

*WitnessKit 3*  
*God And Religions*

Class 1  
Why Study  
Postmodernism?  
Pitfalls of Postmodernism

# Psalm 100:

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

Serve the LORD with gladness.

Come before His presence with singing.

Know ye that the LORD He is God.

It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves.

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving

and into His courts with praise.

Be thankful unto Him and bless His name.

For the LORD is good.

His mercy is everlasting

and His truth endureth to all generations.

# Textbooks for the First 13 Classes

## Lesson 1 through 5

- Dr. Gene Edward Veith's *Postmodern Times*  
Crossway Books, 1994.

## Lesson 6 through 13

- Dr. Francis Schaeffer's *The God Who Is There*, found in *The Francis Schaeffer Trilogy*  
or available separately.

# Why Study Postmodernism?

1. We are more familiar with Modernism—because Postmodernism is newer.
2. Postmodernism is a worldview base for institutions like academia and the media, with far-reaching influence.
3. Reaching Postmodernists with Biblical truth is a new challenge, and important for the future of Christianity.

# People are often influenced

By the worldviews around them...

- WITHOUT understanding the implications of those worldviews.
- Often a “new and progressive” worldview will present itself as an exciting way to overcome difficulties from the past.
- It may appear to do away with superstition.
- It may appear more tolerant or more scientific or more intelligent or more trendy or more fun in some way than traditional views.

# Respect

- People tend to respect the study and effort and time required for advanced degrees. That respect influences their other attitudes and beliefs.
- The university process is a gateway to important career paths. The professors with their advanced degrees are gatekeepers.
- Students tend to respect the knowledge of their professors.

# Respect

- Once students find jobs and are out in the “real world,” they may unlearn some of their university education, or they may respect the learning of those who made it through the graduate school process even more.
- Academia is very influential on the future of the culture. Their current influence on students will be most visible in about 20 years, when the students reach places of leadership within their careers.

# In the 1960s

Liberalism became the slant of the universities, and liberalism had a profound influence. Students of the 1960s have become leaders in their respective fields. But liberalism is not static. Portions of what was liberal in the early 1960s would be conservative today. Sometimes people use the word *leftist* to describe the drift farther to the left of current liberalism.

The media, which spreads ideas throughout the culture, tends to reflect the liberalism of the past, and trends parallel to liberalism's current direction.



# Not a Static Situation



Words like “liberal” and “conservative” don’t tell us very much, because they drift in meaning.

Worldviews tell us more. The next slide shows us the common worldviews in the universities among the professors.

Current worldview study will gain in importance as time goes by. The Professors influence the future even more than the present.

# Four Worldviews in the Universities

Modernism	Postmodernism	Biblical Theism, (within the worldview of Enlightenment Theism)	Islamic Theism
Most common worldview (by far) among professors	Second most common worldview among professors—and taking over in some locations	Very Rare worldview among professors	Fairly common minority view among professors

# Liberal or Conservative?

Where does the word “liberalism” fit among those categories?

Modernism is one form of liberalism, in denial of anything but physical reality—particularly hostile to family-values conservatism. It sometimes is more libertarian in orientation, in fields like economics. In the fields such as engineering, it may be conservative.

Postmodernism is a more radical form of liberalism, often espoused by the social sciences and humanities.

# Liberal or Conservative?

- Enlightenment Theism and Biblical Theism tend to be open to family-values conservatism, but may be less prone toward economic conservatism.
- Islamic theism in academia tends to be politically active toward foreign policy more than fitting a typical “liberal/conservative” category. It is likely to be political in a **postmodernist direction** because of postmodernism’s **cultural-group politics**.
- These worldview categories tell us more about how academics think than broad labels like liberal or conservative.

# Enlightenment Theism

Biblical Theism is a category within the worldview of Enlightenment Theism. Other viewpoints within Enlightenment Theism give greater weight to historical tradition than to the Bible.

We have studied (in the first *WitnessKit* course) reasons to believe the Bible really is a book from God. Evangelicals place the Bible above all other sources for spiritual truth.

The rational framework of Enlightenment Theism is good for Bible study, as long as you are open to an open universe, where God can interact with reality.

# Enlightenment Theism

- **Enlightenment Theism** formerly was the dominant view in the universities of the United States. However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, much of the university climate shifted to a **Modernist** worldview, and in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to a **Postmodernist** worldview. Even professors who claim Christianity as their religion may actually hold either a Modernist or Postmodernist worldview, **because they view their religion through the lens of their worldview**, rather than allowing their worldview to be framed by their religion.

# Religious Colleges

- Religious colleges are not exempt from this problem, because often at most they require a professor to sign a statement of faith. **If** the professor's worldview is Modernism or Postmodernism, he or she may sign such a statement without meaning the same thing an Enlightenment Theist would mean by the words. This is very confusing to parents of Christian College students.
- So everyone needs to understand the worldviews in order to understand what the professors actually intend to teach.

# Professors teach worldviews.

- Even though professors teach specific subjects, scholarship in their own major field is most often based upon either Modernism or Postmodernism. The **framework** that students receive in their studies is often one of those worldviews.
- Professors are allowed to promote a mechanistic view of reality, consistent with Modernism, or a subjective multi-truth approach to reality in Postmodernism. They are not generally allowed to promote Enlightenment Theism, except in private universities.



# The Bible has STAYING POWER.

***“God’s truth endures to all generations.”***

- A Biblical worldview will have a balance and a sense of coherent, integral reality that the other worldviews cannot reach
- BECAUSE...
- The other worldviews are oblivious of OBJECTIVE spiritual truth. They need it.
- Objective spiritual truth is part of reality.
- It is the most important part.

# Truth matters.

- A worldview that denies the existence of truth will present itself as tolerant of all views, and therefore, helpful and progressive. (All of us need to be more tolerant of others, and more patient, and more loving. So this sounds like an idea whose time has come.)

# Truth matters.

- However, such a worldview will have *unexpected problems*.

We want to study worldviews and understand the problems with the novel and righteous-sounding aspects, when the foundation of the worldview is shaky.

# Postmodernism has captured the

**Hearts** of university students because it appears tolerant and fun.

It appears **to correct serious errors** in American history and to provide a framework for cooperation and consensus. It appears to prevent mistreatment of minority groups, whether racial or religious or sexual.

It holds this goal so strongly as **to define right and wrong** by this rule: Tolerance is always right. Intolerance is always wrong.

# Postmodernism's Rule: "Tolerance is always right. Intolerance is always wrong."

- This rule is used **to define evil**. Any whiff of intolerance becomes a reason to stop listening. Bigotry is evil. (Thus an ATTITUDE becomes the basis for defining right and wrong. Attitudes are subjective and poorly defined.)
- Problem: Postmodernists often suspect intolerance where there is none. Because the worldview rejects overarching principles, it fails to balance **principles** in assessing **attitudes**.
- Modernists and Enlightenment Theists have not quite grasped the problem here, and it has major ramifications among young adults.

# If Postmodernism is Fun and Corrects Serious Problems, What's Not to Like...

About Postmodernism?

# Postmodernism's capture of the heart:

- Mistreatment of minority groups is associated with conservatism in the minds of postmodernists. Biblical Christianity is associated as well. This is a false association. Biblical Christianity is the major source of the idea of individual human equality in this world. It was no coincidence that abolitionists were Bible-believing Christians, and many of the early suffragettes were, too.

# Postmodernism's capture of the heart:

- The sins of the “Jim Crow generation” are being visited upon us in this false association. The Jim Crow era defined people, **not** as individuals and equals before God, but as **members of groups**. The groups were treated in a hierarchical manner, and with severe intolerance.
- The Epistle of Saint James in the New Testament treats this as a serious sin. Showing partiality is seriously wrong before God. God does not show partiality.



# Jim Crow Sin

- The problem was not with a Biblical worldview, but rather was a SIN problem.
- Postmodernism does **not** correct this sin problem—even though **it wishes** to correct it. We must study carefully to understand why.
- Postmodernism's wish to correct this problem taps into the idealism of many young adults—and they respond by redefining right and wrong along postmodernist lines, without realizing the pitfalls.

# Postmodernism's capture of the heart:

- We all want to correct those kinds of errors. It is right to want to correct those errors.
- Biblical Christianity has a basis for making corrections. Postmodernism has no standards to follow. Arbitrary standards can make things worse, **unintentionally**.
- Biblical Christianity has boundaries around the kinds of actions that are acceptable toward making corrections. Postmodernism again has no standards to set limits on the methods to produce change.

# The Church

- The organized church has responded to the rise of Postmodernism by trying to focus on emotions and experiences to reach young people. Postmodernism encourages people to be emotionally led.
- This is problematic because of the **redefinition of right and wrong**. Rational thought is necessary to understand where the **boundaries** around right and wrong actually are. Emotions can be used to stir up righteous indignation over intolerance, without realizing where other moral standards are **necessary** to consider.

# The appearance of postmodernism's goodness

Is misleading and superficial, because the foundational principles of postmodernism are so shaky.

Because the worldview of postmodernism denies the existence of objective truth, it cannot tell the difference between good and evil ideas. It fails to fulfill its promise because it is flawed at its core.

People often choose postmodern methods and beliefs superficially, but **getting to the heart of the matter** is a better way to decide.

# Postmodernism claims the moral high ground.

- Because it claims the moral high ground, it is a serious challenge to Biblical Theism. It is the ongoing trend in churches that have abandoned the Bible. Entire denominations have succumbed. (Denominational labels may not reveal which churches have crossed over to Postmodernism. We need to be able to recognize it when we encounter it.)
- Postmodernism has to be addressed carefully enough to reveal where the moral high ground actually is found.

# We want to understand

How a Christian, and especially a Biblically Christian, worldview compares to Postmodernism.

In the second part of the course, we will see the history of ideas within churches. That will show how some denominations switched away from an Enlightenment Theism worldview, so that the word “Christian” has become poorly defined.

# The Textbook for Postmodernism is Dr. Veith's *Postmodern Times*.

- The book is difficult. The slides will clarify its ideas. Read the chapters more than once to grasp the meaning. Outline the chapters if that helps. (I had to outline them to be able to fit the ideas together. It is a challenging study, but so rewarding!)

# *Postmodern Times*

- The book is difficult, but it is very worthwhile.
- Many of the journalists and media spokespersons we hear on television are postmodernists.
- They do not understand a Biblical worldview at all. Often they extrapolate what we say to things we do not believe at all.
- Often we do not understand what they are saying, or the implications of what they are saying.



# Long ago, honors high school English was the jumping-off point.

- We studied philosophical existentialism in English class. We also studied Greek classics.

The English teacher was delighted with the classics, because they led toward the idea of universals. She wanted us to believe in universal principles in order to maintain rights and freedoms. She was correct about that goal. The founders of our nation read the classics, for the same reason.

- The class did not respond quite as she expected.

# Existential

- The word existential is used in more than one way. Sometimes it is used to mean “survival” because an *existential threat* is a threat to survival.
- Philosophical existentialism is a branch of philosophy dealing with the sense of existence and personhood—generally acting as a philosophical bridge between Modernism and Postmodernism.

# Existential

- Philosophical existentialism uses irrational experience to establish meaning and value—
- and it was the theory behind much experimental drug use in the 1960s—as a means of finding meaning—
    - ▣ which could not actually work for that purpose.
  - Where disastrous consequences stopped the advocacy of drug use, the advocacy of “emotional experience” as validation did not stop.

# People reacted to the studies in English class in different ways.

- Some people trudged through the material without understanding the themes or without talking about them. Some recognized the value of universals. A few bright people UNACCOUNTABLY ran the opposite direction from the teacher's wishes. They were very pleased with the existentialist ideas, and adopted that perspective. They often jumped into recreational pleasure-seeking along with that perspective. They abandoned what worked for things that could not work and that had the potential to destroy their future.

# People reacted to the studies in different ways.

- I could not understand why. I could not see how they could go from ordinary real life to prefer such an odd point of view—validating their worth by irrational means! What an odd and foolish idea.
- Why did they reject universals? Why were universals so obviously needed, and obviously real and workable, but not needed at all in their perspective?
- At the time, I did not know how the ideas about “irrational meaning” would change the culture.

# People reacted to the studies in different ways.

- Philosophical existentialism seemed unimportant—a passing fad doomed to failure like living in communes—also going on at that time. Surely, it was blatantly obvious to everyone that it could not work!
- Wrong!
- Existentialist ideas took over academia—especially the humanities and social sciences. Those ideas have trickled out and permeated the culture ever since. They have congealed into the new worldview called Postmodernism.

# What is the turning point?

- Philosophical Existentialism is a turning point between Modernism and Postmodernism.
- Modernism embodies enlightenment rationalism, scientific fact, technology, and progress in the comforts of life, such as air conditioning. It tends to downplay emotion. In style, it is sleek and cool with minimal frills.
- Postmodernism embraces emotion and denies the value of technology and the existence of objective truth. In style it is eclectic, blending styles from many eras, focused on emotional impact.

# Secularism

- Secularism usually expresses either Modernism or Postmodernism. Modernists often do not understand postmodernists, and vice versa.
- Some of the mixed messages we receive in a secular society reflect those misunderstandings.
- In medicine, a Modernist will view advances in scientific techniques as progress. A Postmodernist will view importation of Chinese traditional cures as progress.
- Sometimes secularism expresses Modernism in science and Postmodernism in the humanities.



# Secularism

- Both sets of secularists tend to view a Biblical worldview as a threat, because they do not understand it. The culture has drifted so far from Enlightenment Theism that people have no idea what we mean by what we say.
- Because they view Enlightenment Theism as a threat, they often wish to silence it.

# Secularism

- They tend to associate it with radical extremism rather than historic freedoms.
- They tend to hear a “down home accent” in what we say, and assume “ignorance.”
- They think the university education did not “take,” like a vaccination gone wrong, if someone graduates believing the Bible.

# One reason for doing this study

Is to think about and become able TO EXPLAIN our worldview to secularists.

- Our freedom from persecution may well depend upon being able to explain it.
- Their freedom from eternal condemnation may well depend upon our being able to explain it.
- Their need is greater than ours. If we love them, we will try to meet that need.

# Example Ideologies in Each Worldview: Diversity exists in each general viewpoint.

## Modernists

Enlightenment  
Rationalists  
Secular Humanists  
Economic Marxists  
Utilitarians  
Neo-Darwinists in the  
Bio Sciences  
Materialists in the  
Physical Sciences

## Postmodernists

Romantics  
New Age Adherents  
Cultural Marxists  
Wiccans  
Advocates of Eastern  
Religions as Healthful  
“Holistic Medicine”  
Practitioners  
Social Scientists

# Let's Begin!

*Postmodern Times, A Christian Guide  
to Contemporary Thought and  
Culture,*

By Gene Edward Veith, Crossway  
Books, 1994

# Everyone Should Recognize These Pitfalls in Postmodernism

## Pitfalls in Postmodernism

Because Postmodernism denies the existence of universals:

1. **It leads to competition without communication.**
2. It leads to fragmentation of society.
3. It prevents unity needed for facing common enemies in war.
4. It uses Cultural Marxism as an operational methodology.
5. It denies common ground for setting priorities.

Postmodernism leads to competition  
without communication.

Postmodernism denies BOTH  
the existence of objective truth  
AND  
the existence of overarching principles that  
unify humanity.

Instead, individuals are **defined by and  
bound to** their cultural and language  
groups.

Postmodernists call this a “prison house of  
language.”

Postmodernism leads to competition  
without communication.

Communication outside the group and  
across groups is considered  
impossible because of having no  
common frame of reference.

If communication is believed  
impossible, attempts to find a way to  
communicate will be weak or absent.



# If no communication is possible

And no overarching truths exist, then

Each group becomes a part of a colossal power game to gain rights.

But the power game has no umpire. It doesn't even have rules.

If no overarching truths exist to properly set limits on the ruthlessness of the power game, how can one group tell another group when they are being unreasonable?

# Or wicked?

- This inability to see limits on the power game is a VERY SERIOUS problem within postmodernism.
- Often one will hear postmodernists making excuses for violence when a group thinks its rights have been violated.
- Group opinion trumps ideas of good and evil.
- And nothing can be resolved by communication—only by power—in the Postmodernist view.

# Imagine a game

1. Where one side has fixed rules
2. And the other team can make up its own rules as the game progresses.
3. No rules are allowed that apply to both teams.
4. And the game has no umpire.

What would you predict the team with its own rule-making authority would do?

How would you define fair play in such a game?

How would the game end?

# In contrast,

This confusion of good and evil is not an issue in a Biblical worldview, because the good and evil are clear. Justice is based on moral universals and the value of human life and the use of proper rules that apply to all individuals equally. In a Biblical worldview it **is possible** to distinguish between individual guilt and innocence, based on overarching moral truths. Groups are responsible to respect the human rights of individuals.

Good rules exist. Truth exists. Right and wrong exist. **An Umpire exists.**

# A person can absorb postmodern

Ideas and attitudes without **being** a postmodernist – the ideas and attitudes are pervasive in our society and in the world at large.

- A Biblical worldview helps us be perceptive in the ideas we accept and the ideas we reject.
- Universities often think a Biblical worldview is a form of ignorance, and they often attempt to shift students' worldviews either to modernism or postmodernism.

# University Issues

- Students are vulnerable to these attempts, because their professors have much more education than they. The professors hold power over the students' future, both in grading and in the giving of references for future employment or graduate school admission.
- If the goal of the university is to destroy students' Biblical worldviews, we in the church **MUST** stand against that destruction.
  - Biblical apologetics is not optional. It is necessary.

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5. It denies common ground for setting priorities.

# Postmodernism leads to fragmentation of society.

If a power game has no rules and each group is expected to fight for its rights, and nobody outside the group is expected to understand the needs of the group...

Instead of fostering respect and acceptance of others, this fosters competition and ruthlessness and a refusal to reach consensus.

How CAN any two groups reach consensus if no principles exist to agree upon?

We are seeing this in the “partisan divide” in politics. One side tends toward modernism, the other toward postmodernism. The postmodernists believe they are morally right to try to silence their opposition.



# An individual who disagrees with his identity group

is often treated as an outcast.

- His ideas, which might be very helpful to the group, are cast out with him.
- “Group ideas” are set in concrete. Stereotyping follows.
- So society fragments into groups,
  - ▣ and groups fragment into insiders and outsiders.

# Why do we need universals?

- We **NEED** universals to pull us together.
- We **NEED** universals to enable us to respect each other.
- We need universals to establish a basis for listening to each other.

# We need to know that we are

- One human race, equal before God and valued for our being.
- We need unity in diversity.
- We need common principles.
- These things we need are basic assumptions of a Biblical worldview.

We are not talking about detailed rules that tell us what to eat and wear and where to go or not go, or what to own, or not own.

# Moral Universals

- Moral universals are a few simple rules that apply to everyone equally
- That establish equality of individuals
  - That require mutual respect of mutual rights.
  - Moral universals are reciprocal—they apply to everyone and help everyone.
  - They are “rules of fair play.”
  - They make the game work. Only it is not a game. We need universals much more because consensus is not a game.

# A Biblical Worldview

Sees all individuals as equal before God.

It sees all groups as valued by God, and as having boundaries imposed upon them in regard to their use of power.

Every group must meet God's  
universal moral rules

expressed in the Ten Commandments  
and the commandments to love God most of all,  
and to love one's neighbor as oneself.

When human laws are compatible with these moral universals,

Even if individuals disbelieve in the universals, they still benefit from the fairness of the society.

- When laws are not compatible with these universals, **SOMEBODY** suffers.
- The idea of inalienable rights in the US Declaration of Independence, and of the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in the Preamble to the Constitution, were based on the idea of individual human equality before God—compatible with moral universals.

# Moral Universals

- The historic laws regarding slavery and removal of Native Americans to reservations were NOT compatible with moral universals, or the Ten Commandments or the Golden Rule. The same is true of the Jim Crow laws.
- The historic problem in America was not a Biblical worldview problem. It was a sin problem.

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# Postmodernism prevents unity needed for facing common enemies in war.

If no overarching truths exist, presenting a united front against an outside aggressor has no priority.

The very idea is off the radar screen.

No truths are accepted which would unite us.

# Postmodernism prevents unity needed for facing common enemies in war.

Continuing the struggle for power for one's own group has no limits.

If one party or leader can be demonized for the purpose of gaining power for one's own group, then that is the "right" thing to do, even if it gives an advantage to outside enemies in a war.

# Postmodernism prevents unity needed for facing common enemies in war.

- If no overarching truths exist, it is hard to have confidence in “our side” in a war. After all, the other side can be viewed as **an oppressed group with its own ideas of right and wrong.**
- Who are we to say their group is mistaken?

# We need universals to survive.

- To refuse to stand unified against an outside aggressor is suicidal.
- The middle of a war is **really bad timing** for fragmentation.
- Universals that bind us together as human beings allow us to have a basis for saying a side is right or wrong in a war—
- Or to establish “areas of rightness” on a side and weigh them. **Universals place limits on the use of power.**

# Postmodernism and War

- The issue of torture is a MORAL issue, and a Golden Rule issue. Do we want our troops to experience torture if captured? NO!
- Can we stand against torture if our nation violates the cruel and unusual clause of the Bill of Rights to meet some shifting utilitarian standard? NO!
- Moral universals are necessary **to keep a peacetime perspective** in the middle of war—a perspective worth protecting. Otherwise, the whole culture deteriorates, and we all lose our rights. We have to remember **where the universals are** to find them again when a war is over.

# We need universals to survive.

- Universals allow us to recognize acts of war when they are perpetrated against us, and to know it is right to defend ourselves.
- They make it possible to tell the difference between war and crime prevention.
- They give us a basis for reasonable discussion, rather than demonization.
- They give us principles that define reasonable dissent, and a basis for proper dissent when leaders violate the principles.

# We need universals to survive.

- Universals allow us to demand less than perfection from others, because we know we make mistakes, too.
- They allow us to be LOYAL opposition, while disagreeing with leadership.
- They allow for mistakes to be corrected and unity to be restored.
- They allow for priorities to be agreed upon, even if we don't agree on everything.

# We need universals to survive.

- We can argue peacefully about principles and how to apply them.
- The acceptance of principles allows us to respect each other even when we disagree.
- Without accepting the existence of principles, we have no basis for respecting each other.



# Fragmentation

Carried to extremes  
Deteriorates into physical conflict.

Unity  
Within diversity  
Maintains human rights,  
even where there is conflict of ideas.

# At present we see fragmentation.



- We see a political system where one party tends toward Postmodernism
- and the other party tends toward Modernism.
- Individuals holding to the ideals of the founders of the country are bewildered by both sets of political party elites.

# At present we see fragmentation.

- The reader can think about which party moves toward which label. The Postmodernists are constantly afraid differences of ideas will lead to violence, so they view owning guns as immoral. The Modernists are convinced that no moral boundaries exist on the power of the state during war. The founding-principles group wonders where their country went, because nobody seems to recognize principles.

# Everyone Should Recognize These Pitfalls in Postmodernism

Because Postmodernism denies the existence of universals:

## Pitfalls in Postmodernism

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2. It leads to fragmentation of society.
3. It prevents unity needed for facing common enemies in war.
4. **It uses Cultural Marxism as an operational methodology.**
5. It denies common ground for setting priorities.

# If no universals existed,

Logic would have to be replaced. Logic requires an understanding of certain fixed principles about reality. Logic depends upon overarching principles that are true. Postmodernism attempts to replace logic.

# Because Postmodernism has no overarching universals

- It uses the Hegelian dialectic as an operational method.
- Because it views personal identity as defined by the **group**, it applies the dialectic to cultural groups.
- Classical Marxism applied the dialectic to economic groups. Postmodernism applies it to cultural groups.

# Postmodernism Has Cultural Marxism.

- Thus “**thesis plus antithesis yields synthesis**” substitutes cultural group for economic group.
- Where Modernist Marxism defined injustice as bringing the proletariat to power and getting rid of the capitalists...
- The goal of postmodernism becomes to destroy **injustice by bringing outsider groups to the center and moving center groups to the outside.**

# This is a custom fit for grievance group politics...

- The oppressed groups are defined as those without power, such as racial minorities, and women. The oppressors are defined as white males and the religious right.
- New oppressed groups are homosexuals and lesbians and transgendered persons, and also Muslims who are viewed as subject to Islamophobia by the oppressors.
- (The rest of the nation looks askance at this approach—NOT defining groups as oppressors within the USA!)



# Because of the lack of universals--

- Note that there is no real stopping point for grievance politics – new grievance groups can appear as old grievances are satisfied. And there is not any good way to define “satisfied.”
- In Postmodernist theory, the old outcomes of individual equality under the law and equality of OPPORTUNITY are not seen as goals.
- Remember that **group rights** replace individual rights in this perspective.

# Because of the lack of universals--

- Each group is seen as needing all the advantages of the former oppressors so that equality of OUTCOME is the goal.
- Redistribution of wealth is seen as a good thing, and redistribution of power is seen as a good thing, with each group making its own rules. The oppressed are supposed to become empowered group by group.
- This leads to a very real difficulty in coming to consensus...

# Everyone Should Recognize These Pitfalls in Postmodernism

## Pitfalls in Postmodernism

Because Postmodernism denies the existence of universals:

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5. **It denies common ground for setting priorities.**

# Postmodernism denies common ground for setting priorities.

- The denial of overarching truths makes setting priorities very difficult.
- If everything is just opinion and power struggle, what basis can be used to set priorities?
- Are the “right” priorities those which the most aggressive group fights for? Are trade-offs never recognized as right? Are no moral boundaries to be respected?

# Postmodernism never can be satisfied...

It sets up a system that is always in flux. If we look at an issue like gay marriage, for example, postmodernism will never be able to stop at gay marriage. It has no principles that act as a stop.

It will have to support polygamy and various multi-party arrangements. It will have to support gay adoption. It will have to support gay activists' access to public school students and gay counseling of those students.

# A Student who is unsure of his sexual identity

- Will become a target of gay activists' counseling, under the high moral ground of preventing suicide due to homophobia.
- That counseling will urge him to accept his orientation and get with the new lifestyle.

# A Student who is unsure of his sexual identity

- It will encourage him to view his parents as oppressive for wanting him to avoid homosexual experimentation.
- If gay marriage becomes legal, it will carry gay counseling into the schools with it—because it will be viewed as **morally equivalent** to heterosexual marriage.

# Postmodernism never can be satisfied...

- Postmodernism must support all the wishes of groups that are seen as oppressed and that speak the loudest for their cause.
- It will never accept rules based on moral boundaries previously understood as universal because it denies the existence of universals.
- Groups which cannot speak at all, such as the unborn, will have no rights at all.



# The irresistible force meets the immovable object...

- Postmodernism cannot even speak against a group's wishes if the group **denies human equality**, because that becomes part of their group identity, and "right for them."
- If a group perceived as oppressed has, as part of their culture, a belief in their own supremacy, Postmodernism cannot see a proper resolution. It cannot call their supremacy notion "wrong."
- **This is a tension point that may help someone go back toward universals.**

# We NEED Universals...

- The proper resolution to the supremacy notion within an “oppressed group” is to deny the validity of the supremacy notion, on the basis of universal equality of human worth.
- Universal equality of human worth is not the same as GROUP equality or equality of outcome.
- Group equality is a superficial and unworkable substitute for **individual equality.**

# Instead, Postmodernism will tend

- to view that supremacy notion as part of their culture, and *will fail to protect the persons within their culture who are being oppressed.*
- This is seen in Europe right now, as Muslims demand Shari'a law within their local living subdivisions. Shari'a does not recognize women's rights in divorce proceedings, and fails to protect women from oppressive home situations.

# A GOOD GOD

- A good God is Impartial. The Bible declares over and over that **there is no partiality with God**. That means God sees both women and men as having individual human equality before Him. Jesus treated women in that manner. Jesus treated Martha's sister Mary as having the right to listen to His teaching, and to choose the best and most important thing of seeking God for herself.
- A good God does not want women to be oppressed by men. He created us all, and He cares about all of us.

# Why is this important?



It is terribly important to recognize the difference between good and bad multiculturalism. Good multiculturalism will recognize **unity** in diversity and **will build unity** with respect for diversity and respect for individuality.

Bad multiculturalism will deny unity and individuality and will deteriorate into fragmentation and *will deny any moral boundaries for issues.*

# It is important to see through

Accusations of bigotry by persons who are postmodernists. If a postmodernist denies the existence of universals, he has no concept of **valid** principles that might guide someone to hold a different opinion from his own.

- A person acting on principle regarding an issue should not be demonized as a bigot.
- **Principled realism recognizes that principles sometimes have to be weighed.**

# Even though Postmodernism

- Appears to be on the moral high ground by speaking out against oppression and by actively seeking to prevent oppression, it has serious moral difficulties.
- Without moral universals, even oppression becomes very hard to define. It becomes a manipulative word to use against opponents rather than an expression of reality and truth.

# Here are some moral difficulties in postmodernism...

## Postmodernism's Moral Problems

1. It denies universal moral realities—such as objective truth and right and wrong.
2. It denies individual equality and responsibility in favor of group identity.
3. It denies common ground for moral discussion.
4. It accepts moral relativism.
5. It defines freedom in an amoral manner.
6. It is resistant to the idea of repentance and the possibility of individual change.



# Accepting the Human Equality as a Universal...

Is necessary for freedom.

- The principle was stated in the Declaration of Independence.
- The failure to accept this principle in our Constitution was **a moral failure**.
- We failed to live up to the principle as a nation in the matter of treatment of African Americans, and a war was required to begin to repair the damage.

# Until the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to our Constitution

Established individual equality before the law, only part of our population was free. Until the Jim Crow laws were abolished, only part of our population was free.

# Accepting Individual Equality before the law **as a Universal** is necessary for freedom.

- The Civil Rights movement continued the repairs.
- Until the damage was repaired FULLY, only part of our country was free.
- We failed to live up to the principles in other ways.
- Native Americans were sent to reservations, for example.
- Freedom for everyone requires **individual equality before the law.**
- Defining groups as **separately valued under the law** does not work. Some groups win and others lose.

# The failures of American History

- Were NOT due to the principles of Biblical Theism.
- The failures were due to DEFINING people by their GROUP identity!
- The failures were due to partial rejection of the principles of Enlightenment Theism.
- Postmodernism carries the danger of repeating those failures ***because of its insistence upon group identity.***

# Group Equality Does Not Substitute for Individual Equality under the Law.

- We have seen that group equality without universals forms a very shaky foundation because it fragments society.
- Individual equality is necessary for freedom in a united society, but it is not sufficient.
- Moral universals must also exist and be accepted.
- Moral universals imply **individual responsibility and group responsibility** as well as rights.

# Freedom of Speech is basic to democracy.

- Postmodernism sees free speech as up for grabs—It views that freedom as an opportunity to silence opponents through law. Speech codes on campus are a forewarning of things to come, as students immersed in Postmodernism become the leaders of tomorrow.
- Postmodernism sees individual religious liberty as an excuse for oppression by Christians who disapprove homosexuality. And it cannot tell the difference between disapproval and oppression.

# Because Postmodernism Denies

The Existence of Moral Universals and the Existence of Individual Identity,

- Postmodernism is a theory that undermines real freedom.
- It sees the principles in the Bill of Rights as negotiable, and as subject to change by group power struggle or legal maneuvering.
- It sees no moral responsibility on the part of competing groups, other than the responsibilities the group wants to accept.

# It defines freedom very differently.

- Freedom becomes the right of each formerly oppressed group to do as it pleases.
- Freedom becomes arbitrary as group rights take over the public square.
- Atheists have the freedom not to be offended by someone who wants to pray. The person who wants to pray does not have the free speech rights to do so.



# It defines freedom very differently.

- So freedom becomes forced silence.
- And nobody respects God. Nobody respects another's wish to seek God. The Ten Commandments make those matters a priority.
- Thus, the **freedom FROM prayer=law to silence prayer** is not compatible either
  - with the 10 Commandments
  - or the Bill of Rights.

# Freedom for Sexual Minorities

- Has no recognizable moral standards other than the ones the group selects.
- Thus liberty becomes license.
- The person who points out moral realities, because GOD REALLY DOES EXIST
  - Is a bigot.
  - His freedom to speak about those moral realities is denied, because bigotry is oppressive.
  - Even Bible reading out loud is at risk regarding some passages.

# In addition, a person who wants to find a way out of a sexual minority

Has the validity of that wish denied. He is viewed as unhealthy by the postmodernist. He is viewed as the equivalent of an “Uncle Tom.”

- People are viewed, in Postmodernism, as pre-programmed biochemically, and unable to change.
- Counselors who try to help him find a way out are viewed as the enemy of all that is progressive.

# Freedom for Islamists becomes

- Implementing Shari'a law in their neighborhood, complete with polygamy (accepted in Europe in the Muslim neighborhoods)
- as well as severe treatment of daughters who refuse arranged marriages or who want to date,
- and severe disadvantage for women in divorce and custody cases.

# Freedom for Islamists becomes

- Freedom becomes accommodation for Islamic ritual in public places, at the same time Christian prayer is denied. Some airports have footbaths to prepare for Muslim prayer, for example.

# All groups are not equal.

- To remember George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, "Some groups are more equal than others."
- Groups formerly seen as oppressors are viewed as unworthy of rights,
- and groups formerly seen as outsiders are viewed as worthy of special rights, often at taxpayer expense.

# Finally, the Postmodern lack of belief in universal moral realities

- Prevents repentance from taking place—for **EVERYONE** who buys into this false belief system. If universal morals do not exist, sin does not exist.
- It is terribly harmful to anyone's spiritual life, because it locks people into the separation from God due to sin.
- Denial of sin prevents repentance.

# In order for unity within diversity to be possible...

- We all need agreed-upon moral universals. The moral universals need to be the foundation for the law.
- Then we can have accountability before the law and equality before the law and equal penalties before the law and REAL FREEDOM.
- Then people who have no voice at all will still have rights.



# Beliefs about these foundational matters

Have serious consequences in the real world.

Religious Viewpoint	Representative Democracy Developed through that viewpoint?	Human equality a foundational belief?
Biblical Theism	Yes	Yes—all created in the image of God
Darwinism	Later in time than the form of government—inspired Nazi totalitarian system	No—survival of the fittest views weak as less worthy
Hinduism	No	No—Caste System
Islam	No	No—Tiered system of value: Muslim males, Muslim females, Other faiths to be in subjection
Communism	No	No restraints on power, so the powerful minority acted with cruelty toward the rest

# Everyone should know that A Biblical worldview has these strengths...

that post-modernism needs.

**It has a Source for truth and moral universals and human equality.**

It has universals for finding common ground.

It believes in the possibility of repentance and effective change.

It has room for individuals, not just groups.

It holds society together in ties of brotherly love and respect.

It can tell the difference between liberty and license.

Biblical Christianity has a Source for truth and moral universals and human equality.

- The Source is God and His word— including the infinite worth He ascribes to each of us in His word.

# Biblical Christianity has universals for finding common ground.

- We are all equals before God, and we are all members of the same human race. We are equal in value and equal in importance.
- We are to act toward each other in love and respect, even if we disagree. We can and must respect each other as human beings.
- The Ten Commandments restrain evil while preserving freedom. The command to love God supremely and to love our neighbor as ourselves form principles behind those rules.

Biblical Christianity believes in the possibility of repentance and effective change.

- NOBODY is locked into his sins. Nobody is a victim of his genetic inheritance or cultural inheritance or environment. God is able to give people a better life no matter who they are. The good news of salvation is transforming good news. Redemption is not just emotional—it is intellectual—and it is integral to the whole person.

# Biblical Christianity has room for individuals, not just groups.

- We will each one of us, individually, stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We each matter enormously. Our decisions are our own and they are important to us and to God.
- We have every reason to seek wisdom for those decisions, because they have consequences. They matter.

Biblical Christianity holds society together in ties of brotherly love and respect.

- We are **not** primarily groups locked into political struggle.
- We **are** one human family and one nation under God.
- We belong.
- We matter.
- We can agree to disagree and **STILL LOVE EACH OTHER**.
- We do not have to see each other as enemies.



# Biblical Christianity can tell the difference between liberty and license.

- Because God has given us a few good rules that apply to everyone, and those rules are GOOD FOR US individually and as a group,
- We can tell the difference between freedom and misuse of freedom.
- We can work together to create laws that are good for everyone, not just OUR little group.
- We can create laws that are good for the next generation, too—rules that give them a good start in life.

# We can be honest about what works...

- We don't have to lie to students and tell them "all family forms are equal." "It does not matter what kind of family you have." It matters tremendously and we know it.
- More to the point, if they have gone through something different, THEY know it.
- If we lie about it, we ask them to sweep their hurt under the rug and walk on it.
- Marriage takes work. If we tell the next generation marriage does not matter, why would we expect them to work to keep marriages together?

# We can be honest about what works....

- We know that God's plan for families works the very best, with one dad and one mom who stick together and provide for their children.
- And we can tell them, "Even if the family you came from is not like that, you can CREATE a family like that. You can decide to do the very best thing for your kids."
- "It will take work, and you can do it!"

# Because Biblical Christianity

- Recognizes human equality before God
- And recognizes moral universals...
- Biblical Christianity can tell the difference between good and bad multiculturalism.
- Postmodernism cannot tell the difference.

# Good and Bad Multiculturalism



Good multiculturalism promotes unity while embracing diversity.

It understands that universals bind us together in one human family and make cooperation possible.

Bad multiculturalism promotes diversity to the point of fragmenting society.

It promotes tribalism and denies common ground for communication across varying viewpoints.

# Good and Bad Multiculturalism

Good multiculturalism understands overarching rules in matters of war.

Good multiculturalism protects the right to protest. But it denies violence as a means of political gain.

It protects minorities within diverse groups and accepts them as valid members of the group and of the human family.

Bad multiculturalism justifies violence by oppressed groups.

It fragments groups into insiders and outsiders and promotes “groupthink.”

Bad multiculturalism sees everything in terms of group struggle for power.

# When we understand the difference

between a postmodern view of culture and a Biblical view...

We have new tools for resisting persuasion of the propaganda type. We have a mandate to understand the worldview of those who try to persuade us regarding issues. We then can consider more possible consequences for adopting or rejecting particular issues.

We can see through the haze of slogans to understand factors that make real differences.

# Even with a Biblical Worldview,

- We cannot do all the things on the last slide by ourselves.
- We **MUST** seek wisdom from God as we go.
- We **MUST** seek guidance from His Holy Spirit as we observe and study issues.



# Homework

In 3 sets.

# Homework Class 1 Set 1

Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

What did God expect a king to use as a basis for moral law?

What personal exercises did God require a king of Israel to do?

What four things was a king NOT allowed to do?

Assigned reading: POSTMODERN TIMES, Preface – page 18.

What problems have accompanied acceptance of moral relativism and relativistic truth?

How does moral relativism prevent repentance, thereby separating people from God and His power?

# Homework Class 1 Set 2

Read Hebrews 3:4. How does this Bible verse compare to the ancient argument for a first cause?

Read POSTMODERN TIMES pages 18-32.

What reasons do postmodernists give for rejecting Biblical Christianity?

If God exists and truth exists, do any of these reasons have validity?

What are the purposes of POSTMODERN TIMES?

# Homework Class 1 Set 2

How did the horrors of the twentieth century invalidate the belief system of the Enlightenment, while validating Biblical truths?

What does the postmodernist use to replace reason, intellect, morality, and the concept of the existence of objective reality?

How did Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle develop ideas regarding monotheism? Do you think it is possible that they had encountered the beliefs of Judaism to help spark their thinking?

How does Biblical revelation complete the picture of monotheism?

# Homework Class 1 Set 3

Read Exodus 1:1-22. What utilitarian reason did Pharaoh give for destroying the male offspring of the Israelites?

How did God validate the midwives' use of the moral universal against murder rather than Pharaoh's utilitarian ethic? Did God view obedience to His authority against murder as more important than obedience to human authority requiring murder? How does this example validate God's opinion as the source of moral universals?

How does this example reveal the goodness of God?

Read POSTMODERN TIMES pages 32-51.

# Homework Class 1 Set 3

How do utilitarians decide moral issues?

What was inherently contradictory in Logical Positivism?

How did Romanticism revive pantheism? Do you see Romanticism as a revolt against enlightenment thinking, which may prefigure the postmodernist movement's similar revolt?

How did Romanticism view morals?

How did Darwinism challenge Romanticism?

# Homework Class 1 Set 3

How did existentialism handle the conflict between the two world views?

How does existentialism view morals?

What is the philosophical basis for postmodernism?

What happened in 1968?

How does postmodernism define liberation?

What do postmodernists mean by “narratives?”

What is the theoretical basis for advocacy scholarship in history?