

IS THERE ANY ABSOLUTE TRUTH?:
Post-modernism Versus Christianity
By Sister Ioanna (deVyver), M.Th., M.A., Ph.D.

During my decades of college/university teaching, I was always puzzled and also frustrated, by how my students of all ages could never comprehend the concept of absolute Truth — the concept of a universal Truth that exists whether we perceive it or not. They believed that there is no absolute Truth, that everything is relative. Therefore, their preconceived belief prevented them from even comprehending the concept that something absolute could exist.

Similarly, I have been puzzled and frustrated in the recent 8-10 years, especially since 2016, at how radically cultural values, as reflected in the daily news, have reversed or flipped themselves compared to previous decades. These reversals include such things as:

- how tolerance for ideas different from one's own seems to have vanished;
- how the thirst for learning and education seems to be constantly dwindling, both on the part of the students, and even on the part of the teachers and administrators of the institutions entrusted with education;
- how what used to be considered education, and especially "higher education," had as its goal the expanding of the mind and discovery of new things/ideas/concepts, but now has deteriorated into an obsession with uniformity of ideas and shrinking of the mind, and concealing and even altering past knowledge and history;
- how moral values have become so fluid and relative, that they have become meaningless;
- how the lack of reverence for life has proliferated;
- how concern for the truth and validity of alleged factual statements has vanished so that one can readily invent one's own version of facts and try to pass it off as valid without a shred of proof, and worse yet, it is uncritically, eagerly accepted and readily disseminated;
- how ready people are to rewrite history according to their own present concepts and attitudes, without any concern for what really happened and what various actions meant at the time they occurred in the past, instead, evaluating history in terms of present attitudes and concepts;
- how there is an increasing eroding of basic learning in education, especially of different aspects of history (cultural, political, economic, religious, literary, *etc.*);
- how a tiny minority of establishment "elitist" people are being allowed to impose their out-of-step ideas over the majority's views, and functioning as thought-dictators or thought-police, deciding what is and is not allowed to be believed, no less even to be thought;
- how if someone *dares* to challenge the establishment's politically correct view as invalid, that instead of dealing with the concepts themselves, the response boils down to knee-jerk name-calling and dismissing the challenge to the *ideas* by saying the "offending" person hates *the holder of the challenged ideas* because of their gender, color, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual-orientation, *etc.*;
- the outright hatred of religion, especially of Christianity, and the escalation of increasingly vicious attacks on Christians, their moral beliefs, Christian institutions and culture, and Christianity itself;
- the increasingly vehement attacks on freedom of religion, traditional marriage, physiological gender identification, and biblical moral principles;
- the hypocrisy of purporting to advocate tolerance and diversity, while at the same time viciously attacking as intolerant anyone who disagrees with the "politically correct" ideology, and attacking biblically-based views as bigoted, hate-speech;
- the absurdity that young children can choose what gender they are, rather than accepting the obvious physiology that is definable at birth, and attacking anyone who questions that 3-year-olds and other children are capable of choosing their own gender; plus various other gender aberrations.

It seems that traditional concepts of good and bad, true and false have become fluid and even reversed, or “flipped,” and that psychological pathology, such as gender confusion, has become the new “normal,” as we witness with our own eyes the ever-increasing realization of George Orwell’s prophetic novel, *1984*.

For years I have been puzzled at the rapid proliferation of all these things (plus many others too numerous to cite here), and unable to find a satisfactory explanation for them all. After all, how does one explain logically and make sense out something that is illogical and nonsensical, except that it feels like the fulfilling of the prophecies of Orwell’s *1984*. Surprisingly, however, I recently discovered that there is actually one single phenomenon that provides the reason and explanation for all of these countless things that have puzzled me. This single explanatory phenomenon is what is called “Post-Modernism.” Let me share with you what I have discovered about this “Post-Modernism.”

What is “Post-Modernism”?

Post-Modernism is a term that a few self-appointed establishment so-called “elites,” have adopted to describe Western culture of recent decades, namely, as a rejection of the ideas of the “Modern” era. In the last 10 years or so, and especially since 2016, the speed with which increasing numbers of people have swallowed, adopted and embraced the beliefs of Post-Modernism has escalated at an unprecedented rate. The speed of infection of our culture by this death-dealing infectious, highly-contagious disease, has been aided by the wholesale acceptance and promulgation by most of the mainstream media, in addition to the entertainment industry, the educational and governmental establishments, and now has spread even further to become completely politicized by being fully embraced by an ultra-leftist, ultra-radical and ultra-so-called “liberal” or “progressive,” politically-correct, anti-Christian, atheist establishment “elite.”

Concerning the underlying issue of the naming of eras, let us realize that this concept of giving names and descriptions to different eras is nothing new. There have been various terms that modern scholars have used to try to categorize various previous epochs of civilization, when the values and ways of living changed significantly so that we can retrospectively call them eras or epochs, such as: Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance, Age of Faith, Age of Reason, Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment, Modern, and Post-Modern. Some even claim that the Post-Modern era has ended and that we are now in a “Post-Postmodern” era. The designation of dates given for the “Modern” era varies extensively, beginning, on the one hand, with 1650 (*the Scientific Revolution*), to 1789 (*the Enlightenment and the French Revolution*), to 1890 (*the 2nd Industrial Revolution*), and ending, on the other hand, with 1939 (*the eve of WWII*), after WWII (*the late 1940's and 1950's*), the 1960's and 1970's (*the civil rights' movement, feminism, the Vietnam War, and other major events and rebellions of the 1960's and '70's*), to as late as 1989 (*the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of Communism*) and then, the 1990's that followed. But this fluidity of dating is not surprising either, because, as with all the previous retrospective dating of eras, there has always been significant overlapping of eras, during which the older cultural values and the new ones exist side-by-side, sometimes even for several centuries.

I suggest that this rejection of Modernist ideas primarily grew out of the rebellious college/university students’ disillusionment in the 1960's and ‘70's, the era that rejected most of the rather rigid, traditionalist values of the post-WWII era of the late 1940's and 1950's. Some of these students then went on to become the college professors of the college students of the 1980's and ‘90's and on into the 21st century, (as well as the K-12 teachers), thus spreading and expanding their atheist, rebellious, anti-Christian ideology among the college students of more recent decades, and throughout society. In turn, Post-Modernist ideology was influenced by earlier rebels who were reacting to the problems and profound poverty of the Great Depression of the 1930's. It appears that Post-Modernism has been formulated and embraced primarily by college

educated atheists, who deny the existence of Absolute Truth and moral values, upon which the Christian Faith rests. Thus, I suggest that much of the flaunting of arrogant, self-superiority of Post-Modernists and their condescension to those who disagree with them is a reflection of the tendency of the educated to look down their noses with condescension towards the lesser-educated, as a basket of deplorables. This isn't new: it has probably always existed — we see it in Jesus' time in the Gospels and throughout the centuries. But this extremely pronounced and publically politicized Post-Modernist mentality has enormously proliferated since 2016, and has even come to the point of some Congress members proclaiming that the American people can't be trusted to vote "correctly," and therefore the Congressional "elites" must rectify the ignorance of the people. This negative, arrogant contempt for the views of the people, of course, is the diametric opposite of the positive Modernist view embraced by the founders of the United States and the framers of the American Constitution and its Amendments, and reflected by Abraham Lincoln in his famous Gettysburg words ".....of the people, by the people and for the people."

To summarize it concisely, Post-Modernism is essentially a reaction against the intellectual assumptions and values of the Modern period in the history of Western civilization — roughly, the 17th or 18th century, through the 19th and first half of the 20th century. Therefore, to understand *Post*-Modernism, one must know what is being called "Modernism."

What are the Characteristics of Modernism?

- (1) there is objective reality;
- (2) there is scientific or historical truth (objective truth);
- (3) the universe is rationally and logically constructed and ordered by discernable laws
- (4) science and technology (and even reason and logic) are vehicles of human progress;
- (5) reason and logic are universally valid;
- (6) there is such a thing as human nature;
- (7) language can refer to a reality outside itself;
- (8) there is certain knowledge; and
- (9) there are general theories of the natural and social world that can be valid and true.

What are the Characteristics of Post-Modernism?

On the contrary, Post-Modernism is characterized by beliefs in the polar opposites of Modernism:

- (1) there is **no** objective reality;
- (2) there is **no** scientific or historical truth (objective truth);
- (3) the universe is **not** rationally and logically constructed and ordered, and there are **no** discernable laws;
- (4) science and technology (and even reason and logic) are **not** vehicles of human progress;
- (5) reason and logic are **not** universally valid;
- (6) there is **no** such thing as human nature;
- (7) language does **not** refer to a reality outside itself;
- (8) there is **no** certain knowledge; and
- (9) **no** general theory of the natural or social world can be valid or true.

Certainly, there is no doubt that there is an increasing number of people who have succumbed to these beliefs due to the proliferating efforts at 'thought-control' of the masses by a tiny minority of "thought-police" "elitists" — as the political, media, educational, entertainment, artistic and economic establishment increasingly try to indoctrinate people that good is bad, bad is good, and that there is nothing moral or true in itself. Therefore, traditional Bible-based concepts and attitudes are held in contempt as simply the false constructs of the past, that are being "corrected" by the present more "enlightened" way of thinking. Judaeo-

Christian beliefs, and those who adhere to them, are especially attacked, ridiculed and “shamed.” The number-one underlying precept of Post-Modernism is its vociferous hatred of religion and especially of Christianity. Not only is militant atheism central and vital to Post-Modernism, but the eradication of all religion is an essential goal, as is envisioned by the political-action group called “Freedom From Religion.” There is an increasing spread of this “flipped” propaganda by a minority of people who appear to be desperately trying to do the devil’s work of hypocritically deciding for everyone else what is and is not true, as in *1984*. The self-contradictory hypocrisy is that on the one hand the Post-Modernists purport that there is no absolute truth, while on the other hand, they purport that their beliefs are the one and only truth. If one protests their attempts at dictating their beliefs onto everyone else, one is insulted and labeled as a deplorable, intolerant bigot, and what one says is “hate-speech.” Furthermore, according to the “elitists,” the deplorables who reject this sham ideology, cannot even be trusted to vote “correctly,” due to their ignorance.

How Do We Respond as Christians?

So, we see that everyday we are bombarded by the politically correct “thought-police” trying to enforce compliance to the new “Post-Modernist” religion — by the media, in schools at all levels from pre-school through universities, by the entertainment industry, in the workplace, by elitist government officials, and by entertainment “gurus.” We can be bullied, shamed, threatened, attacked verbally and physically, fired from our jobs, arrested with criminal charges brought against us, sued, taken to court, and have our businesses shut down. We can have our homes, businesses, churches or synagogues, vehicles attacked or vandalized.

How are we, as God-loving, Bible-believing faithful, to respond to these Post-Modernist beliefs that assail us on a daily basis and are being rammed down our throats by the self-appointed, elitist dictators? And also, to delve even deeper, some faithful might even find themselves asking, what is really true? Is there any Absolute Truth? Might there actually be some truth and validity to what I keep hearing and reading everywhere every day? After all, when one hears lies constantly everyday, after a while it’s easy for them to become so familiar that we come to believe them, and then they become accepted as the new “normal.”

First, most importantly above all, we must affirm and vigorously assert that for the faithful Christian, there can be no compromise with this Post-Modernist pseudo-religion sham. One cannot be Post-Modernist, consider oneself to be part of the “Post-Modern” generation, or even be sympathetic to Post-Modernist ideology, and be a faithful Christian at the same time. That is rather like being “a little bit pregnant.” It is vital and essential to realize that just because some self-appointed “elitists” decide that something is true, doesn’t make it true. Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini and other dictators of the twentieth century maintained that their perverted world-views were the one and only correct view, but that did not make them true. In past centuries, believing that the earth was flat or that the earth was the center of the universe, did not make those beliefs true. Furthermore, Christians have been persecuted in many past centuries, and continuing today, because they did not accept the prevailing establishment beliefs, as by Communists and Muslims, as well as by ancient Roman emperors. I assert that it is impossible to accept any Post-Modernist belief and still be a faithful Christian. All the basic tenets of Christianity (and Judaism) are diametrically opposed to Post-Modernist concepts — they cannot both exist side-by-side. One must choose one path or the other.

What Specifically are a Few of These Basic Christian (anti-Post-Modernist) Tenets?

Christianity is based on the underlying principles that:

- There is an invisible, non-physical world that is just as real (if not more so) as the visible physical world;
- God created everything visible and invisible;
- The universe, as God created it, is characterized by absolute, universal laws, both physical, spiritual

and moral;

- All creation is ordered and logical, from which proceeds life; without this ordering principle, there is chaos, which is death;
- The second Person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus the Christ, (through Whom and by Whom the world was created), is called in Greek, the “Logos.” This Greek term is usually translated as “Word,” but means much more than our English “word,” for it is intrinsically related to the words “logic,” and “logical,” signifying that the creation is ordered by reason and logical laws and principles;
- God is the basis and origin of Absolute Reality, Absolute Truth and Absolute moral principles;
- God is the basis and source of truth, goodness, and morality; He IS the Way, the Truth and the Life;
- There is such a thing as human nature that is part of the divine creation and thus to be respected;
- Humans were created in God’s Image as male and female, to be joined together in marriage;
- Humans are comprised of the physical body and the invisible and immortal soul, enlivened by the Mind and Spirit;
- Humans are to have reverence for all of life, from conception, to birth, to death, and to have respect for all human persons;
- The Bible is a main source of God’s self-revelation to humans, the affirmation of Absolute Reality, and the moral guidebook of how to live;
- Traditional ancient Christianity maintains that even though we are fallen, human nature is essentially good, because we are created in God’s image and likeness. Therefore, in our life-journey, we are to strive to overcome and repent of the sins stemming from our fallen nature, and to be restored to our original goodness. We are called to strive to become transfigured and become increasingly like God (deification/*theosis*), as we work together in cooperation with God in doing His work and fulfilling His Will (*synergia*), while ever growing closer in communion with God.

Further Comparison of Post-Modernism and Christianity:

Post-Modernists claim that because the Modernist belief in the validity of reason and natural laws that was supposed to produce progress and improve the world and human life, resulted in the two catastrophic world wars in the 20th century, therefore belief in absolute truth, reason and natural laws must be rejected. What Post-Modernists miss, due to their hatred and rejection of Judaeo-Christian religion and culture, is that the horrors of the two world wars are the result of human sins and the fallen state of humanity, not the result of belief in the existence of universal and absolute Reality, Truth, reason, and natural and moral laws. Actually, one might say that the wars were the result of not acting in accordance with the belief in these Absolutes.

It is essential that those who seek to be faithful Christians and to live the Christian life according to Biblical principles, recognize that the central core of Post-Modernist beliefs and “pseudo-religion” is the rejection and denial of the basic principles of Christianity. Christian life is centered on a life of lively prayer, worship and connection with those who dwell in the very real invisible world: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the hosts of angelic powers and the saints. Furthermore, the Christian Faith insists that every person has an immortal soul, and thus, when a person’s body dies, his/her immortal soul continues to live in the very real, but invisible world, either in the Presence of God or in the presence of Satan and his demonic hosts.

Consequently, to live meaningful lives, we must follow God’s universal moral principles, and take care of His created world, having reverence for all of life — of nature, animals and most especially, our fellow human beings. We are to strive to live peacefully with our neighbors and the natural world, adhering to universal and absolute Biblical moral principles. Jesus declared that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Post-Modernists say that there is nothing absolute — there is no Way, no Truth, no Life, no immortal soul, no universal physical or moral laws and principles, no God and no invisible, spiritual world. There is no

ordered way and no meaning in life, except what any individual gives to it. Consequently, there is no reverence for life, and no moral guidelines; and increasingly, not even common respect and civility for people as human beings, who instead become just tools to be used for one's own self-aggrandizement. Therefore, one can do whatever one wants and declare anything to be moral and true, without any evidence or basis — everything is relative; nothing is absolute. The result is that life is empty, meaningless, hopeless, without rhyme or reason. Instead, there is the proliferation of violence, hate, anger, vengeance, abuse, self-pity, division, feeling like a victim where all one's problems are caused by those of other races, religions, ages, genders, economic status, etc. This ripples out throughout the family, school, workplace, neighborhood, community, state, country and globally. Individuals feel powerless when there is no rhyme or reason, no ordering principle to life and the world, which consequently results in self-hatred, emptiness and powerlessness. To compensate for their sense of inadequacy, emptiness and powerlessness, individuals, groups, political parties and nations try to exert power, manipulation and control over others, starting with those immediately around them and rippling out throughout the world, resulting in hate, division, violence, conflicts, wars — all with their ultimate destruction of life and creation and humanity itself. This is the legacy and world-view of Post-Modernism, as the current form of Satan's deceit is known.

Conclusion — Two Ways or Paths:

In conclusion, in essence, there are only two ways or paths to follow — the Way or Path of Life, Truth, and Creation; and the way of death, deception and destruction. True Christians follow the first Way of Life. Post-Modernists reject this Way and make a free-will choice to follow the second way of death.

Consequently, the only way for Christians to face the Post-Modernist ideology is to recognize it for the sham that it is, and to totally reject it as lies invented by the father of all lies, Satan/Lucifer, and distortions of the real Truth, whose source is God and God alone. In no way can faithful Christians compromise or countenance any Post-Modernist beliefs without undermining the basis of Christianity as a whole. The only way to face the Post-Modernist religion of lies is to reveal it for what it is — an attempt by Satan/Lucifer to erode and deny the Christian Faith. There can be no way of being sympathetic to it, no way of compromising. Compromise is the beginning of Satan's attempt to subvert Christians to his deceit little by little. It is vital for faithful Christians to recognize the Post-Modernist assault on Christians for what it is. In essence, it is a fundamental struggle between God, the author of Truth, and Satan/Lucifer, the author of lies and deception. God created humans in His own Image. Therefore, by nature, we are free, free to choose which path or way we will follow. Just because others — self-appointed establishment “elite” — are trying to force us to believe that lies are true, that right is wrong and wrong is right, that $2 + 2 = 5$, we don't have to accept the deceit. We can and must resist the efforts of “thought-police” to control our thoughts about what to believe is true. The current “politically-correct elite”, acting like dictators or tyrants, adamantly reject that there is any absolute truth or morality, yet try to enforce their perverted, self-invented (Satan-invented) beliefs as absolute truth and morality, no matter how psychologically pathological they are. Then, filled with hate, anger and intolerance, they intolerantly condemn all people who disagree with them as intolerant, ignorant, deplorable, bigots and hate-mongers, calling the upholding of Biblical principles as “hate-speech.”

Let us pray that the Lord will enlighten and strengthen His faithful people to stand up against the devil's deceit of Post-Modernism and to have the necessary strength and courage to stand up for His Way of Life and Truth, which is Absolute Reality and Truth. And let us further pray that He would give the light of understanding to those who have been deceived by the scams of Satan's craftiness and cunning, to recognize the demonic lies for what they are, and turn to the True Light, the True Way, and the True Life, wherein lie Absolute Reality and Truth. Glory to God for all things!

St. Innocent of Alaska Orthodox Monastic Community; <https://stinnocentmonastery.org>; February 2, 2020