

## The Bridges and Barriers Research Project

The Bridges and Barriers Research Project set out in 1999 to answer the questions: What are the cultural barriers to the proclamation of the gospel and to the growth of healthy churches in Spain? And what natural cultural bridges exist that we can utilize to see more effective evangelism and healthier growing churches? The first outcome of the Bridges and Barriers project was a report entitled *The Gospel and Postmodernism*. That report documented the existence of postmodernism in Spain and its philosophical implications for the Spanish Evangelical Church. It also highlighted

***What kinds of ministries tend to work in postmodern contexts and which do not? What does a postmodern sensitive church look like?***

the fact that postmodernism is a significant cluster of cultural issues that can not be ignored if the Evangelical Church is to grow and prosper in Spain.

The Bridges and Barriers Research Project originally planned to do actual street interviews with non-Christians and ask them their opinions on how they viewed religion and what were religious barriers for them and what they viewed as attractive in religion. We actually went through the process of doing four different pilot projects to refine our questionnaire and did around 200 interviews in these pilot projects.

However, during this process we were informed that this type of research had already been done by secular sociologists. Through reading these sociological works we found that they had asked much the same questions that we had, had broader samples than we could have had, had done various works over different times and that their analysis was very well done. These studies clearly document postmodernism in Spain and mention the spiritual tendencies that seem common among postmoderns in other areas of the world. They also confirmed the results of the interviews we did in our pilot projects.

There were a second series of books by secular sociologists who were contracted by various organizations within the Catholic Church to analyze the spiritual condition in Spain. These works were answering Catholic questions but the general information confirmed what other sociologists were saying about the postmodern spiritual condition of Spain. Even though the questions came specifically from a Catholic point of view, the content was useful to us as well. I think it is helpful to point out that these sociologists were not particularly complementary to the Catholic Church. In other words, they were not just telling the Catholic Church what it wanted to hear. Their analysis was straightforward, honest and speaks to many of the issues that we face as Evangelicals. I do not agree with all of their conclusions because as an Evangelical Christian I must view issues through a biblical lens, which did not constrain them. However, their analysis was scientifically accurate and very helpful. For a list of these sociological works see the annotated bibliography at the end of this report.

Since postmodernism's existence and spiritual tendencies were being confirmed in Spain by secular sociologists, we felt the next step would be to find out how effective ministry was done in other areas of the world where people had the same cultural and spiritual tendencies. We decided to do a web search on the Internet asking two basic questions: How does one do evangelism among postmoderns? And how does one "do

church” among postmoderns? We spent over 200 hours on the web researching these questions. We were particularly curious to see if there were any general patterns in these two areas. We were also curious to see if there were churches in Spain that fit these general patterns, if such patterns existed. Finally we wanted to know if these Spanish postmodern

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style churches had relatively greater or lesser success in reaching the Spanish people with the gospel.

This report intends to start where *The Gospel and Postmodernism* left off. Its purpose is to explore the practical strategic considerations of postmodernism in the Spanish church context. It will try to answer such questions as what kinds of ministries tend to work in postmodern contexts and which do not? What does a postmodern sensitive church look like? What kinds of issues are postmodern and which are national, local or personal? What is the general pattern of evangelism in postmodern contexts and how does it differ from more traditional models? What do we really know about evangelism and churches in a postmodern context and what do we not yet know? What do we know about postmodernism in the Spanish church context and what do we not yet know? What are some ideas that can be explored and experimented with?

### **The Realities of Postmodernism**

The first thing that needs to be understood is that postmodernism is a worldwide phenomenon. It is not merely an American situation, nor is it limited to Anglo-Saxon countries or even Western European countries. Such diverse places as Japan, the Muslim World and Eastern European countries are undergoing some type of postmodern worldview shift.

Its philosophical base comes from France, with such philosophers as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean Francois Lyotard, although there are other postmodern philosophers as well such as Umberto Eco from Italy and Richard Rorty from the United States. Postmodernism is not a philosophy invented by philosophers, rather it is a global shift of worldview. Such people as Derrida and Lyotard did not invent postmodernism; they merely describe it and give it a philosophical structure. However, in the process they also promote it and shape it.

***What do we really know about evangelism and churches in a postmodern context and what do we not yet know? What do we know about postmodernism in the Spanish church context and what do we not yet know?***

A better way to understand postmodernism is to view it as a response to the western world’s 500-year experiment with rationalism commonly called the “modern” worldview. The modern worldview, that started with the Renaissance and was further clarified in the Enlightenment, basically stated that the measure of all things is man and that man can fully understand his world through science and reason. The experiment is over and the world has found that modernism is emotionally

unsatisfying and does not adequately deal with such important questions as: Where do I come from? What is the meaning of life? How can I understand the spiritual dimensions of life?

If the rational modern worldview is not fulfilling, then what can take its place? The current answer is postmodernism. This is a worldview that says man can not answer every question. Truth is extremely complex and is impossible to fully express in human language. It takes much more than reason to explain the world we find ourselves in. For a postmodern, rational thinking and science, emotion, tradition, intuition and community are all equally helpful for understanding our world. Since humans can not fully understand or express truth in human language, there is more of a tendency to look for local “truths” that may not explain everything, but help us get through life. This aspect of postmodernism is often called pluralism, which basically states, it is true for you but it may not be true for me. You live with your truth and I’ll live with mine.

### **The Postmodern Person**

What does the postmodern person act like? How are they different from modern people? The following is a profile of postmodern people from their own perspective.

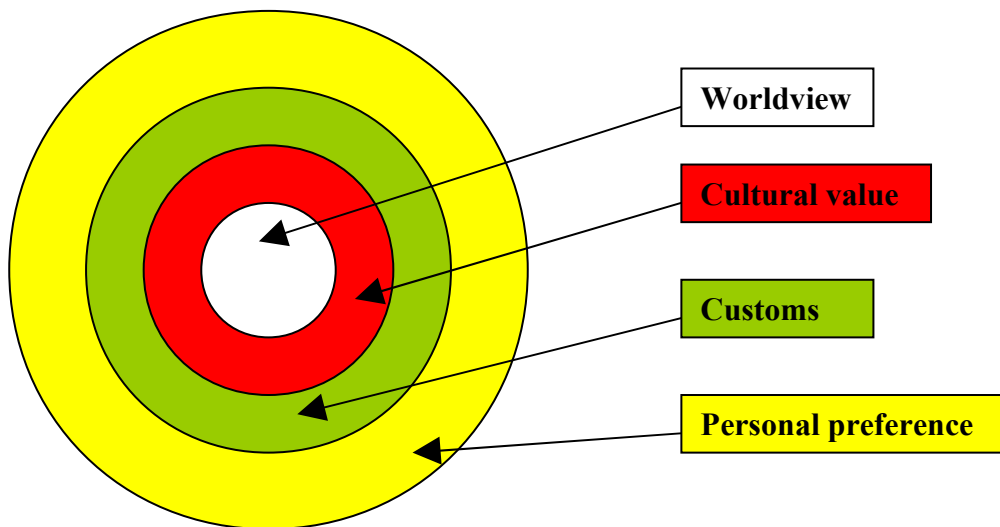


I’m looking for a truth that works for me.  
I can only try to see life from my own perspective; reality is too complex to understand it all.  
I’m interested in the values of my group and my community.  
I believe in being tolerant.  
I believe in letting others live like they want to.  
I don’t like it when people argue about how their group or beliefs are better.  
I want practical answers to life. I’m not drawn to idealistic schemes.  
I am suspicious of schemes that try to explain everything or give simplistic answers to complex questions.  
When people talk to me about these schemes I think of it as “noise” to be ignored.  
I like to have a group of close friends with which I share common values.  
I don’t like institutional religion.  
I do have a vague desire for non-institutional spirituality. But I don’t know how to find it.

These are a few of the more common values of postmodernism. Not every person in a postmodern society holds each one of these values. However, there is a strong tendency in the society for these values and most people hold many, if not all of these values.

One needs to distinguish between philosophical postmoderns and “street” postmoderns. Philosophical postmoderns, like the above mentioned philosophers and their philosophy students in universities, tend to state that there really is no such thing as truth. The average person on the street is not nearly so philosophical. In fact, few ponder the deep questions of life, but they have still absorbed the basic postmodern worldview. If forced to express in words how they view life, the average street postmoderns would more likely state that truth exists, it is just impossible to fully understand. Because of its complexity they tend to look for a “truth” that works for them. Most of the people we meet are not philosophical postmoderns but street postmoderns. The good news is that street postmoderns tend to be quite open to considering the gospel if it is expressed in postmodern sensitive ways.

As stated above, postmodernism is a shift of worldview on a worldwide scale. This can best be expressed with the following graphic.



Worldview is the most profound level of cultural expression. It expresses the most deeply and widely held values. These are the values that form the framework of how we view and understand our world. Worldview values are often held by many cultures in many parts of the world.

Cultural values are also very significant value structures. While they often are somewhat similar to other cultural expressions within the same worldview, they are what make cultures distinct. Cultural values are what make the Spanish different from the French, or the people from Galicia different from those from Catalunya.

Customs are usually local in nature. They reflect such local preferences as food, dress and local dance customs. This is why different groups of youth in the same town may prefer to wear different types of clothing and participate in different activities.

Personal preference is what makes one person different from another. Some prefer reading to watching movies, for example.

Of course there is considerable overlap in these categories and sometimes it will be difficult to distinguish if something is a cultural value or a local custom. The main

issue here is that postmodernism is on the worldview level. It is a change in the way people view and understand their world. It is the deepest kind of cultural shift. Worldview changes are extremely infrequent. The last worldview change in western culture was the Renaissance, which occurred 500 years ago. It would not be reasonable to expect postmodernism to go away soon. It will probably be here in some form or another for a number of generations.

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Since postmodernism is a worldview shift it will have regional and national expressions. France is postmodern and so is England but they are culturally different from each other because they have different cultural values and histories. However, these cultural values will still express themselves within

the worldview framework of postmodernism.

### **Postmodernism in Spain**

Since postmodernism is multigenerational, we will also see differences between different generations within the same culture. In Spain, those born after 1945 tend to be more postmodern in their value structure. This is based on an observation made by sociologist Francisco Andrés Orizo in *Los nuevos valores de los españoles*.<sup>1</sup>

*La edad separa a la población en dos segmentos: el de los 18 a los 44 años, algo más favorable a los movimientos, y el de los que pasan de los 45 años, algo menos favorable.*

(Age separates the population in two segments: those who are 18 to 44 years of age, tend to favor the movements, and those who are over 45 years old, do not tend to favor them.)

Orizo is referring to social movements traditionally favored by postmoderns such as human rights, ecology, disarmament and feminism. This change in values was noticeable in the other sociological studies, in the same age group. Orizo's study was published in 1991, but his research was done in 1990. Hence, those born after 1945 tend to show the postmodern shift in values.

This means that Spain has three postmodern generations. Each succeeding generation will be somewhat distinct from the other and each will be more postmodern in its value structure, than the one before it.

The interesting thing about Spain is that it never fully practiced modernism as much of the rest of the western world did. This is principally due to the powerful influence the Roman Catholic Church has had on the history of Spain. The Catholic Church has an ancient (also called traditional) worldview. Spain's failure to fully practice

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modernism is also due to the victory of the Nationalist forces in the Spanish Civil War which re-imposed the traditional world view of the Catholic Church just as Spain was beginning to experiment with modernism during the Second Republic. It was not until Francisco Franco's death in 1975 that Spain could begin to experiment with a new worldview. By that time, postmodernism was becoming the norm in

Western Europe.

*Y no es una casualidad que muchas de estas manifestaciones que rompen los esquemas de la modernidad se lideren dentro del escenario español, cuando aún no habíamos completado las prescritas etapas de un proceso de modernización. Nos hemos hecho posmodernos sin haber ejercido antes de modernos.<sup>2</sup>*

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

### **Postmodernism in the Evangelical Church**

Biblical Christianity has its own worldview. It has its own explanation for the origins of man, our relationship with our Creator and how men should interact with each other. The amazing thing about biblical Christianity is that, while in and of itself it is a worldview, it is able to fully express itself in every time and culture. Biblical Christianity is now in the process of learning to express itself in the new postmodern world.

Christianity was extremely successful in the ancient worldview as it spread rapidly through the Greco-Roman world. It was able to express itself very well in the Renaissance through Protestantism and in the Enlightenment with Modern Evangelicalism. Now as the worldview has changed around us, biblical Christianity again finds itself needing to develop ways to culturally express itself without losing its fundamental truths.

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Christianity's ability to express itself in different cultural contexts while maintaining its fundamental essence is best expressed by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 9:19-23 (NIV):

*Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew,*

<sup>2</sup> Francisco Andrés Orizo, *sistemas de valores en la España de los 90*, (Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas. 1996). Page LV-LVI.

*to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.*

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As we discuss the Church in the postmodern world we need to distinguish between “postmodern sensitive churches” and “postmodern churches”. In this report postmodern sensitive churches will mean those churches that are as careful as possible to express themselves in ways that are comfortable to the postmodern society around them, without losing their biblical foundations.

Postmodern churches are also sensitive to the culture around them, but they have become so in tune with postmodern culture that they have failed to distinguish those aspects of postmodernism that clash with the biblical worldview. These are titles I am using for clarity in this report. I am advocating that we become sensitive to the Spanish postmodern world around us, without losing our biblical essence. We should become postmodern sensitive without becoming postmodern.

As Christians we can embrace much of the postmodern worldview, but we can not embrace all. Postmoderns are correct to assert that humans cannot fully comprehend truth. Only God can do that. They are correct to assert that we can only view reality from specific points of view because we are limited as human beings. The postmodern desire for community fits well with the biblical concept of a local church and the worldwide church or “Body of Christ”. To a point their value of tolerance parallels the biblical value of “as much as possible be at peace with all men”, but not perfectly.

But postmodernism comes up short when it asserts that all points of view are of equal value. As Christians we would say that only God's point of view is actually correct. We are fortunate indeed to have a God who has revealed himself in written form

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in the Bible and in human form in Jesus Christ. As Christians we assert that Jesus Christ not only spoke the truth but is Truth. When the postmodern worldview and the Christian worldview come in conflict we should clearly, openly and honestly express who we are and why. But we should do this with kindness and grace, avoiding any sense of an argumentative spirit.

As human beings, we Christians should honestly say that we are limited in our complete understanding of the Scripture. That is why sincere Christians have honest differences of opinion on the fine points of biblical truth. However, that does not make the Bible any less true. The weakness lies not in the veracity of Scripture, but in our weakness as human beings. What is more, we have the perfect example of Jesus Christ, who was not only a man but is God himself, who visited Earth in human form. As humans, we fail to live up to his example, but the weakness again lies in us, not in Jesus Christ.

### Postmodern Sensitive Evangelism

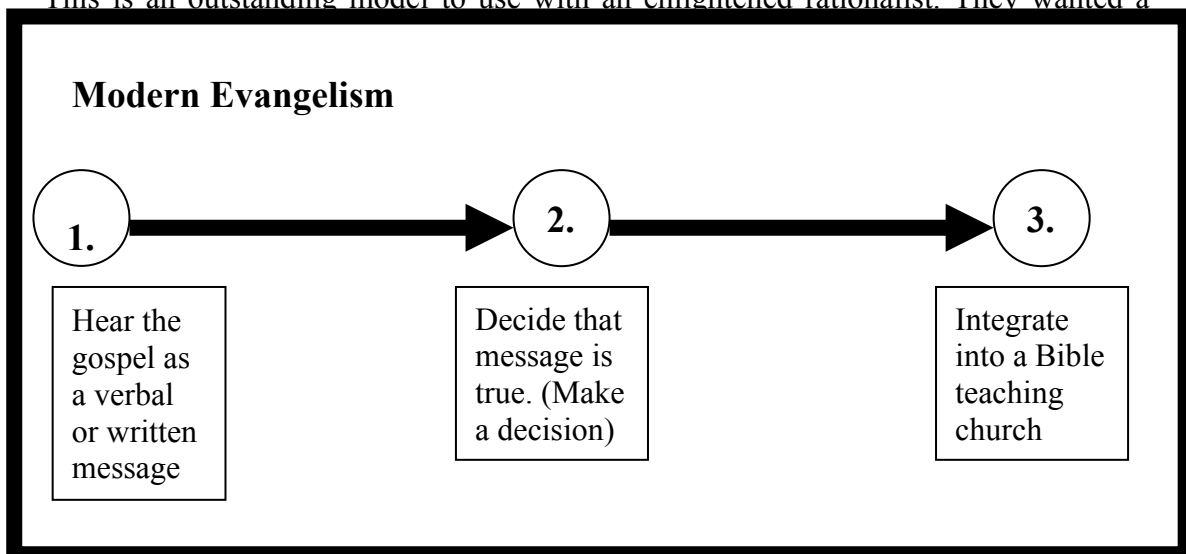
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There seems to be a general pattern to the way effective evangelism was done in a modern context. The same is true of effective evangelism in a postmodern context. But effective evangelism in a postmodern context is different from effective modern evangelism. Most of us have done ministry in churches and organizations that have

learned over the years to be effective in presenting the gospel and having church services among “enlightened” or modern people. The Evangelical Church rightly learned to adapt to this culture and present the truth of its message in ways that would make cultural sense.

The modern model starts with the “message”. The message of the gospel is clearly and rationally presented. One is asked to make a decision as to the truth of the gospel and to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. When one believes the truth of the gospel he is then directed to a good local church where he will grow in his understanding of his faith and become more mature. A good church is one that clearly teaches the doctrinal truths of the Scriptures.

This is an outstanding model to use with an enlightened rationalist. They wanted a



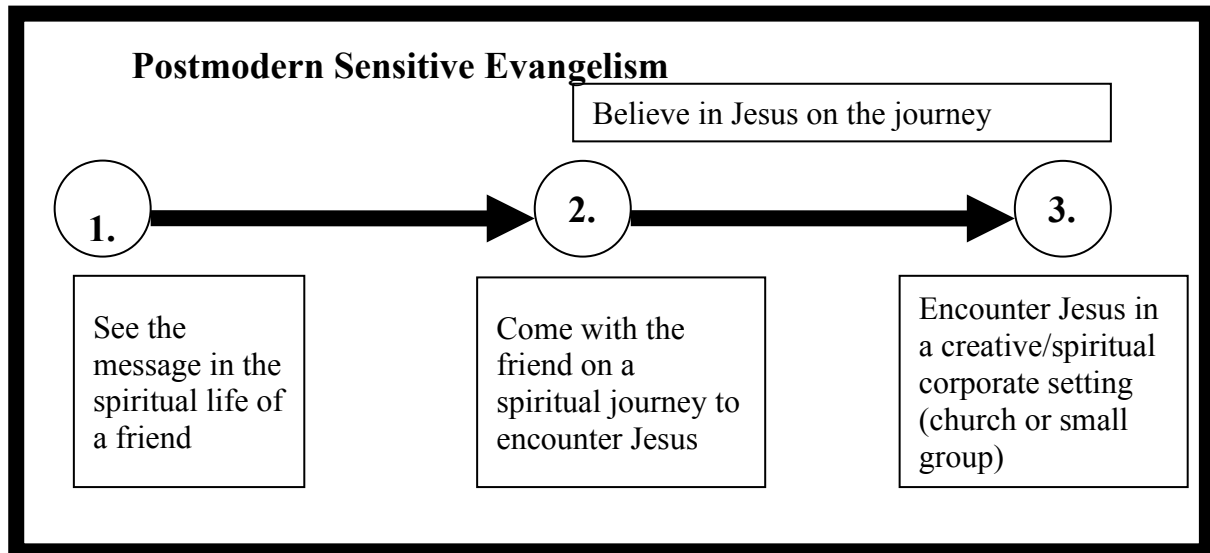
clear rational presentation of the truth. They needed to know that this was the

universal truth that governed the universe. When they were convinced of this, they made a clear decision to believe that truth.

In modern evangelism, there are two basic scenarios of preaching the gospel. Both use the above outline. The first scenario is personal one on one evangelism. The object was to convince someone through a brief, logical presentation of the gospel that they needed to make a decision. Although there are hundreds of ways to do this, it is common to use some sort of clear logical outline or booklet such as the Steps to Peace with God, the Four Spiritual Laws or the Bridge Illustration.

The second scenario of modern evangelism is public evangelism. This is usually some type of public proclamation of the gospel to groups of people, often called a campaign or gospel meeting. Again, there are many ways to do this but the general outline explained above is usually used. There is a verbal explanation of gospel, a decision is called for and those who respond are “followed up” by being directed to a Bible teaching church.

The postmodern model starts with “relationship”. The postmodern sees spirituality lived out in the life of someone he trusts. He is invited by his friend to explore spirituality with him. He learns that spirituality is really a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He is invited to explore this relationship not only individually but also in the community of others who are seeking relationship with Jesus. As he encounters spirituality in the form of the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of his friends, in their love for him and one another and in the beauty of artistically creative corporate worship, he decides to believe and follow Jesus.



This new model often sounds bizarre to those of us who have grown up in the modern Evangelical church. It can sound like a bunch of mystical nonsense. But keep in mind that to typical postmoderns the gospel, presented as a rational message presented by someone they do not have a close relationship with, is just a bunch of noise to be ignored. It doesn't even sound very much like a spiritual message to them. This is our strategic impasse. We are presenting the gospel in ways they won't listen to, while we have the answers to the very things they are looking for. One way to summarize this is

to say that the modern model started with the message as a rational, verbal declaration. Postmodern evangelism starts with the message of a spiritual life. Without seeing the messages wrapped in the life of a trusted friend, the message as a verbal declaration will probably not be listened to.

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Just as modern evangelism had basic evangelistic scenarios, postmodern sensitive evangelism also has basic scenarios. In postmodernism there are three basic scenarios. Again the first is personal one on one evangelism. Unlike modern evangelism, this is not viewed as a one-time event but as an ongoing process. The evangelist, after having lived a life that gives evidence of spirituality, invites his friend to investigate that spirituality through the person of Jesus Christ. In that journey, the friend will be introduced to the salvation offered by Jesus Christ and will probably be introduced to a community of people who are also seeking to experience Christ. Notice that the basic pattern follows the outline for postmodern sensitive evangelism.

Instead of the public campaign of modernism, postmodern sensitive evangelism is usually done in some form of small group studies. The general outline is that groups of people are invited to explore spirituality through the person of Jesus Christ in a group setting. They are then lead through an organized study of the Scriptures to see who Jesus Christ is, what he offers and how one can encounter Him. This is usually done in a home, although it can be done in a church setting. It is usually associated with some type of meal or snack. The emphasis is on a warm, non-threatening, non-confrontational setting where people can investigate Jesus together. In Spain where the Evangelical Church is viewed as both institutional and as a sect it would probably not be wise to do this in a church building.

The third scenario is actually evangelism done within the walls of the church itself. This seems strange to traditional modern evangelists. Why would an unsaved person be in church? In fact, to the modern person there is a clear distinction of appropriate boundaries. Outside the church building is the physical domain of the non-Christian. Inside the church is the domain of Christians. Of course, non-Christians are not restricted from being inside the church building, it is just that activities that go on in this physical domain are done with the Christian in mind.

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But we need to remember that a postmodern person who is seeking spirituality wants to see that spirituality lived out in practical ways in community. Where is he going to see that if it is not in a church or at least a small group of Christians? Since evangelism is a process for postmoderns and they are quite likely to want to explore the community nature of Christianity before making a decision for Christ it is quite

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likely that you will find a non-Christian postmodern in a church. This becomes a significant strategic issue. The church building is where much effective postmodern evangelism is done. This is the

very place that the truths they have been hearing from their trusted friend and that they may have seen in a small group setting is being lived out on a larger scale. Seeing Christians living out the fruit of the spirit in a large community in creative artistic ways, is a powerful witness to postmoderns. If the service is beautifully creative and spiritual, the postmodern seeker may come back time after time until they finally believe. A graciously done altar call or some other call to commitment within a church makes good sense in this context.

Why shouldn't small group evangelism be done in a church building in Spain, yet evangelism can be done in a church service? The difference is a matter of timing and where the person is in the process of seeking. Going to an evangelical church building, where there is only a small group meeting, before they have been drawn by the spirituality of the Christians that they have met, could be a barrier. On the other hand, as the person goes along in the seeking process, it is quite probable that they will want to be involved in a genuine church service. Every case is different and we need to be sensitive to the person and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Each scenario for effective postmodern sensitive evangelism – personal, small group and church setting – is a place where postmodern people will believe in Christ. But it is important that we do not view these as separate entities. Churches that are effective in postmodern evangelism often have evangelistic activity going on in all of these places at the same time and use these three scenarios together in a creative dynamic. Christians serve the non-Christian in their web of relationship through their individual giftedness. If they have the gift of service they serve, if they have the gift of mercy they extend compassion. If they have the gift of administration they might help a friend get their checkbook balanced. In doing this they express Christian spirituality. They verbally give testimony to Christ's activity in their life and when the time is ripe they invite their friends to experience Christ in a community of believers. This may be a small group or a postmodern sensitive church service.

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As they are lovingly invited to explore spirituality through relationship with Jesus, they will probably be given a number of gracious, non-coercive opportunities to accept

him as their Lord and Savior. Some will take quite awhile to make this decision, others will do it quite quickly, still others will never make that decision. Not every postmodern person who clearly understands the gospel will become a Christian. This has been true in every age and it continues to be true today.

## Postmodern Evangelical Methodologies

There are a number of methodologies that use this basic outline. One that has met considerable success in Europe is the Alpha courses out of Holy Trinity Brompton in London. There are currently over 16,000 Alpha courses running in 116 different countries. This is a 10-week 15 session series of well-done videos, which take the “seekers” systematically through a course that answers questions like the following. Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus die? Why and how should I read the Bible? Why and how should I pray? How does God guide us? What about the church?<sup>3</sup>

Another methodology is evangelistic home Bible studies. These are very similar to the Alpha courses without the videos. Evangelistic home Bible studies are often focused on biblical texts that help the seeker encounter Jesus. Some postmodern sensitive churches also use their cell groups to fulfill this function. If this is the case, special effort needs to be made to make sure the small groups are postmodern sensitive.

The Bible really doesn't talk much about making decisions. The biblical terminology is to believe. Here is another strategic problem. For a modern person to believe means to know something is the truth and therefore acknowledge it as true. For a postmodern to believe is more to know, deep in the heart, that this is good and right and satisfying, therefore they will hold these truths for their own. Both are saying they 'believe' but what it means to believe and the very process of belief is different.

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In this aspect, the process of believing in the postmodern world is much like it was in the time of Jesus. The modern world changed the meaning of the word. We are going back to a time when people believe with their whole hearts and don't necessarily just make intellectual decisions. But the way of getting them to that point of belief is very different. If the language of the enlightened rationalist was science, the language of the postmodern is creativity. If the vehicle of belief for the rationalist is reason, the vehicles of belief for the postmodern are relationship and community.

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But how do we know that this is true for the postmodern in different areas of the world? This new way of doing evangelism, through

relationship and community, is based not on local culture or customs or personal preferences. It is based on some of the core values of postmodernism. It is based on the postmodern desire for personal, non-institutional spirituality. It is based on the desire for truth to come from the local community (friends), not from institutional religion. It is based on the longing of postmoderns to experience human warmth and love in community. And it is based on speaking their language: creativity. While it is

<sup>3</sup> For more information on Alpha courses in Spanish write to: Mary Fortier Klein, Apartado de Correos 303, Santa Gertrudis, 07814 Ibiza. Tel/Fax 971 187 19.

true that the kind of creative art that attracts will vary from culture to culture and from generation to generation, artistic expression and the desire to encounter spirituality through creativity probably will not change. How this model will be expressed from country to country and from one generation to another will be different. However, the fact remains that this general outline speaks to the postmodern heart, which give us a much better chance to help them believe.

### **The Postmodern Sensitive Church**

Postmodern sensitive churches start with a vibrant Christian community (local church) that focuses on the deep spiritual growth of its members. It often teaches its doctrine through creative artistic expression as well as through preaching. There is often a focus on creative, contemporary music and the theater arts. There is preaching and teaching but the emphasis is on personal interaction and creativity.

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Leadership structure tends to be non-hierarchical. The leader is an empowering leader who helps others express their Christianity, not someone who demonstrates institutional power. Instead of a clear definition between clergy and laity, there is a feeling that the leadership is just another member of the community expressing their gifts for the good of the church body. Leadership style is non-authoritarian, but rather focuses on encouraging the members to grow spiritually and express their individual gifts in ministry.

There is a strong tendency to have small groups. But these groups are not Bible studies as much as intimate groups, where the members minister to one another spiritually. This ministry may come through sharing the Bible with one another, through praying for one another, through counseling, through sharing a meal together and through just loving one another.

There is a passion for the personal spiritual growth of individuals. Spiritual growth is defined as when Jesus begins to personally guide the believer's life. There is an acknowledgement of the divine paradox of the person becoming more Christlike, while at the same time become more of an individual. This is expressed in the fruit of the Spirit (Christlikeness) and the gifts of the Spirit (individual expression of spirituality).

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A modern person, who was interested in God, wanted to know the truth about God. The modern evangelical church became very good at answering this need by developing and refining systematic theology. We tried to systematically explain all the truth about God, his ways and his church through doctrine.

The postmodern is much more likely to want to know how he can personally encounter God. Therefore the postmodern sensitive church must become adept at answering questions like the following. How can I find God's will for my life? How

does God lead us? How can I follow God? How do I encounter God in the Scriptures? How can I have a deeply spiritual prayer life? How can I hear God's voice? How can I discern if God is really speaking to me? We will lose converts if we try to give systematic theology to them when they are actually seeking to experience God personally.

Does that mean that systematic theology is wrong? Absolutely not, in fact, it is essential if the postmodern believer is to grow in grace. But systematic presentation of doctrine can no longer take the front stage as it did in many modern evangelical churches.

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What role should systematic doctrine play then in the postmodern sensitive church? A good analogy for this role is the fence around the schoolyard. Psychological studies have shown that if children play in a schoolyard without a fence they tend to huddle in the middle of the schoolyard. They fear getting too close to the edge because they fear the

danger of traffic. However, the second a fence is put up they utilize the whole schoolyard for their play. The point of a fence in a schoolyard is to keep the kids safe, to let them know their limits.

In the same way, doctrine keeps our relationship with Christ on safe ground. The point of a schoolyard is to have a place to play. The point of Christianity is to have a deep relationship with Christ. Salvation is the important first step in that relationship, but it is not the whole relationship. We need to emphasize the relationship and how one does that, but within the limits of good doctrine. To take the analogy further there has been a tendency among some Christians to concentrate on the length of the schoolyard fence, the height of the fence, what color of the paint and what kind of steel and brick it is made of. At the same time, they have not taught the school children the joys of playing during recess. In other words, we teach the fine points of doctrine but don't teach the practicalities of experiencing Christ in joyful relationship.

A church that does not emphasize practical spirituality will not be able to effectively keep postmodern believers. It does not matter how effective their evangelism is. Postmoderns will not stay if a church, whose emphasis is on the fine points of doctrine, but does not teach the believer

how to personally encounter God. Just as a school without a fence is a dangerous place to play, so a church without clear biblical doctrine is a dangerous place for a Christian to grow.

***A church that does not emphasize practical spirituality will not be able to effectively keep postmodern believers.***

But the point of a schoolyard is not the fence, even less the color of the fence. It is a place to play. The point of a church is not merely to discuss the fine points of doctrine. It is a place to learn to have a vital, biblical relationship with Christ and to worship him within the joy of community. Biblical doctrine is essential, but it is not the primary focus.

In the postmodern sensitive church, the times when the whole body gets together are viewed as a time of corporate worship, fellowship and celebration through music and

creativity. There will be teaching done, but the emphasis will be on worship and celebration. Most teaching will be creative teaching and teaching through different methodologies not merely a lecture or preaching, although this is done as well.

***Teaching is interactive and participatory.***

However, the preaching and teaching that is done, does clearly state the truth of the Scriptures. Teaching often is interactive and participatory. There may be questions thrown out to the group, which will be answered.

During a sermon, small groups may form to work through a question before the teaching continues. There may be an emphasis on individual members giving a testimony of how God is at work in their life. This may be coordinated with the topic of a sermon or just a testimony time. Worship services are flexible. If there is a sense that the Spirit has spoken through a testimony, song or drama, the leader may set aside his sermon and call for a life changing response from the church. There is often an emphasis on sharing some type of meal, snack or coffee together.

There is structure to the church and in the worship service. These structures are meant to facilitate spiritual growth. Therefore they are flexible. As long as these structures or programs are meeting needs and helping people grow in Christ, they will be welcome. If they, for some reason, begin to hinder growth, they will be adapted or set aside. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. In the same way, the structure is to help people grow. People are not in the church to facilitate the programs.

***There is structure to the church and in the worship service. These structures are meant to facilitate spiritual growth. Therefore they are flexible.***

Much emphasis is placed on making the place of worship a warm environment. This is done by making sure the ambiance is comfortable, tasteful and artistically beautiful. There is also a lot of emphasis on spirituality being expressed in corporate worship through the expression of love, the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit in community. A metaphor for the modern church service could be the Christian classroom. A metaphor for the postmodern church could be a Christian theater or in some cases even a Christian dinner club.

Growth comes through the web of relationships that members have outside of the church. The invitation for a friend to join the community can be an invitation to join a small group or to visit the larger worship service, depending on the circumstance. There is a strong tendency to be connected to the non-church community through community activities and social ministry to the needy. These are viewed as opportunities to express Christ's love and to

***Growth comes through the web of relationships that members have outside of the church.***

make friendships that may become redemptive friendships.

There is an emphasis on love being expressed in personal relationships, in corporate meetings and in the individual's relationship with Christ. When someone visits a healthy postmodern sensitive church, they often comment on how loving and warm

the people are. There is a sense of the loving community. There is a sense that the outsider is welcome to visit, and to become an insider, if they so choose. But there is not a sense of pressure or force.

Finally there is usually a strong emphasis on prayer. This is not to say that modern era churches didn't pray but that there tends to be a correspondingly higher emphasis on prayer in postmodern sensitive churches. For a case study about prayer in a postmodern sensitive environment, read Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire<sup>4</sup> by Jim Cymbala. This is the story of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. This is also a good case study in the use of testimonies in a church service. Jim Cymbala does not call the Brooklyn Tabernacle a postmodern sensitive church, but it does fit the pattern.

As stated above, if the church is modern in its style, a postmodern is probably not going to come back for a second or third visit. This too is a strategic issue. Which do we change first, our evangelism or our church service? The answer is that we have to change the church service first. There needs to be a vibrant spiritual community to invite to. Does the church have to be perfect before we begin to invite our postmodern friends, neighbors and family to them? No church is perfect, nor will any church ever be perfect. Most postmoderns can understand that we are imperfect people being changed by the power and grace of God. But they want to see evidence of that power and grace working in our lives.

***Most postmoderns can understand that we are imperfect people being changed by the power and grace of God. But they want to see evidence of that power and grace working in our lives.***

### **The Time to Start Postmodern Sensitive Evangelism**

When, then is it time to start doing postmodern sensitive evangelism? We need to be able to honestly answer the following questions in the affirmative. Is the definition of spirituality in our church a growing relationship with Jesus? Do we avoid defining spirituality as conformity to outward forms like frequency of meeting attendance or use of Christian jargon? Are there flexible ministries in place to encourage all believers to continue growing in their spiritual relationship with Christ, not merely knowing the fine points doctrine? Is this church a place where spirituality is expressed in creative, artistic postmodern sensitive ways? Is there evidence of a passion for spirituality that is lived in the daily life of the believers? Are solid biblical doctrines present as parameters to spiritual growth? At the same time is there an avoidance of mere knowledge of doctrine as adequate spirituality? Does leadership tend to be non-hierarchical and non-coercive? Again, no church is perfect, but if these issues are not

***We need to acknowledge that we can not fake passionate spirituality.***

honestly addressed, our churches will be postmodern hostile places.

We also need to acknowledge that we can not fake passionate spirituality. Spirituality is something that happens

when we wholeheartedly seek a relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit begins to control our lives. It is not an academic, theological exercise. Nor is it a matter of

<sup>4</sup> Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*. (Zondervan Publishing House. 1997)

working hard for God. It is a matter of abiding in Christ. In the same way, spirituality in the community of believers is not a matter of going through the right forms. We can have the right music. We can have postmodern sensitive evangelism. We can have a testimony time. We can have drama in our churches and small groups in our homes. We can work really hard at trying to do all the right things. But if the Spirit is not active in our lives and our communities, we will have wasted our time. Non-Christians can sense the difference between true spirituality and those who are going through the motions. It would be much wiser to dedicate ourselves to a season of prayer and repentance, asking God to manifest himself among us, than to try to be a postmodern sensitive church in our own power. Forms and methods have their place, but without the power of the Holy Spirit they are dead.

***It would be much wiser to dedicate ourselves to a season of prayer and repentance...***

### **Testimonies, Symbols, Paradox, Parables and Stories**

Postmoderns like testimonies, symbols, paradox, parables and stories. This is much different than enlightened modern person, who just wanted a clear presentation of the facts. We need to sharpen our abilities to use the story telling arts to reach the heart of postmoderns. This was an art form in which Jesus was a master.

While a postmodern may walk away from us if we give a logical presentation of the gospel, they may very well listen to a personal testimony. But the testimonies they are most interested in are not salvation testimonies but stories of how we have personally experienced God. This could be a testimony of divine healing, answered prayer or God's leading. The important thing is, that they see God interacting in the life of the believer. Postmoderns want a personal encounter with God, so they want to hear of others who have had these kinds of encounters.

Symbols are artistic expression with precise meaning. In the last 500 years, we have stripped the church of much of its symbolism. There are two reasons for this. First, some people mistake the symbol for the reality. It is not the act of taking communion that saves, but rather the act of communion that commemorates the salvation that has already taken place. Still, some have come to believe salvation takes place as we commemorate the symbolic act of communion. Second, since the modern enlightened mind was not particularly drawn to symbolism, we learned to communicate in a more exact way. However, we now live in a time when symbolism has again regained its ability to transfer powerful meaning. We need to be clear that it is merely a symbol, but a symbol that communicates an important truth.

***One postmodern sensitive church has re-instituted a second century Christian custom of placing a pinch of salt on the tongue on a newly baptized person.***

One postmodern sensitive church has re-instituted a second century Christian custom of placing a pinch of salt on the tongue on a newly baptized person as they come out of the baptismal waters. The pastor reminds the person that we are the salt of the earth and our lives are meant to spiritually season the community around us. We could give small candles to every one

tongue on a newly baptized person as they come out of the baptismal waters. The pastor reminds the person that we are the salt of the earth and our lives are meant to spiritually season the community around us. We could give small candles to every one

in a church service. Then the room could be darkened and one candle could be lit. This one candle could light others and as the light of the flame begins to brighten the room the pastor could remind the congregation that we are the light of the world. The natural state of our world is spiritual darkness and our lives are to chase away that darkness. A new custom among second generation postmodern Christians is to wear WWJD bracelets. The letters in English stand for What Would Jesus Do? This is used as a reminder to the wearer that their life is to reflect the life of Jesus, even in difficult situations. All of these are examples of the use of symbolism to communicate a message into the heart of a postmodern believer.

Paradox is another powerful communicator to the postmodern mind. Many of us find paradoxes confusing, yet Jesus used them effectively to communicate profound truths. As Christians, we learn that the first shall be last and the last shall be first. In leadership he who is greatest must serve. We come to understand that God's strength is perfected in weakness and that God keeps treasure in weak earthen vessels. It is on meditating on these paradoxes, that the believer gets a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. Some have tended to avoid paradoxes or explain them to avoid confusion. We need follow the example of Jesus, who knew that some of the deepest truths need to be expressed in paradox so we can ponder them.

***We need follow the example of Jesus, who knew that some of the deepest truths need to be expressed in paradox.***

Jesus was the master of parables. We again live in an age where a story with a powerful spiritual punch can communicate into the heart of believers. Jesus gave us many parables, which will stand on their own. They still communicate powerful truth. Jesus used common customs, activities and objects and invested them with spiritual meaning. What Christian can drink wine from a wineskin, without thinking of Jesus' parable of new wine in old wineskins? How many of us have found a lost coin and were reminded of the parable of the lost coins? But Jesus' parables can also be models for new stories that teach us important truths. We can use the customs, activities and objects around us to tell new parables, which teach old truths. We can tell the parable of the computer, or the parable of the used car or the parable of the soccer coach. Our challenge is the same challenge Jesus had, to take common situations and imbue them with uncommon meaning. For an example of this see *The Parable of the Different Harvests* at the end of this report.

***By draping a shawl over her head and shoulders and through the dramatic use of voice and gesture, Charis told an unforgettable story with spiritual power.***

As Christians, our eyes should be open to those special times when God intersects our lives in obviously supernatural ways. These stories have a particular power to communicate to postmoderns the truths of our God. We also need to tell the truths of the

Bible in dramatic story form. Stories can be much more than sermon illustrations. A friend of my daughters', Charis Gonzalez, once did a dramatic presentation of *Mary's*

*Prayer* by Max Lucado<sup>5</sup>. By draping a shawl over her head and shoulders and through the dramatic use of voice and gesture, Charis told an unforgettable story with spiritual power. Our God is a good storyteller and we should be too.

## **Two Waves of Postmodern sensitive churches**

So far there have been two waves of postmodern sensitive churches. Both have had significant success in reaching postmoderns. The first wave has been among the generation that has its feet in both worlds, the world of enlightened rationalism and postmodernism. These first wave churches reflect their generation. They have some aspects to their way of doing things that are modern/rational and some that are postmodern.

### **Modern aspects of first wave churches**

- Emphasis on clearly defined models
- Highly organized
- Emphasis on programs
- Tendency to become mega-churches
- Tendency to have traditional hours for their church services (but not always)
- Highly structured worship services
- Sometimes have traditional church buildings
- Sometimes have liturgical services
- Leadership structures tend to be hierarchical, but less so than modern churches
- Tendency to use marketing techniques

### **Postmodern aspects of first wave churches**

- Emphasis on creative artistic expression
- Emphasis on gifts of the Spirit (not exclusively the “sign” gifts)
- Emphasis on members using gifts in ministry
- Evangelism through webs of relationship
- Tendency of drawing to a vibrant community
- Often started through a small group
- Tendency to avoid denominational names
- Tendency to be computer literate and to have at least one church web page
- Use of the communication media when possible

Some first wave postmodern churches have become very famous. This is because they have become highly effective in reaching people for Christ. Two famous first wave churches in the United States are Willow Creek Community Church, near Chicago and Saddleback Community Church, near Los Angeles. Both of these churches are huge and both have had explosive growth among the generation of Americans who are part modern and part postmodern. This generation in the United States is called

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<sup>5</sup> Max Lucado, *God Came Near*, (Sisters, Oregon: 1986), pp. 33-35.

the Baby Boomer Generation. A European model of a first wave church is Holy Trinity Brompton, in London from which the Alpha groups come. A French model is the Taize Community, near Taize, France. This model is so different it is hard to place in the first or second wave, although it is clearly postmodern. There are also first wave churches in Australia and other parts of the world.

The first thing to note about these churches, and many which are similar to them around the world, is that they follow the general outline of postmodern evangelism. They have a vibrant church community, full of creative artistic expression, and they draw to that community through webs of relationship. In fact, this type of church has been called the “seeker sensitive” model. In other words, they are sensitive to the spiritual longing that exists among postmodern people.

But they are not fully postmodern in their model. They place a high emphasis on structures and methods. They are formulated on the idea that the “seeker” would want to remain anonymous until they felt comfortable in the community, which is true of first generation postmoderns, but not necessarily the second generation. Their worship service is often highly structured. And they often look a lot like a modern church in architectural structure.

***Interestingly enough, these first wave churches are finding that they are struggling to reach second generation postmoderns.***

Interestingly enough, these first wave churches are finding that they are struggling to reach second generation postmoderns. These postmoderns appreciate the creativity and other postmodern forms but are still uncomfortable with the modern aspects of the first wave churches. Yet, this second generation of postmoderns is still open to spirituality and is “seeking” every bit as much if not more than the first generation of postmoderns. For this second generation, a new type of church has evolved.

## **Second Wave Churches**

In some ways, the second wave churches reflect the first wave, or “seeker” churches, but in some ways they are decidedly different. This is because this second generation is fully postmodern in value structure.

### **Ways in which the second wave churches resemble first wave churches**

- Emphasis on creative artistic expression
- Emphasis on the gifts of the spirit (not exclusively the “sign” gifts)
- Emphasis on members using gifts in ministry
- Evangelism through webs of relationship
- Draw to a vibrant community
- Emphasis on small groups
- Avoidance of denominational names
- Tendency to be computer literate and to have at least one church web page
- Use of the communication media when possible

## Other tendencies of second wave churches

- They are usually started with a small group.
- They view God as the leader of the church. Human leaders are merely exercising organizational or leadership gifts.
- They focus on ministry rising out of the body through giftedness, not on models developed by the leadership.
- Leadership focuses on encouraging people to participate in ministry in which they are gifted, not in volunteering to help with programs.
- There is a tendency to have very non-church-like names, such as Mars Hill Fellowship or Warehouse 242.
- Churches tend to meet in homes as a web of cell groups until they become big enough to have corporate worship.
- There is a tendency to become a web of smaller churches instead of a mega-church.
- Corporate worship is much more like a theater production than a classroom; it is highly focused on music and theater arts.
- Church buildings are often set up like theaters with stages.
- Churches are often filled with art, the front being set up like a theater set.
- There is a tendency to meet at non-traditional hours such as Friday Evening at 9:00 P.M. (Rom. 14:5-6a).
- There is a tendency to have loosely structured worship services, which can respond to the movement of the Spirit within the church.
- There is a tendency to have frank sermons which speak directly to sin.
- At the same, time they are open to visitors who live alternate lifestyles such as homosexuality. While they are clear on the sinful implications of such lifestyles, they also emphasize that the sinner is loved and welcome among God's people.
- There is a tendency to distrust marketing techniques

## Mars Hill Fellowship a Case Study

Mars Hill Fellowship started in Seattle, Washington USA, is a classic example of a second wave church<sup>6</sup>. Mars Hill started as a discussion group among postmodern believers in 1995. This grew into a Bible Study, which turned into a core group, which turned into a church. As they state on their web page, “our original desire was for a church focused on emerging itself with the gospel in the emerging postmodern world and upcoming generations”<sup>7</sup>. They intentionally focused their efforts on second generation postmodern students at the University of Washington. The group started as a Bible study for people between 20 and 30 years old. By October of 1996, they formally organized as a church of 200 people. In the

***Mars Hill Fellowship started in Seattle, Washington USA, is a classic example of a second wave church.***

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.marshillchurch.org>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.marshillchurch.org/secondarypages/who\\_we\\_are/FAQs.htm](http://www.marshillchurch.org/secondarypages/who_we_are/FAQs.htm) p.2

last few years, since the founding of the church, they have planted a number of churches and intend to continue planting churches. The emphasis of the church is not on programs but on experiencing God and allowing him to work in the community of believers and add to the community of believers. Pastor Mark Driscoll comments how to plant a second-generation postmodern church:

*Everything begins in trinitarian community. The bottom line of our faith is love of God and love of neighbor. It seems like most things that have changed the world began like Jesus did, with some people gathering over a meal and trusting God to guide them together on a journey of faith into an unknown future. The days of marketing and promoting the church are very short. Postmoderns are no longer lured or impressed by the business approach to dispensing religious goods and services that many modern, boomer, and suburban congregations have so widely embraced. God always builds ministers before He builds ministries, and so our character, wisdom, prayer, silence, solitude, faith, love, etc. cause people to trust us, and trust those they love to join us in community<sup>8</sup>.*

Pastor Driscoll pretty well sums up the second wave view of church planting. One begins with a small community of faith. This community builds up its individual members in the Lord, and in love, while expecting God to add to the community through the web of relationships. The small group becomes a web of small groups and that web of small groups eventually meet together for corporate worship. When they meet together for corporate worship the emphasis will be on frank teaching and the expression of faith through creativity, particularly contemporary music and theater arts. The corporate worship service does not replace the web of small groups; it enhances what is already going on in those groups.

***Pastor Driscoll pretty well sums up the second wave view of church planting.***

### **Cultural Expression in the Postmodern Sensitive Church**

Postmodern culture has become predominant in Western Europe, the United States and Australia. It is having a significant impact in places like Japan, Eastern Europe and the Muslim world. It has not yet had as significant of impact in places where the ancient worldview has predominated and where the modern worldview did not have a strong hold (Spain and Portugal are clear exceptions here). Such places as Latin America and Africa have not moved to the postmodern worldview as quickly as the Western world has. However, postmodernism is very similar to the ancient worldview with a few significant exceptions. One of them is the acceptance of pluralism.

***Different areas of the postmodern world will have different expressions of the postmodern sensitive church.***

Different areas of the postmodern world will have different expressions of the

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.marshillchurch.org/secondarypages/who\\_we\\_are/FAQs.htm](http://www.marshillchurch.org/secondarypages/who_we_are/FAQs.htm) p.5

postmodern sensitive church. While it would be reasonable to expect that the basic outline of how to minister to postmoderns will remain the same (attract to the vibrant community through webs of relationship), there will also be differences. The cultural differences between Spain and Sweden should be reflected in differences in church models. There are significant differences between Saddleback Community church in Los Angeles and Holy Trinity Brompton in London, for example. While both come from postmodern Anglo-Saxon cultures, those two cultures are distinct. The regional differences between Galicia and Andalucia should also probably be reflected in ministry models. Finally, there are the issues of personal preference. Some people will be attracted to one kind of church and others to another kind. This is just as true in Spain as it is in Australia.

### **It Is Time to Experiment**

While cultural differences exist, the basic outline of ministry to postmoderns seems to remain constant. There is creative expression, the emphasis on community, the emphasis on small groups and the evangelistic outline of drawing to the vibrant community through the web of relationships. This helps us by giving us an outline. But we should not try to directly copy models developed in other cultures. These models are a mix of postmodern worldview issues and local cultural issues. We should also pay attention to the generational aspects of postmodern churches. We can use both the “seeker” or first wave model as a starting point to strategize on new evangelism and church models, and we can look at the second wave model as well; but only as starting points. We need to keep in mind the unique aspects of Spanish culture and the reality that Spain transitioned from a traditional culture to a postmodern culture very rapidly, without really having been fully modern.

***The truth is, we need to experiment.***

The truth is, we need to experiment. We don't really know what will work in Spain and what will not. We need people who understand the postmodern worldview, the general outline of how ministry works in postmodern cultures and have a good feel for the Spanish people and Spanish history, especially Spanish Church history. We don't know if postmodern Spaniards are less open to the gospel or more open than other postmoderns are. They have shown themselves more open to postmodern models than to modern models. We know this because of the relative success of such postmodern sensitive models as Asembleas Cristianas, in Jerez de la Frontera and Amistad Cristiana, in Madrid.

But due to the excessive abuse of power in the name of religion in Spain, it is possible that they could be less open than other areas. But again, we don't know because we have not experimented very fully with different postmodern models. It would be easy to give up and say the Spaniards are just too hard, when in reality we may have just not spoken to them in their new cultural language.

***Use of coercion, guilt, duty, force, or brusqueness in leadership will be counterproductive.***

Again, due to the historical abuse of power in the name of religion in Spain, we should be very careful how we express leadership inside the church. Use of coercion, guilt,

duty, force, or brusqueness in leadership will be counterproductive. We should do everything we can to show our leadership as people oriented and facilitative. It should avoid giving the perception that the people are being forced to fit the program or the organization. Instead, whatever organization there is within the church, is there to help people get to know Christ. We need to prove that we are different. It will be assumed otherwise until demonstrated. This does not mean that a leader can't lead or that he has to do anything the other person wants. Leaders speak truth into the lives of those they are leading. But, they speak the truth in love and with graciousness. It is clear from the way it is done, that it is an act of love because the leader wants to see the person grow in Christ, not merely force them to fit the organization. Jesus Christ himself is our model for this kind of leadership.

We need to be as anti-institutional as possible. To the postmodern mind, institutionalism and spirituality are opposites. The more rigid forms we have, the more denominational we are, the more we try to make everyone fit into the forms instead of meet people where they are, the more we will be rejected. As stated above, this can be reflected in our style of leadership. It can also be reflected in a worship service that is overly rigid or lacks creativity. It can be reflected in the architecture or even the hour when we meet.

*We need to be as anti-institutional as possible.*

There is a reason that many postmodern sensitive churches meet at non-traditional hours. It is precisely because they are non-traditional hours. Most western postmoderns know that the institutional Christian church meets on Sunday mornings. Therefore it seems more non-institutional to meet on a Tuesday or Thursday evening. Since this is not breaking a biblical imperative, many postmodern sensitive churches do so to avoid the institutional barrier. Small groups meeting in homes, break the stereotype of the institutional church. Many postmodern sensitive churches, therefore, invite to a small group before inviting to the larger corporate setting. Again, the more stereotypically traditional we are, the more barriers we have with postmoderns. It therefore becomes our responsibility to clearly think through the biblical issues and know what we can set aside (traditional forms) and what we can not (biblical functions).

### **What do we do with churches that have already become accustomed to the modern evangelical model?**

Christian Schwarz, in his book *Natural Church Development*,<sup>9</sup> talks about eight qualities of healthy churches. He has done exhaustive research all over the world to find what kinds of churches are healthy and which are not. Schwarz holds that a church anyplace in the world is healthy if it has these qualities to a significant degree and will grow no matter what the context. While not everyone will be convinced of this thesis, I am in agreement with much of the content. When one looks at the eight qualities Schwarz mentions, one realizes he is describing the postmodern sensitive church. The eight qualities are:

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<sup>9</sup> Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development a Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*, (U.S.A. edition: ChurchSmart Resources, 390 East Saint Charles Road, Carol Stream, IL 60188) 1996.

- Empowering leadership
- Gift-oriented ministry
- Passionate spirituality
- Functioning structures
- Inspiring worship service
- Holistic small groups
- Need-oriented evangelism
- Loving relationships.

***When one looks at the eight qualities Schwarz mentions, one realizes he is describing the postmodern sensitive church.***

One of the analogies that Schwarz uses is the concept of the “minimum barrel”, where each of these eight qualities is viewed as the stave of a barrel. Each stave is of a different length. The barrel will only hold water to the level of the shortest stave. In the same way a church can only grow to the level of the weakest of the eight essential qualities. Schwarz has developed some very helpful concepts and materials for helping churches to grow from where ever they are to health in these eight areas. His basic paradigm is that a church evaluates which of its areas is the weakest and concentrates on that area until it becomes strengthened and habitual. Then they focus on the next weakest area. This is a continual ongoing process always focusing on the area of weakness. Over time, the church will deal with each of these areas a number of times, each time prayerfully growing in their ability to express these eight essential qualities.

***Schwarz is also outlining a plan for a church that has been founded and is comfortable in modern methodology, to become a postmodern sensitive church.***

In describing this process, Schwarz is also outlining a plan for a church that has been founded and is comfortable in modern methodology, to become a postmodern sensitive church. It would be too disruptive to try to change everything at once. This process would be healthy for any church to undergo and if it were aware of postmodern issues it would slowly become a postmodern sensitive church.

### **Lessons to Learn**

There are a number of lessons to learn from the experience of postmodern sensitive churches around the world. The first lesson is that there is a general outline for doing ministry among postmoderns. It is distinct from the outline that was effective among moderns. As stated above, this general outline can be described as the vibrant community growing through the web of relationships.

***Postmoderns around the world seem to be open to the gospel when ministered to in postmodern sensitive ways.***

Postmoderns around the world seem to be open to the gospel when ministered to in postmodern sensitive ways. At the very least, they seem to be more open than modern generations within the same culture.

There seems, to this point, to be two generational expressions of the postmodern sensitive church. The first corresponds to the transitional generation that is partially modern and partially postmodern. These churches are commonly called “seeker sensitive” churches. They are very effective in reaching this transitional generation. When a fully postmodern generation came along, the “seeker sensitive” churches struggled reaching them because of the number of ways that these churches were still modern in style.

When new fully postmodern models were developed, these second wave postmoderns responded as much, or more than, the first generation of postmoderns. But they were resistant to models that had modern elements.

It would have been easy for the “seeker” churches to declare that the second generation of postmoderns was resistant to the gospel because they weren’t responding to their methodology. But this is not the case. This generation continues to be receptive to the gospel, it is just much more allergic to modern forms than was the first generation. To the credit of seeker churches, many have shown flexibility and are trying new ways of ministering to second generation postmoderns.

*Some analysts have called postmodernism “neo-paganism” and there is reason for this. However, out of this neo-paganism a highly spiritual form of Christianity is developing.*

Fully postmodern sensitive churches are highly spiritual in their outlook. Some analysts have called postmodernism “neo-paganism” and there is reason for this. We can no longer assume that people will have a general knowledge of Christianity and be drawn to Christian values. However, out of this neo-paganism a highly spiritual form of Christianity is developing. It is an expression of Christianity that places a high emphasis on prayer, obedience to God, and a strong dependence on God to help them grow. They are quite skeptical of man made programs and marketing, yet they grow without them. These are churches that are in tune with the postmodern desire for spirituality and are expressing Christianity in a supernaturally powerful way.

Second generation postmodern sensitive churches look very much like what we know of the first century churches and their growth. This is probably because postmodernism is very similar to, but not exactly like, the cultural reality of the first

*Second generation postmodern sensitive churches look very much like what we know of the first century churches and their growth.*

century Greco-Roman world. We need to remember that the Church was highly successful in this context, and that it suffered in this context. Both are probably true of the coming

generations of the postmodern sensitive church; we will be successful and we will suffer for the name of Christ.

### **Models to Experiment With**

Are current Spanish postmoderns more like first wave postmoderns, second wave postmoderns or are they divided by generations, as in other areas of the world? I do not have the answer to that question, although I suspect that they are somewhat generationally divided. We do know from the sociological research being done in Spain, that the younger Spaniards are, the more they tend to express postmodern values.

Some churches should experiment with the first wave “seeker” style models, but with sensitivity to Spanish cultural distinctions. This may be a project for churches that are transitioning from modern models to becoming postmodern sensitive. This is because the transition from a modern model church to a seeker church is much less abrupt than to transition into something more like Mars Hill Fellowship. Again, Christian Schwarz and his materials could be helpful in this process. Evangelism should be done through some type of evangelistic home Bible study. One good method to experiment with would be the Alpha courses in Spanish.

Some who are preparing to start new church plants should experiment with the basic outline of the second wave churches. Start with a small core group. Focus on

***Some who are preparing to start new church plants should experiment with the basic outline of the second wave churches.***

the spiritual growth of those within this group. Make this group a vibrant spiritual community that expresses itself creatively. At the same time, they should make contact with the non-Christian community around them and minister to their social needs. Through the web of relationships that develop in the non-Christian community, they should expect God to add to their number as a response to prayer. As the group grows, it becomes a network of small groups. When this network becomes of sufficient size (100-150), a church is formed. It might be wise to not try to become a public corporate worship service when the network is smaller than this because small public worship services tend to be a cultural barrier in Spain. As God blesses, the church becomes a network of churches, just as a small group became a network of small groups.

### **Starting Churches in Places with No Evangelical Witness**

How does one start a postmodern sensitive church from scratch in a place that doesn't have an evangelical witness? There are two basic answers to this question. If one is starting with one family or even one person they will need to make friends and start an evangelistic home Bible study with the friends they make. Again, the Alpha course might be a good place to start unless the person feels competent to develop his or her own material. Emphasis should be placed on starting a group in

***Emphasis should be placed on starting a group in an emotionally warm creative, non-confrontational environment.***

an emotionally warm creative, non-confrontational environment. The weakness of this model is that there is no community to invite to initially. This is a weakness but it is not a fatal flaw. Saddleback Community Church

started with a group of three, Pastor Rick Warren, his wife and his daughter. It is now one of the largest churches in the United States.

Another method that starts with a community is to plant a group of people in a town without an evangelical witness. This has two advantages. One is that there is already a small community to draw to, even if it is five or six people. The second is that a few people can make contacts faster and with a greater number of people than one person can. One good way to make contact is to join a number of programs sponsored by the town government. Many Spanish towns have art classes, dance classes, sports competitions and any other number of activities that people can join. These are great ways to make friends. From that point, the model would look the same, some type of evangelistic home Bible study as explained above.

Evangelistic home Bible studies have important strategic advantages. They can grow through the webs of relationship and are therefore almost infinitely reproducible. They are non-institutional. They do not look like a church. They do not require special facilities and they can be linked to each other in a web of small groups. This allows for a significant number of people to be involved before the new church plant becomes public. The only limit to the growth is the limit on leadership to lead new studies, so there needs to be planning done on developing new leadership. This is built into the Alpha course model, for example.

Evangelistic home Bible studies could fail with postmoderns for two reasons. The first is if we were too forceful with our presentation of our truths. We need to clearly and graciously present truth without being pushy. We need to draw people into our truth, not try to convince them. The biblical word is persuade, not convince. The second is if the study were not creative, interesting or fun enough. Postmoderns will walk away from anything that is boring. The object then is to make something clear enough that they understand how to begin to follow Christ and interesting enough that they want to invite their friends. We should not fear being spiritual or sounding spiritual. Postmoderns are interested in spirituality; they just don't like institutional religion. The more "churchy" a study is, the more likely it will fail.

***The object then is to make something clear enough that they understand how to begin to follow Christ and interesting enough that they want to invite their friends.***

Another model that has been proposed to start churches in towns without an evangelical witness is to plant a small business. This small business would be manned by Christians trained to not only work in the business but to minister among postmoderns. If there were a group of Christians, they would act as a missionary team and do ministry as proposed above. If it were a single person, he or she would have to start by themselves, as explained above.

***Planting a church by first starting a business answers two important strategic issues.***

Planting a church by first starting a business answers two important

strategic issues. When new people move into a small town with no visible means of financial support and no real reason to be there, it can create suspicion. By having a business, there is a reason to be in town. There is also a potential to have financial support for the ministry. However, in reality it is often many years before small businesses become financially stable enough to support a ministry, especially if they need to repay a business startup loan. New businesses are also often a useful service to the town. By starting a needed business we are expressing Christ's love for that community.

The down sides to this model are the following. That it requires a significant amount of money to found the business. The business will take time away from the ministry. And there is a risk that the business will fail. A strategic decision needs to be made on whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages in each case.

The age group of 18 to marriage seems to be a spiritually responsive group in Spain. Orizo notes that there is a rising interest in the meaning of life as Spaniards

***The age group of 18 to marriage seems to be a spiritually responsive group in Spain.***

age. It is the oldest people who are the most spiritually minded. However this trend has one variation, the 18 to 24 year olds, who are also highly spiritually minded as they begin to ask transcendental questions. Older people tend to view spiritual issues through the lens of the Catholic Church, called

orthodox Christianity in the study. But, the younger group did not tend to make such clear doctrinal distinctions.<sup>10</sup> Starting with a ministry to youth and singles might be a good way to start a postmodern sensitive church. Again the emphasis should be on creativity. In this case, the idea might not be to start an evangelistic Bible study but rather some type of activity or a series of activities that meet the needs of youth, while having a spiritual focus.

God has called us to live in an interesting age. He has called us to live in this age of transition to the postmodern world. He has placed, on our shoulders, the responsibility to find out how to faithfully take the gospel of Jesus Christ to people who have a new set of values and a new way of looking at the world. We can not do this in our flesh. We are not capable in our own abilities and intelligence to accomplish this task. But we have a God who can guide us through the process. There is a lot we still don't know about ministering to postmoderns in Spain. But we can move from the known to the unknown. We can start with what we do know and ask our living God for guidance. We are moving to a time of experimentation, not scientific but spiritual experimentation. We are going to have to trust God to take us into this new unknown ministry world.

***God has called us to live in an interesting age. He has called us to live in this age of transition to the postmodern world.***

<sup>10</sup> Francisco Andrés Orizo, *sistemas de valores en la España de los 90*, (Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas. 1996). Page 183-184.

Since postmoderns love stories and parables, let's end this report with a story and a parable, both of which come from a friend of mine who chooses to remain anonymous.

### **A Story From Argentina**

*A church in Argentina went around its neighborhood asking non-Christians what one prayer they would want God to answer. They then offered to pray for this issue specifically. At first, the non-Christians were skeptical, some even mocked the Christians. A few asked for requests like winning the lottery. The Christians responded by asking them, "Is this really what you would want from the God of the universe?" When the non-Christians realized the Christians were sincere, many gave honest prayer requests. After all, it couldn't hurt. At this point the*

***Many non-Christians responded "What? Now I suppose you want us to go to your church." "No," said the Christians, "going to our church isn't part of the deal..."***

*Christians said there was just one condition. Many non-Christians responded "What? Now I suppose you want us to go to your church." "No," said the Christians, "going to our church isn't part of the deal, all you have to do is call me when God answers your prayer". God began to answer these prayers, many in miraculous ways. So the non-Christians called the Christians who were praying for them and told them of the answered prayer and wanted to know if they could come to church. "No," said the Christians, "just give me another prayer request and I will pray for you because my God loves you and wants to answer my prayers for you". So they prayed again, and again God*

***By this time, the non-Christians really wanted to know more about this powerful God who answered prayers.***

*answered prayers and again the Christians were called. By this time, the non-Christians really wanted to know more about this powerful God who answered prayers. In many cases, whole families and groups of*

*friends were curious. Again they asked if they could come to church. Again the answer was no. "But", said the Christians, "we are going to have a time when many people who have had answered prayer, just like you, are going to share their stories. If you would be willing to come and tell what God has done for you, then you can come to this celebration service. You will also get to hear what my God is doing in the lives of other people just like you. And, just like you, they are not members of our church, just people we are praying for and people whom our God loves. Bring any friends and family who would like to come."*

How would you like to have been in that testimony service? How easy would it be to plant a church among those who came to that testimony service? Answered prayer is exactly the kind of practical spirituality that postmodern people are looking for.

### **The Parable of the Different Harvests**

*A great man, Lord of an abundant land, left early one morning to visit the different fields in his domain, to observe the fruitfulness of his harvest. Along with him, he took his various managers who were responsible to know the different seasons and to watch for the times of the harvest.*

*First, they walked through the plains where he had planted wheat, barley and other useful grains for the benefit of the citizens of his land. They also went through the well-attended vineyards bursting with grapes. Finally, they went to the hills where they observed all kinds of*

*orchards and olive groves, each one with an abundance of fruit according to its kind.*



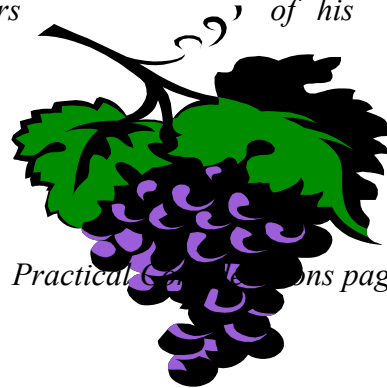
*In the evening, when they returned to his mansion, the Lord called his managers and asked them about what they had observed, saying*

*“In which of the fields will there be a harvest?” They began to say one after the other that “The times and conditions of the harvest will be different for each field, but certainly there will be a harvest in each one. Some are grain fields, and they will be harvested soon, others are grapes and we will need to wait longer. Still others are fruit trees and olive groves that will have to wait until the end of the harvest season.”*

*The Lord responded to them and said “Excellent! You have said well that each harvest will come in its own time. Blessed is the wise man that understands the rhythm of the different harvests and prepares himself to reap and store the produce so that none of my harvest will be lost.”*

*Another time, the Lord of the harvest called his managers and put them in charge of the responsibility of reaping all of the produce of his domain. He gave them instructions to look after each crop according to its nature and take care of the produce until his return. Then he went on a journey to work with the managers of his other domains.*

*In his absence, the managers began to consult with one another about the*



*different aspects of the harvest. They observed that clearly the wheat fields were ripe unto harvest. So they went out with their great and powerful harvesting machines. In a short time they reaped an abundant harvest of wheat, barley and other grains. Therefore, they concluded, the other fields must be just like these were. But when they came to the vineyards they discovered that the harvesting machines didn't work like they had at first. On entering the vineyard, they damaged the plants and they lost the fruit of the vine, reaping little of the harvest. On seeing the difficulty of the harvest in these places and the lack of effectiveness of their machines to reap this harvest, they decided to return to their warehouses and concentrate on tuning up their machines and making their wheat storehouses bigger.*

*When the Lord of the harvest returned from his trip, he called his managers to account for the harvest he had left under their care. They began to speak with great joy of the harvest of the grain, of how they had powerful harvesting machines and of the great wheat storehouses they had constructed. But when the Lord asked them about the harvest of the more delicate and difficult crops, they became strangely silent. On observing their silence, the Lord was moved with great sadness saying "Every part of the harvest is precious to me and useful for my domain."*



***Every part of the harvest is precious to me and useful for my domain***

*He reproved them for being so zealous for one kind of harvest and for forgetting the importance of reaping each part of the harvest according to its own nature.*

*Good and faithful is the manager that understands and practices the wisdom of the parable of the different harvests.*

May God imprint on our hearts: Good and faithful is the manager that understands and practices the wisdom of the parable of the different harvests.

## Annotated Bibliography

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. Cymbala, Jim. *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*. (Grand Rapids, MI Zondervan Publishing House. 1997).

This is an exciting first hand account of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. The Brooklyn Tabernacle is a postmodern sensitive church, in its growth and practice. Particular notice should be given to the emphasis placed on prayer, the use of creative artistic expression, the flexibility of the worship service and the use of testimonies. Cymbala does not use the word postmodern, nor does he even seem to be aware of the issue, but the Brooklyn Tabernacle fits the postmodern sensitive pattern.

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

This is one of the best books written on postmodern thought, from a Christian perspective. Grenz clearly understands postmodernism, its dangers and its potential advantages for Christianity. He does not fall into the trap of condemning postmodernism because it is different. I suggest reading the introduction through the end of chapter 3 then read chapter 7, which is the last

chapter. The section in the middle is only those who are highly interested in a history of philosophy and more specifically the philosophy of postmodernism.

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

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

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

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

8. Lucado, Max. *God Came Near*. (Sisters, Oregon, Multnomah Publishers. 1986).

This is a series of short, dramatic vignettes or sermonettes. They can be used as a source for dramatic readings, skits and plays for the creative postmodern worship service.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14. Schwarz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*. (Carol Stream, IL, ChurchSmart Resources, 1996).

I highly recommend this book for churches that want to prepare themselves to be postmodern sensitive. Because most postmodern converts will not stay in a modern church context, it is strategically important to prepare the church to receive those converts. In fact, it is strategically necessary to change the church before seriously undertaking postmodern evangelism, because we might very well win the converts, but lose them when they come to our churches. Schwarz provides a reasonable way to go through a process that helps our churches become postmodern sensitive.

15. Sweet, Leonard I. *Aqua Church*. (Loveland, CO, Group Publishing, Inc. 1999).

Sweet has written a trilogy of books focused on postmodern ministry. Each book focuses on a particular scenario. This, the second book in the trilogy, focuses on the postmodern church. Sweet has compiled a tremendous amount of information in his three books. There are a lot of quotes, facts and tidbits. Some may find his writing style a bit glib or even sarcastic. However, while some may bristle at Sweet's style, all three of his books are excellent sources of information.

16. Sweet, Leonard I. *SoulSalsa: 17 Surprising Steps for Godly Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan Publishing House. 2000).

This is the third book in the Sweet trilogy. *SoulSalsa* focuses on personal spirituality for the postmodern believer.

17. Sweet, Leonard I. *SoulTsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan Publishing House. 1999).

This is the first book in the Sweet trilogy. *SoulTsunami* focus on the realities of the postmodern sociological shift, and its spiritual implications, from a Christian perspective. This book has an extensive and excellent bibliography.

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

A sociological work written to help one understand the Spanish view of the Catholic Church, both from an insiders point of view and from the outside. Of special interest, was the table on page 39, which describes four types of Catholic Christians: Christians looking for an existential adjustment, Moral Christians, Interdependent Christianity, and Vocational Christianity. They define these terms and then show why each is being rejected by the Spanish society at large. The most strategic insight is that, while “Vocational Christians” who have found a true spirituality are respected and even admired, the Spanish society at large feels that these spiritual people are somehow so

special as to be beyond reach for the average person. This should encourage us. If we can show that we can be truly spiritual and at the same time normal people we should have a hearing from many in Spanish society.

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

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

WebPages of interest:

1. [www.alpha.org.uk](http://www.alpha.org.uk)  
This is the Alpha course webpage. You can use it to order material and find information on Alpha and where Alpha courses are located.
2. [www.aquachurch.com](http://www.aquachurch.com)  
A web page to go along with his AquaChurch book. It is basically an interactive study guide with web resources.
3. [www.colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/pomo/html](http://www.colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/pomo/html)  
This is a five-page essay on postmodernism as a literary phenomenon and as a sociological phenomenon.
4. [www.jordoncooper.sk.ca/](http://www.jordoncooper.sk.ca/)  
A ministry resources for postmodern sensitive churches. As the homepage says it is “a place where church leaders and those engaged in ministry in a postmodern world can come, hang out, and hopefully find some tools that help them along their spiritual journey.” It even has a section on books associated with postmodern ministry and a bookstore to buy them on line.
5. [www.leaderu.com](http://www.leaderu.com)  
A resource page for scholarly research from a Christian perspective. It is basically a Christian University on line. It has good articles on postmodernism.
6. [www.next-wave.org/](http://www.next-wave.org/)  
Resource on line magazine for second generation postmodern sensitive churches, called “Gen X” churches in the webpage. Articles from past issues are available.

7. [www.next-wave.org/dec99/new\\_wave\\_of\\_gen\\_x\\_churches.htm](http://www.next-wave.org/dec99/new_wave_of_gen_x_churches.htm)  
The underlining may not show up on this webpage address. It should read [new\\_wave\\_of\\_gen\\_x\\_churches](http://www.next-wave.org/dec99/new_wave_of_gen_x_churches.htm). This article from Next-Wave outlines the difference between first and second generation postmodern sensitive churches. The article uses the title “Babyboomer church” for first generation postmodern sensitive churches and “Gen X churches” for the second generation churches.
8. [www.shootthemessenger.com.au/](http://www.shootthemessenger.com.au/)  
Australian resource page for second generation postmodern sensitive churches. It tends to focus on music, television and literature. It does have some articles.
9. [www.shootthemessenger.com.au/u\\_jan\\_98/infowism/i\\_trailgenx.htm](http://www.shootthemessenger.com.au/u_jan_98/infowism/i_trailgenx.htm)  
This should read [jan\\_98\\_/infowism/i\\_trailgenx](http://www.shootthemessenger.com.au/u_jan_98/infowism/i_trailgenx.htm). This is a good article from a Australian postmodern sensitive Christian perspective on how to reach postmodern people.
10. [www.SoulSalsa.com](http://www.SoulSalsa.com)  
A study guide for the SoulSalsa book.
11. [www.theooze.com/](http://www.theooze.com/)  
This is a resource and information webpage for postmodern sensitive churches. It is particularly focused on second generation or Gen X churches.
12. [www.SoulTsunami.com](http://www.SoulTsunami.com).  
A study guide for the SoulTsunami book.

List of webpages of postmodern sensitive churches.

1. <http://freespace.virgin.net/adam.baxter/grace/>  
Webpage for St. Mary’s church in London.
2. [www.abbess.demon.co.uk/visions/](http://www.abbess.demon.co.uk/visions/)  
This is a webpage for St. Cuthberts Church in York, England.
3. [www.axxess.org/](http://www.axxess.org/)  
Axxess is a postmodern church plant of Pantego Bible Church in Arlington, Texas. They actually planted another church to reach postmoderns using the same building. This is an indication of how significant the difference is in ministering to postmoderns. The webpage starts out as a black screen. You will need to scroll down to find the rest of the page.
4. <http://member.aol.com/coapostles/>  
Webpage for Church of the Apostles in Fairfax, VA.
5. [www.evergreenchurch.com](http://www.evergreenchurch.com)  
A postmodern sensitive church in Charlottesville, VA.
6. [www.ginghamsburg.org/](http://www.ginghamsburg.org/)  
Webpage for Ginghamsburg Church in Tipp City, Ohio.

7. [www.insearch.org/](http://www.insearch.org/)  
A second-generation postmodern sensitive church in Cleveland, Ohio.
8. [www.kairosonline.org/](http://www.kairosonline.org/)  
Webpage for Kairos Church Falls Church, VA .
9. [www.marshall.fm/](http://www.marshall.fm/)  
This is the webpage for Mars Hill Fellowship in Seattle, WA. It is a prototypical second-generation postmodern sensitive church.
10. [www.purposedriven.com](http://www.purposedriven.com)  
This is the webpage for Saddleback Community Church. Saddleback is a prototypical first-generation postmodern sensitive church or as others call them a Babyboomer church.
11. [www.quest.nu](http://www.quest.nu)  
This is a postmodern sensitive church in Woodinville, Washington USA. Go to the “Searching” section of their webpage and see how they draw a “seeker” into a search for God. You will find that it is much different than preaching the Gospel as a message.
12. [www.sandalschurch.com](http://www.sandalschurch.com)  
A second-generation postmodern sensitive church meeting in the building of a first generation church in Riverside, CA.
13. [www.sayingyes.com/pinnacle2.shtml](http://www.sayingyes.com/pinnacle2.shtml)  
This is the webpage of Pinnacle Church in Amarillo, Texas. This is probably the best webpage to get a feel for what a second-generation postmodern sensitive church looks like, feels like and how they think. Take a tour on their “Virtual Tour” and you will see photos of the church environment. Read the captions and you will get a feel for how these churches think.
14. [www.solomonsporch.com](http://www.solomonsporch.com)  
This is a second-generation postmodern sensitive church. See their photo album to see what the physical setting of their church looks like. Also read the Associated Press Report ‘Postmodern’ Ministers Reshape Protestantism which can be accessed from the Solomon’s Porch home page. The pastor, Doug Pagitt, was the youth pastor at Wooddale Church, a large and famous Evangelical church in the Minneapolis area.
15. [www.souljourn.org/index2.cfm](http://www.souljourn.org/index2.cfm)  
SoulJourn is a very cutting edge second-generation church. See their PowerBrunch ministry for a way of combining evangelism, teaching, creativity and meals. Note to how much trouble they went in being non-coercive in their invitation to join them and how they make invitations to join them a spiritual journey.

16. [www.warehouse242.org](http://www.warehouse242.org)  
Warehouse 242 is a second-generation church in Charlotte, North Carolina.
17. [www.waves.ca/index.htm](http://www.waves.ca/index.htm)  
Waves Community Church is a Chinese second generation postmodern sensitive church in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada.