

## **Postmodernism and Its Impact upon Theological Education**

### **Introduction: The Emperor Has No Clothes**

The famous Hans Christian Andersen children's story *The Emperor's New Suit*, concerns an emperor who is deceived by swindlers. Two weavers convinced the emperor that they had made him the most beautiful garments in the world, but they are totally invisible.

The deceived emperor allowed the weavers to go through the motions of putting on this invisible clothing. Then a procession began with the emperor under a canopy and court officials walking behind pretending to carry the non-existent train of his coat.

The emperor's nakedness was exposed publicly in a grand procession.

Everyone marveled at the beauty of the emperor's new clothes, that is, except for one small boy.

The boy cries out, "But he has nothing on at all."

Most Evangelicals in the pew today are unaware of the terrible state of theological education. They haven't looked into it, and as a result, they don't realize that figuratively speaking, theological education today has no clothes.

There is a grand procession going on.

Men and women have earned doctorates from the grandest schools Europe and America. They speak with words that few churchgoers can understand. Yet that makes what they say seemingly all the more impressive. The fact that what they are saying is gibberish is ignored by everyone for surely it must make sense. These people have doctorates from Oxford, Cambridge, Basel, Harvard, Yale, and the best schools on the planet.

Even many of us who graduated from Bible Colleges and Seminaries twenty or more years ago are not aware of the deception taking place in this theological procession.

Many of us don't really know how much things have changed.

Most Evangelicals have no idea what is being taught in Christian colleges and seminaries in America today. They assume that those training for the ministry are being taught the Bible, sound doctrine, and how to teach and preach.

The truth is hard to believe.

The norm in most American theological institutions, among both the faculty and the students, is the idea that we are certain of either very little, or of nothing at all. Many professors, students, and graduates are certain that they can't be certain of anything!

Not only are theological students and faculty not certain of their eternal destiny, they aren't even sure that God exists! And they say so in class.

Students no longer primarily study the Bible. They primarily study what scholars say about the Bible.

Sound doctrine is no longer a given among Christian students. Many diverging views are tolerated among the faculty, even views that radically disagree with the school's doctrinal statement.

Beware of American theological education today. It can be quite hazardous to your spiritual health.

### **Postmodern Agnosticism Rules at Most Conservative Theological Institutions Today**

According to most Evangelical educators today, we cannot be sure of even foundational Christian truths. For example, many seminary and Bible college professors specifically say we cannot be sure that Jesus rose from the dead!

I know a number of DTS students who were taught last year in a first-year research methods class that we can't be sure of anything, including that Jesus rose from the dead or even that God exists.

#### **University of Denver Chair of the Dept. of Religious Studies Raschke Says Postmodernity Is The Next Reformation**

Carl Raske is the author of *The Next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Postmodernity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004).

He has a Ph.D. from Harvard in the Philosophy of Religion and is chair of the department of religious studies at the University of Denver.

Raschke says that for the evangelical postmodern faith is existential, not rational. Faith is "a total surrender of one's heart" (pp. 168, 210). "A rational 'faith' is not really faith at all. Faith does not require any kind of unimpeachable demonstration. It is a passion for God amid the contingencies of experience and the messiness of life in general" (p. 168).

"The Bible is not a system of arguable and debatable propositions. A genuine systematic theology forged from the Bible is impossible" (p. 210).

The Bible has errors in it, yet it is authoritative (pp. 120, 134, 143). "The 'infallible' authority of Scripture, therefore, is not founded on the fact

that it contains no ‘errors’” (p. 134). “The authority of the Bible does not rest on whether it is logically and seamlessly consistent and free of ‘errors’” (p. 143).

Certitude is the enemy of faith (pp. 82, 150, 168, 174). Without certitude to stand on, postmodernity takes its stand on *intuition!* “*The real is relational and the relational is real.* On this intuition the postmodern Christians take their stand” (p. 158, italics his).

“Postmodernity is all our doubts supersized” (p. 174).

Raschke admits, “At first glance the prospect appears both repugnant and frightening.” It must take a lot of glances to remove those fears. The more I look at evangelical postmodernity, the greater my fear and repugnancy grows.

**Wheaton University**  
**Jay Wood, Philosophy Professor,**  
**Evidence Cannot Prove Anything**  
**We Believe in God Despite No Evidence**

According to Wheaton Professor of Philosophy Jay Wood, “modest foundationalists make no claims about the invincible certainty of one’s basic beliefs” (*Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous*, p. 98). The reason is because we cannot be sure of anything based on evidence.

Wood rejects the suggestion by W. K. Clifford that “it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence” (p. 107). *For Wood anything we “believe” is believed in spite of the fact that there is insufficient evidence.* Clifford’s credo runs headlong against Wood’s postmodern “truths.”

Wood speaks of “the inescapable ambiguity of ‘sufficiency of evidence’” (p. 112). No matter how much evidence one has for something, it cannot prove that it is certainly true. He gives as an example the belief that God exists. Even this basic belief is not something of which a postmodern can be certain (pp. 112-13).

It is hard to believe that we have faculty at leading Bible Colleges, Christian Colleges, and Seminaries who are not even certain of the fact that God exists.

Wood gives many examples of situations in which a person’s eyewitness testimony is reasonably doubted by others (see, for example, his example of jurors with different beliefs about a defendant’s guilt, p. 11, the illustration of a young boy accusing another of stealing one of his baseball cards, yet with the group doubting the charge, p. 114, and the claim of a bird

watcher to have seen a very rare bird, with the group doubting the claim, pp. 167-68). Wood in part wishes the reader to see eyewitness testimony may not be true. Of course, no one has ever doubted this. However, he also seems to want the reader to jump to the unreasonable conclusion that one can never be sure of the eyewitness testimony of any witness or group of witnesses. Interestingly in each of the examples he gives to show that an eyewitness claim may not be true, he shows the reader problems with the claim *by appealing to evidence*.

Postmoderns seem to want it both ways. On the one hand, Wood presents lots of evidence in an attempt to prove his claim that no amount of evidence could ever be sufficient to prove anything is certainly true. On the other hand, they want to say that all evidence is suspect and no matter how much there is we are faced with “inescapable ambiguity.” It would seem that they are in a hopeless impasse.

However, for postmoderns, this is the beauty of beliefs that are not bound by proofs. Wood by his own admission was a new convert who when he went to college was “not at all sure that my newfound faith was intellectually defensible” (p. 11). He learned as he continued in philosophy studies that when people expressed skepticism about his religious beliefs he might avoid giving evidence entirely! “What if instead of answering the religious skeptic’s demand for more evidence, I were to argue that one may be perfectly rational believing in God in the absence of evidence?” (p. 13).

## **Calvin College**

**James K. A. Smith**

### **We Can’t Know Anything, Except We Know We Can’t Know**

James K. A. Smith is the head of the department of Philosophy at Calvin College.

Smith has written a book endorsing postmodernism: *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism?* Smith notes, “The postmodern theologian says, ‘We can’t know that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. The best we can do is *believe*’” (p. 119).

Smith continues, “Why? Because to know would mean being certain. *We know* that such certainty is an impossible dream...”

Did you notice that Smith contradicts himself? To know would mean being certain, Smith says. And we can’t be certain. But then he turns right around and says he does indeed know something. He does “know that such certainty is an impossible dream.”

Smith continues, “therefore, we actually lack knowledge. We don’t know; we can only believe, and such faith will always be mysterious and ambiguous. But this isn’t a bad thing; quite to the contrary, it is liberating and just” (p. 119).

He doesn’t even seem aware that in back to back sentence he totally contradicts himself.

As with many Evangelical postmoderns, Smith describes himself as a charismatic. On an NPR radio interview cited at his personal website Smith said he likes to describe himself as a “Reformed Catholic Charismatic.” In the same interview he stressed the importance of *experience* in the Christian life (3:05ff.). He spoke of the importance of *mystery* and of *charismatic worship* (ca. 4:30).

**Biblical Seminary, Hatfield, PA**  
**Dr. John Franke, Prof. of Theology**  
**Evangelicals Agree There Are No Absolutes!**

The following are short transcripts from two of Dr. John Franke’s presentations at the 2005 Annual ETS meetings in Valley Forge, PA.

One of his messages was on “Postfoundationalism and Postcolonialism.”

*“Everybody [at ETS] agrees that classical foundationalism is not a helpful project...”*

*I’m glad the theory has been rejected. I think it needs to be. So I think it sounds like we can stop debating that. We agree. That’s what I’m hearing at ETS. (Disk 4, Tract ?, 9:45-10:45).*

Moments later Franke expanded a bit on his point:

“Postmodern theory raises two basic questions about this agenda and its tendencies. Whether such an approach to knowledge as described by foundationalism in its classical form and its tendencies 1) is possible and 2) whether it is desirable.

*It’s not possible. Human beings are finite.*

*Further, it’s not desirable. Human beings are fallen and if some would say even if it were possible, it wouldn’t be desirable because it’s a scary thing when people, human*

*beings who are corrupt, feel they have that kind of confidence about absolute, certain, objective truth.*

As one friend of mine put it, ‘You don’t have to listen to most of the defenders of absolute truth very long before you realize they not only believe in the idea, they think they have it. And they are prepared to use it—sometimes on you, if you don’t agree with them.’ [Laughter in background.] That’s important, friends. It’s funny and I think we can laugh, but that’s what happens.” (10:55-11:47).

During another ETS Parallel Session in which Franke and J.P. Moreland discussed these issues, Franke made this fascinating comment:

The word to me that haunts this discussion...is *certainty*. So in J.P.’s response...he says that ...we need to move forward without caricaturing the position of [modest] foundationalism as having anything to do with the quest for certainty, control, human autonomy, or such. I agree with that...(Disk 4, Tract 29, Time: 29:30-30:00).

Franke’s choice of the word *haunt* is quite telling. *Haunting* suggests that which is fearful, dreaded, and sinister. For Franke certainty is like a ghost that haunts and thereby terrifies people.

**Dallas Theological Seminary  
Brian McLaren, Darrell Bock, Greg Jenks,  
Michael Patton and Rhome Dyck  
We Aren’t Sure**

Being a graduate of DTS and living in Dallas and having DTS students work for me gives me more insights into this school than any other. As a result, I have information both from published information and from statements made recently in classes by DTS professors.

*McLaren.* Dallas Theological Seminary had a conference on postmodernism in February of 2004. The guest speaker was postmodern pastor Brian McLaren. McLaren was recently listed by Time Magazine as one of the 25 most influential Evangelicals in America today. That fact, combined with the fact that DTS wanted him to speak there, should grab all our attention. What he has to say is important, even if it is heretical, and I use that term intentionally.

During a question and answer session, McLaren was asked if he knew anything for sure. Initially he said he did know some things for sure, such as knowing he had experienced God's love. But then he said,

I can have doubts about anything if it's late enough at night. Certainty, I think, is overrated in the modern world.

Note that last sentence. It is the heart of postmodernism: "Certainty, I think, is overrated in the modern world."

What is not overrated in the postmodern world is doubt. Skepticism is the name of the game for McLaren and those whom he proselytizes.

*Bock.* A Distinguished DTS Professor, Dr. Darrell Bock, was sitting next to McLaren during that Question and Answer time and chose to answer this question as well. Bock's remarks are equally amazing. He said the following immediately after McLaren ended his answer:

Well, I think that when you're discussing foundationalism, it's clear that the concept of certainty has to also do with provability. Can I prove that something has taken place? Can I prove beyond any reasonable doubt? Can I *prove* it?

And one of the reasons foundationalism is under pressure is because of this burden of proof that foundationalism bears. It bears a terrific burden of proof at one level.

And, the relationship between conviction, certainty, and faith, I think, is a problem all of us have to wrestle with, no matter which era we might identify with. And, I think that we have convictions about the Bible.

I am reminded of a situation where I was debating Marcus Borg, and he got up and began by saying, "I don't think this debate really is a real debate, because Darrell is going to defend the position that that he holds to: the Bible is inerrant. And, therefore, as a result, the resurrection must happen. He doesn't have anything to debate with me."

Which I thought was an interesting way to begin a debate. And, I got up and said, "I think what tonight is about is not whether I can *prove* the resurrection takes place as a

matter of absolute certainty, but whether or not the *case* for believing in the resurrection as a physical act has greater plausibility than the case that it's a metaphor." And, there is a distinction between what I believe and why I believe it and how strongly I hold to it and what I can actually *show*.

Foundationalism, technically speaking, as a philosophical concept is about what you can show. And, that's part of the reason why foundationalism operates in a little bit of tension today, because there's difficulty with being able to show everything. That's where the problem lies.

Bock avoids saying he is sure that Jesus rose from the dead, or even that he is sure of anything the Bible says. What he does say is that he can show that the resurrection of Jesus Christ *probably* occurred.

It is vital to remember the question Dr. Bock was answering was *Do you know anything for sure*. After McLaren says, "No...certainty is overrated," Dr. Bock does not contradict him. Instead, Dr. Bock supports McLaren.

*Greg Jenks*. Last year three first-year Th.M. DTS students worked for me. Though in more than one section of this class, they all reported that the instructor, doctoral student Greg Jenks, who had every single first-year Th.M. student at DTS in his various sections of this class, said in class that the key to doing good research is recognizing we know nothing for sure. When students objected he asked them to state something they were sure of. When they pointed to the resurrection of Jesus, he said that we can't be sure Jesus rose from the dead, even though we can and should have strong convictions that He did. In a subsequent class Jenks told the students how when he first realized he couldn't be sure of anything, he went through a time of despair. At one point in his Th.M. studies at DTS he was, he said, actually contemplating suicide because of how disturbing this thought was at first. However, Jenks was now promoting the very philosophy that led him to the brink of suicide.

*Reclaiming the Mind Ministries*. Two recent DTS Th.M. graduates, Michael Patton (2001) and Rhome Dyck (2004) are President and Executive Director respectively of this internet-based teaching ministry using the latest technology and big-name Christian educators to teach lay people Evangelical postmodern thought.

They have an internet radio broadcast called *Theology Unplugged* (that can be heard at [reclaimingthemind.org](http://reclaimingthemind.org)). In one of their internet



broadcasts they featured a discussion between the two of them and radio talk show host, Greg Cromartie, who himself is conversant on postmodern thought. In that session they discuss how sure they are of the existence of God, of their own eternal destiny, and of the pre-trib rapture.

Patton asks the other two how sure they are, on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 represents not certainty, but as sure as you can be, that God exists.

Cromartie says he'd put God's existence at somewhere between 5 and 8 on a 1 to 10 scale.

Dyck, the DTS graduate, puts God's existence at 7 on the 1 to 10 scale.

Then they discuss how sure they are that Jesus will return to rapture us before the tribulation. Cromartie quips, "That's a nice story." Then he says he'd rate the pre-trib rapture as a 2 on a 1 to 10 scale.

Dyck, the DTS graduate, doesn't give a number, but suggests that the answer to that question might even be a negative number, whatever that would mean.

Here I play a sound clip of them debating how sure or unsure they are of God's existence and of the pre-trib rapture.

The DTS students who work and have worked for me estimate that a huge percentage, over 80%, of the students in their classes buy the postmodern uncertainty that they are being taught in class.

That would mean that 8 or 9 out of ten DTS graduates will be like Patton and Cromartie and Jenks.<sup>1</sup> They not only will not be sure that God exists, but they will be actively seeking to convince those who are sure that God exists that they really aren't sure.<sup>2</sup>

**Minot (North Dakota) State University  
Dr. Stewart Kelly (ETS Member), Prof. of Philosophy  
We Aren't Sure Jesus Rose from the Dead!**

A message given at the 2005 ETS Annual Meeting in Valley Forge, PA. by Dr. Stewart Kelly, entitled, "Miracle, Method, and Metaphysics:

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<sup>1</sup> Less than a month ago one DTS OT Professor said in class that a later editor changed some of the place names from what Moses had written to what was the then name of the place, yet without indicating he was making the change. A student I know then asked if say the Cyrus prophecy could have been similarly edited, with another originally name given and a later redactor putting Cyrus's name in. The professor said something like, "Sure, that type of change is certainly possible." The student was aghast. In this way prophecies can be wrong, but after the fact they can be fixed and made just right.

<sup>2</sup> Also in the last month a DTS Theology Professor when speaking on five views of sanctification said that all five views worked. He also said that students should be critical of others who had a different view of sanctification than they had. The student I spoke with did not recognize this as pluralism at work in the classroom.

Philosophy and the Quest for the Historical Jesus” shows that Bock’s statement on the *probability* rather than certainty of Jesus’ resurrection being true is precisely what many if not most Christian historians, theologians, and exegetes say today. Note this comment by Kelly about Troeltsch’s *probability principle*:

The probability principle claims that “in the realm of history, there are only judgments of probability, varying from the highest to the lowest degree, and that consequently an estimate must be made of the degree of probability attaching to any tradition.” Given that faith requires at the least a certain degree of trust, the inherent non-certainty of the historical method might be seen as an enemy of faith. But as Alvin Plantinga points out, Troeltsch’s first principle is not a prescriptive claim, about how all historians and theologians should practice their craft, but rather a descriptive one about the historical enterprise in general. Well, any historian, Christian or otherwise, can readily agree with Troeltsch in this matter, for absolute certainty of the sort that Descartes and others prize will be limited to innocuous claims such as Caesar crossed the Rubicon or else he didn’t.

Now from the fact that historical claims are probabilistic, it hardly follows that particular Christian claims, for example, Jesus rose bodily from the dead, are at risk here. Few Christian apologists claim apodictic [incontrovertible, demonstrably true] certainty for such a claim [the resurrection of Jesus!], but merely that it is the best and most plausible explanation given the historical data with which we are dealing. (Time marker: 16:22 to 17:44.)

**Fordham University,  
The Jesuit University of New York,  
Merold Westphal, Prof. of Philosophy  
Rose Hill Campus,  
Our Beliefs Never Correspond to Reality**

Also in Valley Forge at ETS, Dr. Merold Westphal, professor of philosophy at Fordham University said, “I appreciated, Bill, these charitable attempts to make me into a critical realist...But, he was just dead wrong about me. He was hoping desperately that my view is that our beliefs do not

necessarily correspond to reality and not that, therefore, *our beliefs never correspond to reality. And, it is the latter which is my view, and this is why I am anti-realist*" (Disk 4, Message 47; around the 4:30 mark).

Our beliefs never correspond to reality?

For people like Westphal, every human being should be in a mental institution since we are all out of touch with reality.

Westfall went on to say, "*nothing we ever say about God strictly speaking is true.*"

Then why would any honorable person who believed that make his living by being a pastor, by teaching in a seminary or Bible college, by being a missionary, by working in a parachurch organization, or by doing anything Christian? Would he not feel guilty if he knew that nothing he says about God is true, and yet that is what he is being paid to do? Wouldn't it be hypocrisy to take a paycheck for promoting lies? Wouldn't anyone in the ministry be a shyster?<sup>3</sup>

## **Nyack College, Christian and Missionary Alliance School**

**Dr. James Danaher**

**Head of the Dept. of Philosophy**

**Testimony: Three Experiences with the Lord**

**Role of Teacher: Not to Impart Information**

Danaher is the head of the Department of Philosophy at the Nyack campus of Nyack College, a CMA school. A faculty interview of him is posted at the Nyack website.

Under the heading, "My conversion to a life in Christ," Danaher says:

I had an experience with the Lord when I was eighteen, but it was an experience and not a conversion into a radically new and different life. Twelve years later, I had another God experience but again without the kind of surrender that marks the beginning of a transformed life. God was faithful still and, two year later, with a third experience, there was a

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<sup>3</sup> In an article entitled, "Blind Spots: Christianity and Postmodern Philosophy" ([www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1058/is\\_12\\_120/ai\\_1039...](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_12_120/ai_1039...)) Westfall compares atheistic postmodernist and Christian postmodernists such as himself. "Atheistic postmodernism says that we are not God because there is no God. Christian [postmodern] thought says we are not God because only God is God. In spite of the deep disagreement about God, there is a deep agreement between Christians [i.e., postmodern Christians] and postmodern thinkers [i.e., atheistic postmodern thinkers] that we are not God *and should not claim divine status for our knowledge.*"

surrender and the beginning of a transformation that has continued for the past twenty-five years.

As a committed Evangelical postmodern, it is not surprising that Danaher emphasizes *experience* in telling of his conversion. He tells of three difference *experiences with the Lord*. Evidently Danaher hadn't surrendered sufficiently the first two times for transformation to begin.

It is telling that we read nothing about faith in this testimony. Nor is anything said about Jesus Christ in this testimony. And nothing is said about everlasting life, justification, or the kingdom of God. As with many postmoderns, Danaher sees surrender to God as a condition of temporal transformation, which is a common understanding of *salvation* among Evangelical postmoderns.

That Nyack College, a Christian school, gladly posts such a testimony on their website reveals the degree to which postmodernity is at home there.

In the same faculty interview, note what Danaher says "the role of a teacher" is:

The role of a teacher is not to impart information but to stimulate imagination and create interest. Intelligence is largely a matter of interest. We are all geniuses with regard to those things toward which we have a deep interest. The job of the teacher is to instill such an interest in the student. To do so, two things are essential. You have to love your subject matter and you have to love your students. Everything else in regard to teaching is superficial.

While there is certainly some truth in what Danaher is saying, there's also some error.

Surely the role of teacher includes at least *some* impartation of information.

We are *not* all geniuses, even in regard to things to which we have a deep interest.

While loving your subject and your students is certainly important in teaching, it is going too far to say that "everything else in regard to teaching is superficial." Communication skills, knowledge of your subject, preparation for each class session, and attention to detail are also vitally important.

## **Talbot School of Theology**

**Dr. John Coe**

### **The Bible Is Insufficient for Sanctification**

At the 2006 ETS annual conference in Washington, D.C., Coe presented a provocative paper entitled, “Spiritual Theology: A Methodology for Bridging the Sanctification Gap.” He said, “Though the Scriptures are a central and defining datum, a Bible-alone approach is inadequate and truncated in understanding the doctrine of sanctification and the process of transformation” (p. 2). He continued, “*If we are going to understand all we can about the work of the Spirit in the soul, we are going to have to study and understand that work in real life as well as the Biblical text*” (p. 3, italics his).

In the Q & A time I asked him if we can learn from unregenerate people like Catholics, Buddhists, and Hindus, how to do spiritual formation. He answered that while the unregenerate often have a “truncated view” of spiritual formation (note the quote above using the same expression regarding Bible-only folks!), yes, we can learn from the unregenerate how to do spiritual formation as long as we filter out the mistakes they make.

The room this took place in seated around 75 people. Every seat was taken and there were another 20 or so seated in the back and in the aisles. This was a very popular session. As far as I could tell from the questions and from the faces of the people in the audience, people were very favorable toward this presentation.

See the section below on spiritual formation for more details on Coe’s paper.

## **Biola University**

**Seven faculty listed as experts in postmodernism**

**Thirteen faculty listed as experts in spiritual formation**

I did a Google search of “Postmodernism and Christian Education.” Among the first-page hits was one that read, “Biola > Experts Directory.” When I clicked on this, I was directed to a list of faculty, each of whom had a number of areas of expertise. When I searched that list, I found that seven of the faculty members were experts in postmodernism.

Now it is possible that some or all of these faculty members are against postmodernism. However, that seems highly unlikely. Most of the other categories in the lists are things which an Evangelical professor would only be an expert in a positive sense. Other things on the lists, for example,

include “apologetics, attributes of God, Christian education, Christian thought, church growth, discipleship, evangelism, healing, intelligent design, missions, morality, pastoring, spiritual formation, spirituality, theology, and worship.” The only things on the list one would be sure the Evangelical expert was against were “drug addiction, euthanasia, homosexuality, Jehovah’s witnesses, moral relativism, physician-assisted suicide, and occult.”

Why would Biola want to advertise that it has seven experts in postmodernism on its faculty? Clearly the school must feel that this is one of its strengths.

A quick comparison showed they have more experts on postmodernism than they do on *Biblical languages* (2), *Bible interpretation* (4), *church* (4), *evangelism* (4), *theology* (5), *faith* (5), and *discipleship* (6), and an equal number of experts between postmodernism and *Bible* (7).

Biola lists a whopping 13 experts on *spiritual formation*, which is directly related to postmodernism.

### **“Not Your Father’s Seminary” Seminaries and Bible Colleges Consider Postmodernity A Helpful Ally and Modify Curricula Accordingly**

An internet search of “Postmodern Seminary Classes” shows that most schools have classes and conferences on postmodern ministry, postmodern preaching, postmodern theology, etc. There were 405,000 hits, or over 4,000 pages each with 10 articles. I stopped after the first 25 pages of hits (250 hits) and I already had a list of 32 different seminaries with classes or emphases on postmodernity.<sup>4</sup>

One of the hits referred to an article entitled, “Not Your Father’s Seminary” by Ronald William. He suggests:

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<sup>4</sup> For example, an internet search revealed classes or emphases on postmodernity in the following schools: Asbury Seminary, Ashland Theological Seminary, Bethel Seminary San Diego, Briercreech Seminary, Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Columbia Evangelical Seminary, Concordia Seminary, Covenant Theological Seminary, Dallas Theological Seminary, Denver Seminary, Detroit Baptist Seminary, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Erskine Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Knox Seminary, Luther Seminary, McCormick Theological Seminary, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Nazarene Theological Seminary, Northern Seminary, Providence Theological Seminary, Reformed Theological Seminary Orlando, St. Augustine’s Seminary, Union Theological Seminary, United Theological Seminary, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Wesley Theological Seminary, Western Theological Seminary, and Westminster Seminary.

Two basic reactions informed how American evangelical seminaries have responded to postmodernism. Some see postmodernism as a threat and have reworked their programs and course requirements to emphasize the authority of Scripture and arm students against postmodernism's dangers. Others consider postmodernism a useful ally, and they have reevaluated core curricula to include and emphasize new critiques and formulations of the "old, old story," as well as the centrality of relationships to the kingdom of God (<http://seminarygradschool.com/seminaryeducation/october2005/adv1205.1.html>).

William suggests that most schools have adopted a position somewhere between these two approaches, though from his later comments, he seems to see most as closer to the second approach. He suggests they haven't cut back on teaching Greek and Hebrew and Bible and Theology, but have instead added practical ministry classes and have revamped other classes to deal with postmodern issues in the classroom.

In my estimation Williams is looking at the situation with rose colored glasses, probably because he seems to himself view postmodernity as an ally. Most schools I'm aware see postmodernism as "a useful alley" and they have indeed "reevaluated core curricula to include and emphasize new critiques and formulations of the 'old, old story...'"

Most schools have indeed cut back on Greek, Hebrew, Bible, and Theology. I know that is true at my alma mater, Dallas Theological Seminary.

*Not Your Father's Seminary* is a fitting description of most seminaries today. Seminaries today have new curricula and, as we shall now see, new values that are far different from those of 25 or more years ago.

### **[Postmodern Educational] Values**

In an article entitled, "Postmodernism and You: Education," Gary DeLashmutt and Roger Braund speak about postmodern educational values (<http://www.xenos.org/ministries/crossroads/doteduc.htm>):

Okay, so they don't want to impose the teacher's "reality" on students, why go to school?

Actually, they have a definite set of values they hope to inculcate:

- **striving for diversity**—guarding, unchanged, the existing values, tastes and way of life of each subculture in our society.
- **Equality**—In postmodern ideology, equality means equal in terms of power relationships
- **tolerance and freedom**—tolerance has a new meaning: roughly, never negating or criticizing oppressed groups. Freedom for cultures and communities to express themselves
- **the importance of creativity**—Creativity is clearly allied to the postmodern emphases on the construction of knowledge and diversity. Stimulating and affirming creativity in students is important in constructing knowledge and values, particularly, if diverse viewpoints are to be encouraged
- **the importance of emotions**—Affirmation of emotions follows along with the importance they place on self-esteem. They believe that any time children's emotions are challenged (even hate or selfish jealousy) the child is being disabled by having the teacher's reality imposed on her
- **the importance of intuition**—intuition gains in importance, because rational thought has lost its authority as a means for dealing with ideas. Modernists tend to suppress intuition and feelings, according to postmodernists, even though they are just as legitimate and perhaps even more important than rational, conceptual (or "linear") thought

Are these values the sorts of the values that conservative Christian educators are seeking to inculcate in their students?

One would think that Christian education, since it is rooted in objective, absolute truth, could not have these sorts of values. However, postmodern Evangelicals do not believe that Christianity is rooted in objective, absolute truth. Thus these values can and do exist in leading conservative seminaries and Bible colleges.

*Diversity of thought* is highly valued among many Evangelical educators today. This is clear in their writings and in the papers they read at the Evangelical Theological Society. It is also apparent in the reports I've received from current students at Dallas Theological Seminary.



*Equality*, since it goes hand in hand with diversity, is also highly valued.

As David Wells has noted, *tolerance* may be the greatest virtue today in Christianity and in Christian education. Intolerance is the greatest vice.

Last month I read a paper in Washington D. C. at the ETS conference. Later I learned that some DTS students present felt that I had made negative comments about some of the DTS NT professors.

What I did at ETS didn't sit well with those DTS students. Tolerance is highly valued by most ETS members today. There is discomfort over someone saying that another ETS member holds and promotes views that contradict the ETS and DTS doctrinal statements.

Preachers are not to criticize the views of others. Preachers are to be tolerant.

No longer do most preachers warn their flocks or teachers warn their students about false teachers and false teachings. That is considered divisive and arrogant.

In our pluralistic culture, everybody just tries to get along. Everyone wants to be middle of the road.

What Paul did in Galatians, angrily denouncing the Judaizers, is not something that most pastors do today. The result is that flocks are not well trained and they are susceptible to the cults and to all kinds of false teachings.

In the current climate of Christian education, all faculty members should have unchecked *freedom* to teach whatever they feel to be true for them, yet without, of course, calling into question what others might feel is true for them.

*Creativity* seems to be highly valued among ETS members and the students they are teaching. The words of Jesus as reported in the Gospels may well not be His words at all, but the words of the Gospel writers or their communities. We can even be so creative as to suggest that Post-resurrection events may be reported as Pre-resurrection events.

I spoke with an ETS member who argued passionately that Jonah is a parable and that when Jesus referred to Jonah He was referring to what He and His audience realized what a fictional character and story.

*Emotions* are indeed highly valued in Christian education today. This goes along perfectly with all of the values mentioned above.

*Intuition* fits perfectly with creativity and emotions.

If a student makes dogmatic assertions in a sermon or paper, his professor will often correct him. Zeal is fine. But dogmatism smacks of arrogance and intolerance.

Any zeal students are encouraged to show is to be directed toward their stories, toward their feelings, toward their experiences, toward something that is true *for them*.

### **Spiritual Formation, an Unbiblical Method, Is Widely Taught Today in Christian Institutions**

One aspect of postmodernism is something called *spiritual formation*. I am amazed that conservative seminaries have embraced this concept and most are now teaching it.

For example, my alma mater, DTS, requires all students, and strongly encourages their spouses, to participate in spiritual formation. McLaren during his conference at DTS said he was delighted that DTS was teaching spiritual formation. He pointed out that when evangelicals wanted to learn how to do *spiritual formation*, they went to the Roman Catholics. McLaren didn't explain, but probably knows, that the Catholic mystics didn't get *spiritual formation* from the Bible, but that they got it from Buddhist and Hindu meditative techniques!

It is alarming that conservative Christian schools are teaching their students the methods of attaining spirituality taught by Buddhism and Hinduism. Isn't the Bible our only source for learning how to be spiritual?

Spiritual formation is a product of the rejection of classic foundationalism. Once truth becomes relative, then one need not confine our search for how to be spiritual with the Bible. We can learn from other religions of the world how to be spiritual.

Spiritual formation can result in a person *feeling closer to God and feeling more love for Jesus*. Spiritual formation "works" in the sense that one has an experience. Two of my friends from our days together at DTS use spiritual formation in the churches they pastor, and use it themselves, precisely because they find that it produces these feelings.

Of course, if these feelings and experiences are not from God, then they are the byproducts of counterfeit spirituality.

Is there something wrong with serving God even when we don't feel good? I always thought that God was especially pleased when we served Him in spite of the fact that we were battling cancer, arthritis, fatigue, depression, or the like.

In Coe's ETS paper, mentioned above, he specifically indicated the Bible is insufficient for us to learn how to be sanctified, for us how to learn how to please God.

Coe indicated that during his theological studies 25 years ago he saw his teachers telling him what he was to do, but not telling him how to do it. He was frustrated in that no answers were being given as to how sanctification and spiritual transformation really works in the life of a Christian.

Coe's solution was to turn outside the Bible to see from the experience of people how spiritual transformation works. Experience, says Coe, is absolutely necessary if we are to learn spiritual formation.

The emphasis on *experience* is a hallmark of postmodernity.

According to Coe's ETS paper, his title at Talbot School of Theology and Rosemead School of Psychology is "Director, Institute for Spiritual Formation, Associate Professor of Spiritual Formation and Philosophy."

Why does any school need an associate professor of spiritual formation?

Nearly 30 years ago at DTS I was taught that we were to subordinate experience to Scripture. The Scriptures interpret our experience, we were told. We were not to give any authority to experience whatsoever.

Today experience is put on par with Scripture in conservative Christian higher education today.

(Another example of the authority of experience from ETS 2006 is a paper presented by Dr. Bill Heth of Taylor University entitled, "Demonization Then and Now: How Contemporary Cases Fill in the Biblical Data." In his paper he argued that the NT does not give sufficient information to know how to cast out demons. Modern experiences of people casting out demons fills in the biblical data and shows us how to do it.)

### **Postmodernity Allows Faculty to Indicate Agreement to Statements They Do Not Believe**

About 10 years ago at the ETS annual conference in a meeting of the Dispensational Study Group, I heard Dr. Darrell Bock discuss the DTS doctrinal statement. He said that it was "a community document." As such, he said, any given point in the doctrinal statement had "three or four different acceptable understandings." As long as a faculty member held one of these three or four views of a given point in the confession, he could sign it in good conscience since his views were within the community.

Unstated but clearly meant is that a DTS faculty member can disagree with what the framers of the doctrinal statement meant in a given point and yet still agree with the statement.

No matter how outrageous the disagreement with the school's confession, as long as the administration does not fire a person who holds a view, that view becomes de facto one of the acceptable interpretations of the doctrinal statement. Then faculty can sign the statement without reservation.

This is true in most, but fortunately not all, conservative Evangelical schools in North America.

A Mormon scholar, Robert L. Millet, captured this spirit. In his book, *A Different Jesus? The Christ of the Latter-day Saints*, Millet cites what "one professor of religion at a Christian institution remarked to [him]" (p. 50). It appears that Christian institution was not a Mormon school. Here is what he was told:

"You know, Bob, one of the things I love about my way of life as a religious academician is that no one is looking over my shoulder to check my doctrine and analyze the truthfulness of my teachings. Because there is no hierarchy to which I am required to answer, I am free to write and declare whatever I choose" (p. 50).

Millet went on to say that without a hierarchy (like the LDS church hierarchy!) that looks over the shoulders of educators, "academic freedom can become a license to interpret, intuit, or exegete a scriptural passage in a myriad of ways..." (p. 51). His unfortunate, cultic conclusion, is that "there are simply too many ambiguous sections of scripture to 'let the Bible speak for itself.'" (p. 51).

We shouldn't need a Mormon to tell us Evangelical faculty members feel free to teach whatever they want. They feel little compulsion to limit their teaching to that which agrees with the doctrinal statement of the schools who pay them.

Even so, since once in a while educators do get fired on doctrinal grounds, there is at least some concern by some Postmodern Evangelical educators today.

### **Nevertheless Some Faculty Fear They May Not Have Sufficient Academic Freedom**

I was at the annual ETS meetings three years ago and heard a Bible College Professor, Dr. Doug Kennard, speak on the issue of tradition and tolerance. His concern was that he knew of colleagues whose research had led them to conclusions which they felt were still within the community in

which they taught. But these professors were actually fired for what they published! Kennard called the publication of one's research that resulted in his firing *theological landmines*.

Kennard urged confessional schools to be exceedingly tolerant about their traditions. He felt that intellectual freedom gives the professor wide latitude in his views. The professor should be allowed to hold and express views which are quite at odds with the doctrinal statement.

But how much diversity is too much? Kennard could not say. He was simply urging maximum tolerance.

Today almost anything goes in conservative Evangelical schools.

Unfortunately, those who graduate from such schools tend to adopt the same attitude toward doctrinal statements. Hence we now have a generation of men going into pastorates will indicate agreement with doctrinal statements that they not find accurate because for them doctrinal statements are community documents.

### **Students Now Rarely Study the Bible, They Study What Others Say about the Bible**

A little over 10 years ago, my friend, Dr. Art Farstad, leading NT scholar, who is now with the Lord enjoying His presence, told a joke when he and I and Zane Hodges, another leading NT scholar, were having lunch together. The joke illustrates this point.

He told of a New Testament scholar who was retiring after 40 years of teaching. When asked if he had any regrets, the retiring professor said said, "Well, I regret that I never studied the New Testament."

All three of us laughed heartily. Then I said to Art, in all honesty, "Why are we laughing? I don't understand the joke. Don't NT scholars study the NT?"

Art said, "No, Bob, NT scholars study *what other NT scholars say about the NT*. They don't actually study the NT for itself."

At most schools today students are trained to write interpretive papers by laying out the various views, with careful citations from people in the community, explaining the strengths and weaknesses of each view, and concluding with which view you prefer, and why.

Rarely does a student actually say that one position is correct. For students today, exegesis is a matter of probabilities. To become a good exegete today, a person must be able to determine which view is most likely and why.

That sounds so odd you'd think I'm making this up. But this is actually the way the vast majority of students in conservative schools do exegesis today. And they like it.

**Because of Postmodern Influence,  
Inerrancy Is Now Virtually Meaningless  
in Most Schools That Affirm It**

At the 1999 annual ETS meeting in Boston, I heard Dr. Dan Wallace, a leading NT scholar, read a paper in which he said that the Gospel writers took more liberty with the words of Jesus than Thucydides did with the speeches he created.

According to Dr. Wallace, the words of Jesus as reported in the NT are often not what He said. I have written a journal article reviewing Dr. Wallace's paper that can be read on the internet ([www.faithalone.org](http://www.faithalone.org), look under publications, journal, Spring 2001).

Here are some of the statements he made that day:

- “Occasionally, although the words [in different Synoptic Gospels] are almost identical, the meaning seems to be altered” (p. 7).
- “Within the synoptic gospels, interpretive additions to the words of Jesus seem to occur” (p. 10). [Under this point he says concerning Mark 2:17, Matt 9:13, and Luke 5:32,] “Luke has actually slightly altered the meaning of Jesus' words here” (p. 10).
- “To sum up: There seems to be evidence in the synoptic gospels that, on occasion, words are deliberately added to the original sayings of Jesus... There seem to be examples within the synoptics where the words are similar, but the meaning is different” (p. 12).
- “Sometimes the alteration between gospels is not merely in a word or two, *but seem to involve a change in speaker*” (p. 13, italics added). “But does the ‘speaker alteration’ phenomenon happen with dominical sayings [sayings of Christ]? It is possible that it does” (p. 14).
- “In a number of places, there seem to be sufficient variations in the dominical material to give a different *impression* as to the sense of the original” (p. 16, emphasis his).
- “Some of the dominical material seems dislocated or even patched together” (p. 17).

Wallace's point is that the Gospels do have historical errors in them in terms of our view of historiography, but that we need to realize they didn't write under our higher view of historiography. They followed Thucydides and so there really are no errors.

Wallace believes the Gospel writers changed meaning, changed speakers, and introduced both distortion and falsehood into God's Word. His view is a capitulation to liberal higher criticism.

Wallace is far from unique. Bock wrote an article called "Live, Jive, or Memorex" in which he said many of the same things that Wallace said in his ETS paper. He specifically said that the Gospel writers followed the practices of Thucydides and that they sometimes gave the reader not what Jesus actually said, but an interpretation or even an application of what He said, yet without identifying their own remarks as being interpretations or applications.

In their book *The Jesus Crisis*, Drs. Robert Thomas and David Farnell show that what most NT scholars are saying today is that the Bible does not accurately report what Jesus said. Essentially most NT scholars are saying that the NT contains historical errors. But those same professors can, with a straight face, say they believe in inerrancy. Why? Because, at I argued at last month's annual meeting of ETS in Washington D. C., they have changed the definition of inerrancy!

Old Testament scholars similarly have abandoned a meaningful view of inerrancy. Many professors in conservative schools now deny six literal days of creation, that Jonah really was swallowed by a whale and went to Jonah, that the Noahic flood was a worldwide flood, and much more.

The same is true of professors in all disciplines.

### **Unity, Even at the Expense of Doctrine, Is Essential**

At large meetings it is not uncommon to hear the speaker say from the podium, "Hug the person next to you. He's your brother. Don't let doctrine divide you." And who is standing next to you. He may be a Roman Catholic or even a Mormon. That's okay. Hug him and don't let doctrinal and denominational distinctions divide you.

Sixty years ago Roman Catholics weren't considered Evangelicals. Evangelicals were concerned about the lostness of Roman Catholics. They were considered religious unbeliever trying to work their way to heaven.

No longer. Now most major Evangelicals consider Roman Catholics to be fellow believers.

A leading seminary professor, Dr. Craig Blomberg, wrote a book with a Mormon scholar called *How Wide the Divide*. In the book Blomberg and his Mormon friend argue that Mormon's are born again and Evangelicals should stop evangelizing them since they are already Christians.

Unity is the name of the game in most Christian schools and that is certainly true in the churches that are pastured by graduates of such schools.

**We Should Think Long and Hard  
before Selecting a Bible College or Seminary  
for Our Children (or to Teach at Ourselves)**

I attended a secular school, the University of California at Irvine. If I were 18 years old today and had the choice between going to a typical Christian college or my alma mater, I think I'd prefer my alma mater. *While my alma mater was quite liberal and in some ways anti-Christian, I never heard the type of sophisticated attacks on the authority of the Bible that are commonly taught by Bible college and seminary professors today.*

I had less baggage graduating from UCI than most graduates of conservative Bible colleges have today.

My ministry focuses on issues related to evangelism and discipleship. Postmodernity is not our focus. However, I cannot ignore what is going on. For if postmodernity wins the day, then our evangelism and discipleship will fall on deaf ears. Postmoderns are not interested in listening to those whom they view as arrogant and boastful. Anyone who is sure of anything is bothersome to them.

If we aren't careful, the next generation of pastors and missionaries will be so influenced by postmodern ideas that very few will know anything for sure, will preach the objective truths of Scripture, and will evangelize clearly.

We may think there are few such ministers today. Well, it is getting much worse. We are in a crisis and it is time we get our heads out of the sand.

My purpose is to warn us. We live in perilous times.

It is hard to believe how far seminaries and Bible colleges have fallen.

Withhold your support of schools until you are sure they are not teaching postmodernism. Don't attend such schools or send people from your churches there.

**It's Time We Fight Back—  
But How?**



Speaking on this subject a few months ago in Kansas City, I suggested we need to fight against postmodernity. But I didn't say how. After a session I was asked how we can fight back.

First, we need to teach young people the dangers of postmodernity. It is criminal that we send college seniors from Christian high schools off to college without them knowing about the dangers of postmodernity.

A couple in Kansas City told me that 6 years ago their daughter went from her Christian high school off to a Southern Baptist College. There she learned that we aren't sure that God exists, that the Bible is the Word of God, or that Jesus is the only way.

Within one year their daughter had abandoned her former beliefs and adopted a view her parents had no label for. She considered Mom and Dad to be backward, uneducated, and ignorant. She pitied her parents and their intolerance and misguided certainties.

We ought to teach this in Sunday School and in Christian schools and in homes starting no later than 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

Second, we need to write books educating children and their parents on this subject.

Third, we need to purge conservative Bible colleges, Christian colleges, and seminaries of their postmodern faculty. What Al Mohler did at Southern can and should be done elsewhere.

If we stop sending our children to Christian schools with postmodern faculty, and if get other parents not to send their children too, the schools will lose students and will scramble to provide what is wanted.

If donors who are awakened to this problem withdraw their funds until the postmoderns are gone, formerly conservative schools quite possibly will become conservative again. For Christian education is often about the dollar sign. Withdraw the funding and suddenly Presidents and boards will see the light and move the schools back to actually teach what their confessions mean.

Fourth, we need to start new schools that not only are not postmodern, but which teach against postmodernity and train their students to fight against it.

Fifth, whenever we talk with postmodern Evangelical scholars, or the students whom they dupe, we should confront them on their stupidity. Like the 10-year old boy we should shout, "Postmodernity has no clothes." We may win some of the faculty over. Surely we can and will win many of the students over, especially those who haven't yet been fully brainwashed.

Sixth, we should pray for God to move American Evangelicalism back to an inerrant Word, back to a God who lives, back to Christianity as the only way, back to justification by faith alone in Christ alone, back to prophecy and a certain future, back to lives that have purpose and meaning, away from nihilistic depressing fatalism of the modern elite.

### Conclusion

The Hans Christian Andersen story leaves the reader in doubt about what the final outcome was. Did the emperor come to his senses?

The father of the small boy who had cried out, “But he has nothing on at all!” said, “Good heavens! listen to the voice of an innocent child.” One by one people in the crowd whispered to one other what the child had said. “But he has nothing on at all.”

The story ends with these words: “That made a deep impression upon the emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought to himself, ‘Now I must bear up to the end.’ And the chamberlains walked with still greater dignity, as if they carried the train which did not exist.”

It is time we recognize postmodernism for what it is: theology that has absolutely nothing on.

*Watch out for swindlers weaving falsehoods!*

We must tell our friends that postmodernism lacks any substance. We must stand against the swindlers before it is too late.

Postmodernism may well be the single greatest threat to the cause of Christ today.

Make sure you grill your pastoral candidates and that you tell them that if they lie to you, they will be fired the moment their deception is uncovered and there will be no severance pay and no help in any way for to do so would be enable lying. Tell them that your doctrinal statement is not a community document. It means what it says. If you believe anything contrary to it, tell us now. If you teach anything contrary to it, off you will be.

I gave a different form of this paper back on March 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year. Note this comment from a recent seminary graduate about what I said:

“I would call your speech unbelievable, if not for the fact that I just finished a Th.M. from DTS [Dallas Theological Seminary] and I witnessed every single thing you mentioned first-hand. I couldn’t believe what the students I talked to believed about Dispensationalism, Reformed Theology, faith, etc., until I started listening to many of the Professors. I am a victim of the bait and switch. When the older Professors go in about 10-20 years, DTS will be completely lost.”

I recently read a book about C. S. “Jack” Lewis, called *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C. S. Lewis*. In it I ran across a statement of Lewis about philosophy that well summarizes the postmodern problem in Christian education. In October of 1925, at the age of 27, he wrote:

I have not the brain and nerves for a life of pure philosophy. A continued search among the abstract roots of things, *a perpetual questioning of all that plain men take for granted*, a chewing the cud for fifty years over inevitable ignorance...is this the best life for temperaments such as ours? *Is this the way of health or even of sanity?* (Alan Jacobs, *The Narnian*, p. 119).

Those words were written before postmodernism even existed. Yet they are a fitting analysis of postmodernism.

In an insightful *JETS* article from September 1997 on the challenge of postmodernity in Christian education today, Bruce Little concluded with these cautionary remarks:

Christian education cannot serve two masters. God is the source and end of the Christian educator’s task, not a culturally-oriented consensus. The Church exists primarily as a voice for God’s truth, not as a moral/religious glue for society—that is, Christian education owes its allegiance to God, not culture. Failure to recognize this distinction will confuse the mission of Christian education and eventually weaken the curriculum, thus corrupting the distinctiveness of the Christian worldview.

I like to read secular fiction, especially science fiction, espionage, crime dramas, and the like.

Recently I came across a very powerful writer, Greg Iles. After reading two outstanding books by him I read *The Fingerprints of God* (New York: Scribner, 2003). It is about a secret government project to make a computer that actually thinks.

Iles has the lead character, Tennant, experiencing visions of what God himself has thought and felt. His visions are of a weak, fearful, lonely, confused, and relatively impotent being whose only value to the universe seems to be that he stores the collectively consciousness of all who have ever lived (plus his own).

At one point Tennant says, “Sometimes the truth is in the mind before evidence can be found. This is how science proceeds” (p. 402). That is, of course, a tenet of postmodernism. We encounter truth before we have any evidence as to its validity.

But what Iles means by truth is not what the uninitiated mean. He means what the postmodern means. The very last sentence of the entire book, that is, the last line of the acknowledgements, is this: “If we have learned anything in the past ten thousand years, it is that nothing is certain” (p. 462).

If we lose absolute truth, then certainty of eternal life is lost.

If certainty of eternal life is lost, then we lose the saving message. Jesus promised, “He who believes in Me has everlasting life” (John 6:47), “He who comes to Me will never hunger and He who believes in Me will never thirst” (John 6:35), and “He who lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:26). But if we cannot be certain of anything, we cannot be certain that Jesus was telling the truth, or even that Jesus said these things in the first place.

We can no longer say, “I know for sure because I believe in Jesus I am eternally secure and that Jesus Christ is coming again soon to take me to Himself and deliver from a time of unparallel suffering on earth.”

Instead we will be reduced to, “That’s a nice story.”

## **Appendix 1**

### **The Sokal Affair**

Wikipedia in its article on “hermeneutics,” discusses the postmodern approach to hermeneutics in which science is rejected and seemingly nonsensical positions are elevated to keen insights on how to interpret literature.

Here is what Wikipedia says about Dr. Alan Sokal's experiment in postmodern writing:

“Not surprisingly, this critique of scientism has won hermeneutics some enemies within the natural sciences. One of the most famous of these is a physicist by the name of Alan Sokal.

In an attempt to discredit hermeneutic, postmodern, and other forms of “non-scientific” knowledge, Sokal wrote a paper which he intended to be complete gibberish, to see if a postmodern cultural studies journal would “publish an article liberally salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors’ ideological preconceptions”. The paper, entitled “*Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity*” [1], was accepted and published in the journal *Social Text*.”

Wikipedia gives more details under the heading “The Sokal Affair”:

The **Sokal Affair** was a famous hoax played by physicist Alan Sokal upon the editorial staff and readership of a leading journal in the academic humanities. In 1996, Sokal, a professor of physics at New York University, submitted a pseudoscientific paper for publication in a postmodern cultural studies journal, as an experiment to see if a humanities journal would, in Sokal’s words: “publish an article liberally salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors’ ideological preconceptions.”

The paper, titled “*Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity*,” [1] was published in the Spring/Summer 1996 issue of *Social Text*, without any review from a qualified physicist. On the same day of its publication, Sokal announced in another publication, *Lingua Franca*, that the article was a hoax.

The expose caused an academic scandal for Duke University, where *Social Text* is published. Sokal called his paper “a pastiche of left-wing cant, fawning references, grandiose quotations, and outright nonsense”, which was “structured around the silliest quotations I could find about mathematics and physics” made by humanities academics.

## Appendix 2 Postmodernity Favors Islam

Mark Steyn wrote an excellent column on January 6<sup>th</sup> of 2006. It is entitled, “It’s the Demography, Stupid: The Real Reason the West Is in Danger of Extinction.”

Steyn shows that the population of European countries is dropping precipitously. The only way these countries are surviving is by importing foreign workers. These workers are Muslim.

I must say that Steyn never used the terms *postmodernism*, *postmodernity*, or *postmodern*. However, he spoke of tolerance and multiculturalism, which are two of the hallmarks of postmodernity. Clearly Steyn’s comments on the alarming rise of Muslims in the world’s population in the face of liberal tolerance of Muslim intolerance directly relates to postmodernity.

Steyn’s comments are chilling:

What’s the better bet? A globalization that exports cheeseburgers and pop songs or a globalization that exports the fiercest aspects of its culture? When it comes to forecasting the future, the birthrate is the nearest thing to hard numbers. If only a million babies are born in 2006, it’s hard to have two million adults enter the workforce in 2026 (or 2033, or 2037, or whenever they get around to finishing their Anger Management and Queer Studies degrees). And the hard data on babies around the Western world is that they’re running out a lot faster than the oil is. “Replacement” fertility rate—i.e., the number you need for merely a stable population, not getting any bigger, not getting any smaller—is 2.1 babies per woman. Some countries are well above that: the global fertility leader, Somalia, is 6.91, Niger 6.83, Afghanistan 6.78, Yemen 6.75. Notice what those nations have in common? [They are all Muslim countries.]

Scroll way down to the bottom of the Hot One Hundred top breeders and you’ll eventually find the United States, hovering just at replacement rate with 2.07 births per woman. Ireland is 1.87, New Zealand 1.79, Australia 1.76. But Canada’s fertility rate is down to 1.5, well below replacement rate; Germany and Austria are at 1.3, the brink of the death spiral; Russia and Italy are at 1.2; Spain 1.1, about half replacement rate. That’s to say, Spain’s population is halving every generation. By 2050, Italy’s population will

have fallen by 22%, Bulgaria's by 36%, Estonia's by 52%. In America, demographic trends suggest that the blue states ought to apply for honorary membership of the EU: In the 2004 election, John Kerry won the 16 with the lowest birthrates; George W. Bush took 25 of the 26 states with the highest. By 2050, there will be 100 million fewer Europeans, 100 million more Americans—and mostly red-state Americans...

Of the increase in global population between 1970 and 2000, the developed world accounted for under 9% of it, while the Muslim world accounted for 26%. Between 1970 and 2000, the developed world declined from just under 30% of the world's population to just over 20%, the Muslim nations increased from about 15% to 20%...

Europe is significantly more Islamic, having taken in during that period [1970 to 2000] some 20 million Muslims (officially)—or the equivalents of the populations of four European Union countries (Ireland, Belgium, Denmark and Estonia). Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the West: In the U.K., more Muslims than Christians attend religious services each week. (Emphasis added.)

### Appendix 3

#### **For Further Reading**

“Christian Education, Worldviews, and Postmodernity's Challenge” by Bruce A. Little (*JETS*, September 1997: 433-44).

Note these remarks from his last paragraph:

Two caveats are in order, however. (1) Christian educators/pastors must avoid allowing Enlightenment's grandchild, postmodernity, to influence education as the Enlightenment affected colonial education. As history reveals, accommodating the Enlightenment was partly responsible for the secularization of the early American academy. (2) Christian educators/pastors must realize they cannot serve the needs of the culture and the needs of the church in the same way. Christian education directly informs

and trains Christians who in turn can challenge the postmodern mind in and out of the public square with a Christian worldview. Christian education cannot serve two masters. God is the source and end of the Christian educator's task, not a culturally-oriented consensus. The Church exists primarily as a voice for God's truth, not as a moral/religious glue for society—that is, Christian education owes its allegiance to God, not culture. Failure to recognize this distinction will confuse the mission of Christian education and eventually weaken the curriculum, thus corrupting the distinctiveness of the Christian worldview. Whereas only a truly Christian worldview can meet the challenge of the postmodern mind, Christians must submit every aspect of life to a Christian worldview, beginning with Christian education.”

“Emergent: Believe It...Or You're Not...Saved,” by Ken Silva.

[http://www.apprising.org/archives/2006/09/emergent\\_believ\\_1.html](http://www.apprising.org/archives/2006/09/emergent_believ_1.html).

“Follow the White Rabbit: Reframing the Spiritual Journey,” by James Wheeler.

[http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/postmodernism/white\\_rabbit.php](http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/postmodernism/white_rabbit.php).

“The Gospel and Postmodernism,” by Ross P. Rohde.

[http://www.newway.org/the\\_gospel\\_and\\_postmodernism.htm](http://www.newway.org/the_gospel_and_postmodernism.htm)

Hart, D. G. *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004).

According to Hart, “[Evangelicalism’s] design was to affirm a lowest common denominator set of convictions and practices” (p. 183). “Tolerance and civility” are valued much more in contemporary evangelicalism than zeal for sound doctrine (p. 71). “Scholars were not the only ones to ask whether evangelicalism had any substance beyond vague and warm affirmations about a personal relationship with Jesus” (p. 15). “If being an evangelical means liking Billy Graham, with a spot in one’s heart reserved for James Dobson and Tim LaHaye, then evangelicalism requires very little from its adherents” (p. 124). “Like creation after Genesis 1:1, [evangelicalism] was formless and void” (p. 183).



Jacob's Well Church, Kansas City, MO. <http://jacobswellchurch.org/>

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“Modernism, Postmodernism, and Confessional Education in Christian Colleges and Universities,” by Elmer J. Thiessen (<http://www.directionjournal.org/article/?1017>).

Thiessen, writing about education in confessional Mennonite schools, takes a basically positive view on postmodernism. Note this statement in his conclusion:

A Mennonite college has a unique understanding of what the human inheritance of beliefs and understandings is or should be. A Mennonite college should therefore initiate/socialize students *systematically* into a Mennonite inheritance. And we should not make any excuses for this confessional component of education. But of course, we should at the same time broaden the intellectual horizons of our students so they come to understand and appreciate other ways of looking at the world. We also need to free our students to reject the inheritance that they are being initiated into. And we should give them the tools and the necessary background to be able to disagree with what they are taught, or to move constructively beyond what they are taught.

“Not Your Father's Seminary: How Postmodernism, the Culture Wars, and the Information Age Forced Seminaries to Change Everything—and Stay the Same,” by Ronald Jack William.

<http://seminarygradschool.com/seminaryeducation/october2005/adv1205.1.html>

“Postmodernism and You: Education,” by Gary DeLashmutt and Roger (<http://www.xenos.org/ministries/crossroads/doteduc.htm>).

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“Theological Education Options Moving Beyond the Traditional,” by Pat Cole. [http://www.baptiststandard.com/2000/3\\_22/pages/theological.html](http://www.baptiststandard.com/2000/3_22/pages/theological.html)

“Unpacking Postmodernism: Is a Postmodern Ministry Really What You’re After?” by Kary Oberbrunner.

<http://www.karyoberbrunner.com/newsletter/documents/unpackingpostmodernism.pdf>

Wood, W. Jay. *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

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[http://www.youthfrontconversations.com/index.cfm?PAGE\\_ID=50](http://www.youthfrontconversations.com/index.cfm?PAGE_ID=50).