and more specifically the philosophy of postmodernism.

6. Gene Edward Veith, Jr, *Postmodern Times, A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.1994).

In my opinion this book is not to be recommended. Veith has a good grasp of postmodernism but fails on two strategic points. He fails to see the modernist tendencies of evangelicalism and fundamentalism and therefore fails to grasp why postmodernist are reacting negatively to us. He only sees liberal theology as modernist, which it is, but fails to see his own philosophical foundations. Secondly, he attacks postmodernism because it is different than his own worldview. This is reactionary rather than helpful. We can not stop postmodernism, we must learn to have a vibrant, spiritual and biblical Christianity within postmodernism without accepting its counter biblical tendencies. It is better to read Grenz who did not make these strategic mistakes.

7. Alister E. McGrath, *Intellectuals Don’t Need God and Other Modern Myths*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan.: Zondervan Publishing House.1993).

McGrath's book is on apologetics. He has a brief section in Chapter six *A Clash of Worldviews* that deals with postmodernism. He makes a good point that in dealing with postmodernists "we must adopt a tactical approach in order to gain a strategic advantage." (page 177). He goes on to explain correctly that with postmodernists it is not wise to start with doctrinal truth but to introduce it later. His weakness is that as an apologist he still fights the battle by arguing about what is true and right. Most postmodernists would turn this off as noise. He seems to have not yet grasped that this type of argument is almost always counterproductive with postmodernists. See also his section on "The New Age" in the same chapter. New Age is religion based on a postmodernist worldview. He is actually more helpful in his comments on how to speak to New Age believers than when he talks about postmodernism.

8. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1989).

Newbigin thinks clearly and very well about postmodernism. However he never actually uses the word in his book. Instead he uses pluralism or pluralist society. Nevertheless, he is talking about postmodernism. He actually sets up a defense of the reasonableness of postmodern understanding of reality, then uses postmodern argument to defend why postmodernists have the worldview they have. He does not however buy into postmodernism wholeheartedly. He understands its strengths and weaknesses and deals with them. This is an excellent book.

9. Antonio Cruz, *Postmodernidad*, (Terrassa, España, Editorial CLIE. 1996).

This is the only book I know about that is written from the Spanish Christian perspective on the issue of postmodernism and its potential ministry ramifications. Cruz does a good job of outlining the basic issues of postmodernism but his suggestions for what to do about it tend to come from a modernist perspective.

10. Francisco Andrés Orizo, *Sistemas de valores en la España de los 90*, (Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas. 1996).

Francisco Orizo is a non-Evangelical Spanish sociologist who is participating in an ongoing world wide sociological research. He has analyzed the Spanish portion of the research and also compared it to European wide trends. He clearly talks about Spain being postmodern, explains in minute detail what that means. He talks for example of the spiritual longing of postmodern Spaniards and their feelings and for the most part rejection of the Catholic Church. One interesting statement he makes is that Spain appears to have gone from a "traditional" (read premodern) worldview to a postmodern worldview without really going through modernism. This is an excellent source of data on the Spanish sociological condition.

11. Francisco Andrés Orizo, *Los nuevos valores de los españoles*, (Madrid, Fundación Santa María. 1991).

This is a synthesis of the ongoing European research that Orizo is participating in, focused on Spain. It is of an earlier date than *Sistemas de valores en la España de los 90* and he was not yet ready to declare Spain "postmodern" although he indicated that it seemed that Spain was going that direction and time would tell. In his work five years later in *Sistemas de valores en la España de los 90* he clearly states that Spain is a postmodern society. His analysis for Fundación Santa María tends to have a Catholic point of view.

12. Juan del Pino Artacho and Eduardo Bericat Alastuey, *Valores sociales en la cultura andaluza, Encuesta Mundial de Valores. Andalucía 1996*. (Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas. 1998).

This is part of the same worldwide study as *Sistemas de valores en la España de los 90*. It is focused on Andalucía. It is helpful in that it shows that postmodernism in Spain is not just an urban phenomena but has reached conservative rural Spain.

- 13 Andrés Tornos and Rosa Aparicio, *¿Quién es creyente en España hoy?* (Madrid, PPC, Editorial y \_Distribuidora. SA. 1995).

A great sociological work to help one understand the Spanish view of the Catholic Church both from an insiders point of view and from the outside. Of special interest was the table on page 39, which describes four types of Catholic Christians: Christians looking for an existential adjustment, Moral Christians, interdependent Christianity, and vocational Christianity. They define these terms and then show why each is being rejected by the Spanish society at large. The most strategic insight is that while “vocational Christians” who have found a true spirituality are respected and even admired the Spanish society at large feels that these spiritual people are somehow so special as to be beyond reach for the average person. This should encourage us that if we can show that we can be truly spiritual and at the same time normal people we will have a hearing from many in Spanish society.

- 14 José María Mardones, *Para comprender las nuevas formas de la religión, La reconfiguración postcristiana de la religión*. (Estella, Navarra Editorial Verbo Divino. 1998).

A sociological work written for a Catholic audience. Nevertheless, it has a lot to say about why new religious movements are taking hold in Spain because of postmodernism (called postchristianity). After reading this book I had the strong impression that we are living in an hour of opportunity for the Evangelical Church in Spain if we can learn to minister to Spanish postmodernists in postmodernist ways. He is saying in much more detail what this paper has set out to say.

Other books on my postmodernist reading list not yet read:

Craig A. Loscalzo, *Apologetic Preaching, Proclaiming Christ to a Postmodern World*. (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2000).

Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm, *Christian Apologetics in a Postmodern World*, (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 1995).