Chapter One

After Post-Modernity… What?

The date THEN was April 6, 1966. With ominous red on black, the cover of *Time Magazine* boldly inquired, *"Is God Dead?"* But that was *then* related to the rise of modern secularism and enlightenment liberal individualism amidst a Christendom oriented and rationalistic West. The question seems all but antiquarian *NOW*. But we are again presented with ominous red on black. This time it is the April 5, 2009 *Newsweek Magazine a*nd it boldly proclaims "*The Decline and Fall of Christian American,"* related to an emerging polymorphous revival in spirituality that is at once modern, post-modern and post liberal albeit within a global convergence of all things East and West. Together, they perfectly illustrate from whence we have come as to anticipate where we are going relative to an *emerging* and increasingly "transmodernist" context for doing Christian Spirituality and Church practice today. That is, by means of survey we will discover how emerging spirituality contains vestiges of *both* modern and post-modern *praxis* albeit in search for a pre-modern and canonical orientation *for the future*. And it will also introduce the proposed Christology Applied in Search of Christian Spirituality and Church practice as a proposal in sympathy!

MODERN *THEN*

As pertaining to modernity THEN, the "God is Dead" rhetoric was inspired by a perceived rise in *secularism* that was attributed to the corrosive acids of the modern enlightenment. The culprit acids were said to be market place pragmatism and supply-demand capitalism; the rising prestige of the natural sciences with its corresponding empiricist based sage; and a desensitized spirituality formed out of an increasingly bureaucratized and techno-urban socialization that shielded us from the agrarian forces that at once made God more believable, if not more useful. Especially, as related to the church question, spirituality tended toward a more bureaucratized organizational structure as to form conglomerate oriented and program driven mega-church orientation in ecclesial spirituality suitable to a consumer based populist. But of particular importance to our narrative, was the reductionism reflected in both enlightenment *liberal-individualism* and *modern-rationalism*.

On the liberal-individualism side of the reductionism, it concerned modernity and the way it impacted the conception of "self" and personal identity in relation to social organization and tradition. According to Peter Berger et al. in *The Homeless Mind* (1973), our identity as "self" was being reconstructed to become "an anonymous functionary" within an increasingly technological and bureaucratic conglomerate oriented mode of life-- what Berger described as "anomie" or "homelessness" relative to a crisis in self-identity and significance. This at once made us more self-absorbed, if not also *less* communal and especially suspicious of organization. That is, even as modernity was more organizationally bureaucratized, human identity was turning more inward and subjectivist in orientation.

This last point is especially important since some, after modernity, will view themselves as reacting against modernity in so far as they are biased against bureaucratization-organization. A social analysis will reveal just the opposite. A bias against organization or, in our case, organized religion is in fact just "more" of modern or "post-modern" as per the *modernist* oriented conception of the "naked self." For again as Peter Berger observed, "the conception of the naked self, beyond institutions and roles as the *ens realissimum* [the most real] of human being is at the very heart of modernity."[1] Modernity was generally suspicious of organized and social parenting wherein the "heretical imperative" was to break from social constraints in order to discover the naked self, and even the true spiritual self, through individual autonomy. Thomas Oden described this aspect of modernity this way:

> The rhetoric of unrestrained, individual freedom is a prominent earmark of the spirit of modernity. The goal of modern life is to be liberated from restrictions, constraints, traditions, and all social parenting, all of which are self-evidently presumed to be dehumanizing... the social, psychological and political strategies and rhetoric of modernity all focus on a highly abstract notion of individual freedom... sustained covenant accountability is misplaced in the interest of subjective self-expression."[2]

One thinks as well of Robert Bellah's remarkable 1970's study entitled *Habits of the Heart, Individualism and Commitment in American Life* where the modernist "reversal" of pre-modern sociology was nicely summed up as follows.

> For Americans, the traditional relationship between the individual and the religious community is to some degree reversed. On the basis of our interviews, we are not surprised to learn that a 1978 Gallup poll found that 80 percent of Americans agreed that 'an individual should arrive at his or her own religious beliefs independent of any church or synagogue.' From the traditional point of view, this is a strange statement — it is precisely within the

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[1] Peter Berger, *The Homeless Mind*, 213
[2] Thomas Oden, *Beyond Modernity... What?* p.47

> *church or synagogue that one comes to one's religious beliefs — but to many Americans it is the Gallup finding that is normal.[3]*

And so modernity, by its very nature, trended toward BOTH bureaucratization and individualistic oriented subjectivism, both of which a populist oriented evangelicalism was especially susceptible.

On the philosophical side of modernity, the culprit acid of secularization was of course an anti-supernatural driven epistemology as applied to religious faith. It was the world of A.J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936) where it was argued that God talk was nonsense since it was based on neither logic nor empirical evidence. That is, modernity was known for its radical optimistic concerning the power of both reason and modern science (positivism) as *the* determinative epistemic "foundations" for what we can authentically know, even as this resulted in what could be described as both a *rationalist- correlationist* spirituality and a *subjectivist-anti-correlationist* kind of spirituality, *and at the same time*, during modernity. This is important in so far as one can see emergent spirituality after modernity, both, and at the same time, reacting against the *rationalist-correlationist* trend in modernity, but continuing, even escalating, the *subjectivist-anti-correlationist* trend in modernity albeit wed to communalism less individualism. This is what I mean:

To begin, philosophical modernity is often traced back to Rene Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*, with an emphasis on "first." His Cartesian revolution basically turned pre-modern thinking on its head by asking FIRST what before had been asked LAST. For if in pre-modern philosophy (Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, etc) the first question was "what is real" then "how do I know it" and finally, "how can I be certain that I know it," Descartes reversed the order. Before asking what we are trying to know and therefore what about the nature of thing we want to know would determine how we know it, he instead *first* sought to determine what is real based on what we can know, albeit immediately and independently as per the unencumbered, unbiased self— unencumbered that is from a-prior religious assumptions or religious tradition especially.

Therefore, fueled by the Cartesian premise of epistemic *foundationalism*, "metaphysics," according to Immanuel Kant, was limited to the "bounds of experience" as to redefine the limits of "pure reason." Kant even waxed poetically about the whole thing:

> *This domain* (within the bounds of experience) *is an island, enclosed by nature it self within unalterable limits. It is the land of truth—enchanted name!—surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion, where many a fog bank and many a swiftly melting iceberg give the deceptive appearance of farther shores, deluding the adventurous seafarer*

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[3] Gallop Poll taken in 1978 and quoted in Robert Bellah, *Habits of the Heart, Individualism and Commitment in American Life.*

ever anew with empty hopes, and engaging him in enterprises which he can never abandon and yet is unable to carry to completion.[4]

It was a "world without windows" according to Peter Berger, a world that could no longer get "beyond the ordinary" to an "infinitely vaster and 'more real' world, in which and through which human life receives its ultimate significance." The reaction to all this is what Joey Horstman later described as the "post-modern yawn!"   For the world that modernity produced was what Donald MacKay described as a *nothing buttery* kind of place. For if the program was to explain a thing within the bounds of "pure reason," much in life-- love, mystery, romance, bravery, sin, and of course faith-- was more often than not being explained away! AS per a more militant expression of modern positivism, David Brooks summarized it well:

> The idea of a spirit world, God, the soul, etc was ridiculous—modern science declared that everything arises from atoms, genes shape temperament, brain chemicals shape behavior, assemblies of neurons create consciousness—free will is an illusion—basically human beings are hard wired to do this or that and religion is an accident, a freak of the evolutionary process… In this materialist view, people perceive God's existence because their brains have evolved to confabulate belief systems. You put a magnetic helmet around their heads and they will begin to think they are having a spiritual epiphany. If they suffer from temporal lobe epilepsy, they will show signs of hyper-religiosity, an overexcitement of the brain tissue that leads sufferers to believe they are conversing with God.[5]

Now to be clear, modernist reductionism played out two very different directions.   In the public oriented direction, the reductionist trend in modernity was wed to the democratization by means of a *correlationist* program leading to Josh McDowel's "evidence that demands a verdict" style of apologetics, even if to subvert modern anti-supernaturalism and the corresponding threat of atheism.   But more interesting still, if not often negated in the emerging critique, modernist epistemology played out in a more private and anti-correlationist direction as well. For in the attempt at preserving what Berger has described as the "beyond ordinary" and "infinitely vaster" stuff of faith, modern spirituality also trended toward a more subjectivist oriented conception of faith as if in a parallel universe in relation to the modern rationalist oriented conception of faith.

Here again, this is perfectly aligned with Kant's own concession to rationalism in his *Critique of Pure Reason* as to presage the anti-intellectualism of modern evangelicalism even.   For if "pure reason" per the public program was restricted to the rational/empirical island of enlightenment foundationalism, Kant simultaneously expanded "faith" within the personal or privatized program

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[4] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan and Co., 1929), p. 326-327.
[5] DAVID BROOKS, The Neural Buddhists Published: May 13, 2008.
www.nytimes.com/2008/05/13/opinion/13brooks.html

as to transcend the bounds of reason by a subjectivist turn.   In Kant's own words, "I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith."[6].

Arguably, Kant's great concession was an expression in epistemic pietism. And its true, it could as well anticipate a "back to pre-modern" reaction to modernity as to admit of a "window" in the otherwise closed system universe and the reality of super-natural revelation and even by God's illuminating providence the perspicuity of scripture.   And yet while *Critique* already made the case against supernatural revelation as a *reasonable* source for public knowledge, Kant would also say "we are entitled, therefore, to suppose that transcendental ideas have their own good, proper, and therefore, immanent *use*… for it is not the idea in itself, *but its use only*."[7]   As Korner once observed, "our pragmatism would then be epistemological or metaphysical" even if the emerging trends in spirituality lean more in the direction of communalistic pragmatism than in Kant's subjective pragmatism. [8]

And so, at the risk of over generalization leading toover simplification, modern evangelicalism, no less than her liberal leaning bedfellow trended toward a rationalist program per a correlationist leaning evidentialist spirituality while at the same time trended toward a subjectivist program per an anti-correlationist leaning pragmatism.   That is, modern evangelicalism was at once a populist oriented to the " sovereign audience" and committed to the enlightenment driven correlationist orientation even as it was oriented to individual subjectivism as especially related to bible interpretation. As further explained by Nathan Hatch:

> In America the principal mediator of God's voice has not been state, church, council, confession, ethnic group, university college or seminary; it has been quite simply, the people... the impulse to rework Christianity into forms that were unmistakably popular... and democratic in at least three respects: it was audience centered, intellectually open to all, and organizationally pluralistic and innovative.

And as sociologist James Hunter, wrote *then* about the "evangelical orientation toward the Bible" and how it was a "trend at one level that involves an accommodation of varying degrees to modern epistemology—philosophical rationalism, even shades of positivism" on the one hand and yet simultaneously "de-objectified wherein in different terms, there is a shift from a concern with "what the Bible states" to a more subjectivist "what God is telling me."[9]   As George Marsden in his *The*

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[6] *Critique*, BXXX
[7] *Critique*, p 671.
[8] Korner, *Kant*, (England: Penguin Books, 1955) p. 125
[9] James Hunter, *The Coming Generation*, p. 46-47

Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Movement[10] once pointed out, both evangelical "new school revivalism" and "mainline liberalism" were drinking from the same modernist waters.

Notwithstanding the above description even if to anticipate the emerging trends that would come later, there were a few evangelical dissenters.   For instance, and as to presage what would come "after" modernity, Wolterstorf joined with Alvin Plantinga *then* in their co-edited *Faith and Rationality* in believing that evidentialism was both too restrictive and incoherent. There was as well the so called "presuppositionist" approach to rationalism as espoused by those like Cornelius Van Til in his *The Defense of The Faith* (1955) and later popularized by practitioners like Francis Schaeffer, especially his *The God Who Is There* (1968) within evangelicalism. In many ways, these evangelicals mirrored in some respects the Barthian approach in theology and his adamant "NO" to natural theology (although Van Til would turn over in his grave to be compared to Barth given his strong opposition to Barth's so called ""neo-orthodoxy").   Van Til, as much as anyone challenged the modernist credo itself . For instance, he argued then that "the knower himself needs interpretation as well as the things he knows" since "the human mind as the knowing subject, makes its contribution to the knowledge it obtains." (p. 67) Sounds strangely familiar to post-liberal George Lindbeck, albeit applied less to the cultural linguistic, communal interpreter as to a moral-individual interpreter in Van Til's way of thinking

In more counter-cultural and communal directions, one thinks as well of the various dissenting movements such as Clarence Jordan's *Koinonia* farm community, Francis Schaeffer's L'Abri community in Switzerland, and the Metanoia Fellowship in Massachusetts—all affirming the sorts of things that was early espoused by Dietrich Bonheoffer's classic *Life Together* vision, for instance. These movement were again less "organized churches" per se as communal movements in reaction to the "naked self" anomie of modernity as to perhaps anticipate emergent spirituality after modernity perhaps.   And finally, there were the reactions to evangelical modernity in the often-celebrated pilgrimages back to Alexandria or Rome. For while at the same time there continued to be a steady conversion of Catholics to Protestantism, there emerged "a new exodus of Protestants streaming to Rome" and especially among the so called "Gen X" and "millennial" generations. Back to Rome, one thinks of Brad Wilcox, A *River Runs to It: A New Exodus of Protestants Streams to Rome* (May, 1999) and others like Peter Kreeft, Richard John Neuhaus, Deal Hudson, and Scott Hahn. Toward the east, again one thinks Peter Gillquist in his *Becoming Orthodox* (1990) and "Coming Home" (1992), as well as   British author Michael Harper's   *A Faith Fulfilled* (Conciliar Press, 1999).

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[10] For a more cursory synopsis, see George Marsden, "The New School Heritage and Presbyterian Fundamentalism," *Westminster Theological Review* (1970) 32, 2:129—47.

In summary, Robert Weber has suggested that the high point of modern era evangelicalism was 1947-1980 and that the '80's through 2000" represented "the last gasp of evangelicalism in the modern world" (Listening *to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches*).   He further notes that during this time, Christian spirituality became "increasingly pragmatic, corporate, entertainment oriented and need driven as per the therapeutic faith of modernity" wherein "the divide between theology and practice was complete."[11]   And if modernity was at once rational and cognitive, reductionist and fundamentalist, individualistic and subjective; then modern evangelicalism tended to be the same albeit targeting the anti- supernaturalist modern secularism

BUT THAT WAS ALL THEN related to the red and black cover of the 1966 *Time Magazine* warning of secularism! And however ominous the *Times'* "Death of God" threat might have appeared *then*, the question itself feels antiquarian *now*. For not withstanding even the significant vestiges of modernity past vis-à-vis works like Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (2006/2008), Sam Harris, *The End of Faith* (2004), Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great* (2007), and of course the remnant evidentialist debaters in response, the social sciences portray how spirituality is increasingly *in*, even if "church as usual" is increasingly *out*!

<div align="center">POST-MODERN NOW</div>

Accordingly, the 2008 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) released in March of 2009 affirms how the odds are still a mere one in sixty-two that you will ever run into an atheist or agnostic on a typical American street!   It's a world where *even* 23% of the 15% who report *no religious affiliation* believe in a higher power, and 21% believe in a personal God!   A parallel survey released in 2006 by Baylor University found that almost 2/3rds (63%) of the Americans who claim *no* religious affiliation still believe in God and another third (36%) said they prayed at least occasionally.   And then again there is the 2008 Pew Forum study that reports how 41% of the religiously *unaffiliated* describe religion as either very important or somewhat important in their lives. Again, these trends are related to the *least* religious of us!   As Stephen Prothero summarized it, "the nones are by no means non-believers![12]

This is not to say that the secularization rhetoric still might not play well for some.   As explained by Prothero, "the so-called new atheists want to see Christianity on the retreat because to them, religion is poisonous idiocy. But born-again Christians like the faith-on-the-run story too because it

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[11] *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches*, gen. ed. Robert Webber, contributors, Driscoll, Burke, Kimball, Pagitt, Ward (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Zondervan, 2007)p. 18
[12] *Post-Christian? Not even close, by* Stephen Prothero, USA Today oped, 2009/04.
http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2009/04/post-christian-not-even-close.html

makes their centuries-old call to re-Christianize the country only more urgent."   But all in all, the social sciences portray not a modernist oriented secular west, but an increasingly transmodernist oriented *post-secular* or "spiritual" west, albeit in ways increasingly polymorphous as perfectly coinciding with emerging Christian spirituality as well. And so we are again presented with ominous red on black albeit the cover of the April 5, 2009 *Newsweek Magazine* heralding *The Decline and Fall of Christian American,"* wherein the perceived threat is no longer secularism. but post-secular *pluralism*! It concerns then the rise of a post- denominational and post-dogmatic spirituality amidst an emerging globalized synthesis of all things east and west that we must concern ourselves, even as to introduce our own emergent context for thinking about *The Church Question* especially.

To begin, as far back as 1993 we begin to hear the rumblings of cultural dissent against modernity and especially its reductionist foundationalism. Indicative of the dissent, Joey Horstman published his "Channel Too: The Postmodern Yawn" in *The Other Side Magazine* which that aptly summed up the growing sentiment after modernity."[13]   Without doubt, the *nothing-buttery* reductionism of modernity, and especially the way it tended to truncate life AND spirituality into contrived, bite-sized "fundamentals" was producing a culture wide "yawn."

On one side of the reaction, Stanley Grenz, explains the *post*modern response as affirming "whatever we accept as truth, and even the way we envision truth, are dependent on the community in which we participate... there is no absolute truth, rather truth is relative." [14] One immediately thinks of Richard Rorty and his "Introduction," to *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (1991) for instance.   More specifically, Richard Lints has explained how post-modernism "was overtly anti-metaphysical as it very clearly took the "linguistic turn." The real subject of philosophy and even theology became language in post-modernity, rather than reality itself. Semantics, rather than material things, become the new epistemic "foundation" even as language itself is necessarily *relative* to the vernacular of a given community. Therefore, the fundamental building block of knowledge beca,e the simple word, but words that correlate more to socio-communal narratives than some abstract reality.   Metaphysics and "meta-narrative" as such were "cast into the flames of meaningless discourse" says Lints, "since they had no cognitive significance."[15]   In other words, post-modernity *after* modernity is reflected in a growing awareness concerning the "end of science" and/or "the end of reason" as it where.

[13] Joey Earl Horstman, "Channel Too: The Postmodern Yawn," *The Other Sid* 29, no.3, (May-June 1993), p. 35.
[14] Grenz, S. J., *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 8.
[15] Richard Lints, "The Postpostivist Choice Tracy or Lindbeck?" *J Am Acad Relig.*1993; LXI: 655-677

In the *post-science* direction, there is an emerging awareness that modern science has its limits as a basis for human flourishing, even as this has made more room for a more holistic epistemology and spirituality especially. John Horgan, the former editor in chief of the prestigious *Scientific American*, published his *The End of Science: Facing the Limits of Knowledge in the Twilight of The Scientific Age.* " He writes, "If one believes in science, one must accept the possibility—even the probability—that the great era of scientific discovery is over." What he meant by this was not that there would no longer be scientific discovery per se, but that scientific discovery might not be the "be all and end all of discovery." As then to represent the reunion of science and faith, albeit in the eastern direction, the interesting commentary by David Brooks in his May of 2008 *New York Times* Op-Ed entitled "The Neural Buddhists." He explains how "in unexpected ways, science and mysticism are joining hands and reinforcing each other" which in turn leads "to new movements that emphasize self-transcendence but put little stock in divine law or revelation." He further explains, "the momentum has shifted away from hard-core materialism to a neurologically compatible spiritualism."

Here again, while moving toward a more eastern leaning participationist or "temple" oriented way of knowing (even if the "temple" is cosmic), Brooks eludes to the demise of "dogma" as per the western leaning "divine law" or "covenantal" oriented epistemology. In then the post-propositional direction, there are arguably two very different kinds of responses—one "post-modern liberal " (or "post-modern" for short) and the other "post-modern post-liberal" (or "post-liberal" for short), albeit both a reaction to modern foundationalism in accommodation to pluralism after modernity.

That post-modern epistemology leads to pluralism is not hard to understand. For as a result of the "linguistic turn" in epistemology, truth is relative to socio-linguistic communities n as to bias no particular community as a "meta-community." That is, even within modern Christendom, the issue was not whether or not orthodoxy existed based on divine law, but what, amidst competing orthodoxies, was considered to be true orthodoxy? In other words, however much there existed a plurality of opinions within modernity, there was still, based on a program to form a correlation between the natural sources of knowledge and Christian faith, an almost utopian vision for ultimate orthodoxy or a meta-narrative however much reduced! There was still, even if severely limited, such a thing as "dogma" or "creed" or "rule of faith and practice" or "canon!" Now within post-modernity, such a utopian project of finding ultimate and universal truth toward a 'meta-narrative" is all but abandoned as modern naïveté. And in the absence of "creed "there is the necessary absence in orthodoxy in the absolute sense, accept as Lints noted earlier, the orthodoxy of pluralism.

With respect then to a pre-modern way of thinking per the bias of evangelicals, if the challenge for a *modern* evangelicals within a modern secular context was to defend the supernatural of God, the pre-modern amidst a post-propositional context, observes David Brooks, is "to defend the idea of a *personal* God, and explain why specific theologies are true guides for behavior day to day." In other words, "the real challenge is going to come from people who feel the existence of the sacred, but who think that particular religions are just cultural artifacts built on top of universal human traits. It's going to come from scientists whose beliefs overlap a bit with Buddhism."

Corresponding to this, ARIS reports how from 1990 to 2008, the portion of American adults who self-identify as Christians has dropped 10 percentage points (from 86% to 76%), while the portion of those who report no religious affiliation has almost doubled — from 8% to 15% (Again, not to be confused with "non-believers"). But does this warrant the label "post-Christian America?" Well, yes and no!

No… we ought not loose sight of the fact that *still* 76% of America confess to being Christian. That is, there are *still* more Christians in America than Jews in Israel. And of course, just ask a Muslim or a Jew around Christmas time if America isn't "Christian." Or consider that the *born-again* Christians are on the rise and constitute 34% of the American population. Or ask an African American whether America is more Christian today than say the 19th century.

And yet, it remains nonetheless commonplace within North America, and especially aimed at the urban centers of North America, to hear the term "post-Christian" applied to our contemporary context, especially in so far as traditional Christian ethics no longer enjoy hegemony in American culture. Europe's' David Fergusson has also observed that "the emergence of pluralism…in the late-twentieth century have led to the breakdown of any clear Christian consensus under girding the standards, assumptions, and policies of multi-racial and multi-religious societies." He further concedes, "We can no longer assume that Christian ethics simply endorses what everyone recognizes to be good for human beings *qua* human being."[16] We will want to return to this point later in our chapter on ecclesial ethics in so far as the emergent post-liberal vision is concerned. But to the present point, Darrel Guder has observed how "it is now a truism to speak of North America as a mission field."[17]

And so "yes," it could be argued that America IS becoming post-Christian, but only *if* you can add the qualifier, "Christian *as usual*" or perhaps better *"post –denominational/organizational."*   That is,

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[16] David Ferguson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.1-2.
[17] *Darrell Guder. ed., The Missional Church, (Eerdmans, 1998) p. 2*

the real news exposed by recent social studies is that spirituality is in, but Christian spirituality is in a state of extreme flux and in all sorts of polymorphous directions having rid itself of traditional identifications. So for instance, described as the "Faith in Flux" study by the *Pew Forum on Religion & Public*, it is revealed that roughly half of adults have either switched religious affiliation, moved from being unaffiliated with any religion to being affiliated with a particular faith, or dropped any connection to a specific religious tradition altogether.   And again, the trend is that all of this is happening in an amazing range of expressions and directions even albeit decidedly post-dogmatic/denominational.

Accordingly, the ARIS documents how the "non-denominational Christian" category that populates U.S. mega churches has exploded from under 200,000 in 1990 to 2.5 million in 2001 to in excess of 8 million today! More intriguing still, the recent rise in the religiously unaffiliated between 1990 and 2001 has basically flattened out since 2001 till the present.   What *has* continued to escalate is the way in which Christian faith is becoming more polymorphous and fluid in ways that resist denominational organization all together. David Barrett, author of the World Christian Encyclopedia, estimates that there are already 112 million *out-of-church Christians* around the world. He expects this number to double by 2025.[18] The Barna Research Group reports that the number of unchurched adults has nearly doubled since 1991."[19]And at a time when the so-called *twentysomethings* are increasingly "absent from Christian churches," 80% say that their religious faith is important in their life.[20]

Turning now to the ecclesial context especially, the *post-modern* the reaction to modernity (as distinguished from the post-liberal reaction) is to reject the premise of rational foundationalism leading to pluralistic relativism albeit still committed to the enlightenment liberal project of seeking to form a correlation between natural sources of knowledge and Christian sources in order to form a democratized or public theology. This correlationist focus, per modern pragmatism, takes a decidedly ethical turn in post-modernism in so far as the agenda is focused upon the social transformation of the public squire for the common good! That is, the goal of Christian faith is very much focused on socio-cultural transformation *directly*! Here, one thinks of David Tracy's *The Analogical Imagination, Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism (1981)* for instance. This is largely a continuation, albeit in its post-modern expression, of what is often been associated with

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[18] From "Growing numbers of Christians leaders leaving church" at www.churchcentral.com, June 10, 2004.
[19] *The Barna Report* May 4, 2004 located at www.barna.org.
[20] Only 31% of *twentysomethings* attend church in a typical week, compared to 42% of those in their 30's and 49% of those in their 40's. See The Barna Research Group of Ventura, California, "Twentysomethings Struggle to Find Their Place in Christian Churches," *The Barna Report* September 24, 2003. www.barna.org.

mainline liberal traditions.   It continues the largely enlightenment vision for Christian based social or public transformation that was associated with H. Richard Niebuhr and his highly influential five part typology *Christ and Culture (1951)*, which was an extension of Ernst Troeltsch's three part typology in his equally influential *The Social Teachings of the Christian Church (1912).*

As a second ecclesial response to modernity, the *post-liberal* will adopt the post-modern rejection of foundationalism such as to have a more relativistic orientation leading to pluralism, and yet it also rejects the enlightenment liberal strategy of attempting to establish a correlation between Christian faith and public interest, at least directly, leading then to a public theology for the public squire. So for instance, Robert Jones has succinctly summarized the post-liberal counter enlightenment liberalism program as follows:

> The post-liberal critique of liberalism is that it promotes isolated individual selves endowed with rights but few responsibilities, universal truths independent of particular (communal) narratives, and an almost-blind optimism about progress and the promise of human reason; above all it is a tradition that has lost a distinctive theological voice through cultural accommodation. Post-liberalism resists each of these and emphasizes community, narrative, skepticism about human reason, and distinctiveness. If the motto of modern liberal Christianity was to "Christianize the social order" through work for social justice, the motto of post-liberal theology is "to let the church be the church" (Hauerwas 1983).[21]

Many of the post-liberal responses to modernity (although not all, some being more pre-modern as in the case of many "emergents") will share with post-moderns the anti-rationalist premise vis-à-vis the linguistic turn, but they will also abandon the correlationist program in hopes of constructing a public theology.   Stated differently, the subjectivist and populist orientation of modern evangelism is something that the post-liberal oriented evangelical would reject more or less.   The post-liberal is sectarian by nature in that it has no interest in social-transformation *directly*, even if to be sure this is viewed as the best way to transform society in the long run, albeit indirectly, by means of preserving the distinctively Christian witness within it (see "ecclesial ethics" later).

For example, David Fergusson, speaking on behalf of the post-liberal position, has observed that "the emergence of pluralism and secularism in the late-twentieth century have led to the breakdown of any clear Christian consensus under girding the standards, assumptions, and policies of multiracial and multi-religious societies." He further acknowledged that the present social predicament "has led to calls for greater Christian authenticity " wherein "we can no longer assume that Christian ethics simply endorses what everyone recognizes to be good for human beings *qua*

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[21] Robert P. Jones The unintended consequences of Dixieland Postliberalism,

human being." And to the present point, Fergusson contends:

> The time has therefore come to bear witness to the specific virtues of the Christian life through reference to its setting within the church under the guidance of Holy Scripture and the lordship of Jesus Christ. Christian witness in this social context bears the character not of seeking common ground with those who dwell *extra muros ecclesiae* [outside the walls of the church] but of articulating a vision that is distinctively and sometimes counter to the prevailing culture."[22]

Its as if post-liberalism are the spiritual counterpart to what Samuel Huntingdon has described as "an eruption of a global identity crisis" leading to a "culture of balkanization" as expressed socio-politically in the rise of political radicalism."[23]   The post-liberal will desire to preserve the communal narrative or "canon" if for the sake of preserving its Christian identity and witness within the greater society. This is viewed not 'against" the world, but as a contribution to the world along side of other sectarian witnesses toward a broader, albeit pluralistic construction of a public ethic.   Again, the post-liberal reaction to modernity is decidedly counter-cultural, although it should be added, for the sake of culture and admitting for pluralism at least philosophically.

In some respects, the pre-liberal expression "after modernity" is akin, in praxis if not principle, to the modern era movement of presuppositionalism and communalism during modernity.   The Barthian influence is again observed as per it's "confessing church" movement during Hitler's Germany for instance.   More immediately, one thinks of John Howard Yoder's seminal work, *The Politics of Jesus (1972)* and then any one of the many books by *Stanley Hauerwas* such as *Resident Aliens life in the Christian colony* (1989 as co-authored by William Willimon), *After Christendom? How the Church is to behave if freedom, justice and a Christian nation are bad Ideas*, (1991).

More related to post-liberal epistemology, one thinks especially of the so called "Yale School" such as George Linbeck and his *The Nature of Doctrine, Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (1984) and *The Church in a Postliberal Age* (2002), Richard Hayes, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament Community*, Cross, New Creation (1996). What they all share is the linguistic turn in epistemology even if to transcend the modernist debates back to a concern for the communal narrative or "canon" as a rule of faith and practice.   It is not altogether that different from a pre-modern hermeneutic, even as there is some debate as to whether Lindbeck and others affirm relativistic pluralism at a philosophical level, or are merely affirming the necessity of a socio-cultural or "dynamic at the epistemic level as to possibly make room for a pre-modern participationist theory of knowing. (more on this later).

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[22] David Ferguson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.1-2.
[23] Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations (1998)

Tim Keller in *Our New Global Culture: Ministry in Urban Centers* has aptly summarized the trends THEN and NOW: He writes*:*

> If *moderns* are rational and cognitive; postmoderns are more experiential and intuitive. If moderns are secular and anti-spiritual; postmoderns are more open to the spiritual and mystical. If moderns are more hard-line liberal or conservative; postmoderns are less ideologically rigid. If moderns are individualistic; postmoderns are more oriented to community and friendship.

Even a brief survey as has been presented here illustrates the polarizing "either-or" dichotomy of the THEN and NOW orientation.   If one was propositional, the other was communal. And yet, it has also been presented how BOTH were fundamentally reductionist, even if then to precipitate the dichotomy. This is because the "either-or" orientation and resultant spirituality partisanship lacked a transcendent narrative of a pre-modernist oriented world relative to the perspicuity of divine revelation especially.   And subsequently, BOTH were fundamentally subjectivist even if polarized along individualistic OR communalistic praxis, notwithstanding the remaining vestiges of both.   It was likewise suggested that even evangelical spirituality participated in the partisan, *nothingbuttery* kind of orientations even if intending to subvert the anti-supernaturalist and "closed system" universe of modernity and post-modernity. This then brings us to the present and emerging transmodernist context.

By "transmodern" it is meant the fluid amalgam of socio-cultural, philosophical and spiritual trends that are at once reacting against postmodernism's "hypermodernity" even if to express vestiges of modern and post-modern trends that are even inherent to the foundationalism, absolutism, optimism and universalism of pre-modernity. In some of its expressions, it represents a kind of "back to the future" way of thinking that will reflect the reunion of things once fragmented by modernity in relation to postmodernity past. Wanting to move beyond the "yawn" of modern reductionism it as well seeks to move beyond the nihilistic fragmentation of a relativistic oriented postmodernism that is becoming increasingly passé within even the academy.   The *New York Times*, for instance, reports how postmodern theory is dead, largely because it did not give anyone the basis for calling oppression and injustice wrong.[24] As nicely summed up by Rosa Maria Rodriguez Magda, "Modernity, Postmodernity, Transmodernity would form the dialectic triad that, in more of less Hegelian manner, completes a process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis." She

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[24] Emily Eakin, "The Latest Theory Is That Theory Doesn't Matter," The New York Times (April 19, 2003). Quoted in Tim Keller *Our New Global Culture: Ministry In Urban Centers* and can be located on the "Redeemer City to City" website.

further elucidates the triad as expressed in such forms as "culture- multiculture and then transculture" or "global, local and then glocal" for instance.[25]   (I'm thinking for this project something along the lines of "reason, community and then *reasonomunity*.. or perhaps better "covenant-law, temple-presence, and then covenantal presence in so far as a Biblical historical paradigm for Christian spirituality and Church practice is concerned—more on this later).

And so as aptly summarized by Tim Keller in his *New Global Culture* about a 1997 conference at the University of Chicago, "the question was posed: If we absorb postmodernism…but do not want to stop in arbitrariness, relativism, or aphoria, what comes after postmodernism?"[26] In response, Keller makes the following observation concerning the *emerging* trend that more or less coincides with our project here:

> *As a result, there are many efforts—probably too inchoate to be called a movement as yet—seeking to get beyond both the modern idolization of individual consciousness and the postmodern idolization of community.*[27]

There is therefore a growing sense that postmodernity is both untenable if not also unlivable. Keller explains that "there is no true identity to be accepted or discovered… there is no overarching purpose (or if there is we can't know it)." In other words, while there is a vision for social justice, there is no real vision for "how such totally different and diverse people can live together in peace?" And while there is a hunger for community, there is a emerging concern about how "community [can] be built in a deeply pluralistic world?   And while there is a yearning for passion, there is a hunger for something that "moves me" since "so little does."   And again, into the post-modern "yawn" there is yearning for friendship and community, and yet without a meta-narrative into which we might find a communal home. In response, and especially per the transmodern context, the emerging sympathy trends toward being modern, postmodern and yet showing signs of a pre-modern yearning.   For while Keller notes how " postmoderns are not as rational or linear in their thinking as moderns" can't we as well say that transmoderns are more open to the supernatural or spiritual? And while they "tend to see the church as a historically oppressive power" per their modernist reaction to political bureaucratization, they are at once hungry for a communal home and ritual.

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[25] Rosa Maria Rodriguez Magda, Globalization as Transmodern Totality, *Transmodernidad*, Barcelona, Anthropos, 2004) Posted on her blog, "Tranmodernity

[26] In The Focusing Institute, www.focusing.org, http://www.focusing.org/apm.htm#Online%20Papers (accessed 4/16/09)

[27] Tim Keller's *Our New Global Culture: Ministry In Urban Centers* and can be located on the "Redeemer City to City" website. C.f. Paul C. Vitz, "The Future of the University: From Postmodern to Transmodern." In Rethinking the Future of the University, eds. David Lyle Jeffrey and Dominic Manganiello. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1998), p. 113.

And so at the risk of adding to the inchoate chaos of transmodernism, what would it look like to get beyond both modernism and postmodernism *past* with respect to Christian spirituality and Church practice into even a pre-modern future? And what might a vision for Christian spirituality and Church practice look like if to affirm a kind of back to the future "pre-modern" narrative *after* postmodernity in ways strangely familiar to the 1st century pre-Christendom spirituality and practice espoused within canonical Christianity? Enter then the emergent movement!

Many have wanted to suggest that emerging spirituality is at least "biased" toward post-modern sympathies if not also hooked on post-modern philosophy. For example, Al Mohler emphatically states:

> The Emergent movement represents a significant challenge to biblical Christianity. Unwilling to affirm that the Bible contains propositional truths that form the frame work for Christian belief, this movement argues that we can have Christian symbolism and substance without those thorny questions of truthfulness that have so vexed the modern mind. The worldview of postmodernism—complete with an epistemology that denies the possibility of or need for propositional truth—affords the movement an opportunity to hop, skip and jump throughout the Bible and the history of Christian thought in order to take whatever pieces they want from one theology and attach them, like doctrinal post-it notes, to whatever picture they would want to draw.[28]

And again, one evangelical website out of concern for the "postliberal cult of the Emergent Church" references John MacArthur's "What's So Dangerous About The Emerging Church?" wherein MacArthur claims "the Emerging church sanctifies the post-modern culture as if it is legitimate and says if we're going to reach these people, we've got to become like these people. That's never been the biblical way…never!"[29] Well, we get the idea.   In response, I would want to counter that the emerging trends in spirituality are much more aligned with transmodernism—at least this is the assumption that I will make in aligning myself with the emerging project more or less.

In other words, is the emergent movement necessarily wed to "post-modernism?" Or is emerging spirituality merely a protest against modernity that's moving in a *transmodern* direction albeit in ways that might well *in praxis* reflect many of the vestiges of modernity and post-modernity within at least an intended pre-modern orientation true to her evangelical lineage? For instance, Robert Weber has defined the emerging church as the "first gasp of evangelicalism in the postmodern world" and is said to begin around 2000 to the present." Now already this definition is biased to see the emerging church as originating from the evangelical, or "pre-modern," orientation in so far as a

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[28] Albert Mohler, "A Generous Orthodoxy—Is It Orthodox?" Al Mohler's Weblog (June 20, 2005), online at: crosswalk.com/news/weblogs/mohler/?adate=6/20/2005,accessed August 8, 2006.
[29] John MacArthur, Whats so dangerous about the emergent church, located online at ww.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/GTY107

worldview is concerned.   This of course still begs the question as whether emerging spirituality is so much "post" or "hyper" modern as "anti" or "hypo" modern as it where.   Again, is it a protest movement in search of Christian spirituality and church practice AFTER modernity, or it is a protest movement that is decidedly post-modern?

"Emergent" pastors Tim Chester and Steve Timmis in their *Total Church* argue that the emergent movement owes is origins to "an experience of conservative churches that has been institutional, inauthentic, and rigidly programmed." They further describe the "emerging church" as "a loose movement of people who are exploring new forms of church." Again, notice the link with "conservative" here in reaction against modernist leaning evangelicalism. Brian McLaren in his *A New Kind of Christian* likewise recites the very typical emerging sentiment about how "modernity was an era of conquest and control; of the machine; of analysis; of secular science; aspiring to absolute objectivity; a critical age; modern nation-state and organization; individualism; Protestantism and institutional religion."[30] And again, Mark Driscol sums up the predominant direction of the emergent church this way, albeit making room for variance:

> The emerging church is a growing, loosely connected movement of primarily young pastors who are glad to see the end of modernity and are seeking to function as missionaries who bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to emerging and postmodern cultures. The emerging church welcomes the tension of holding in one closed hand the unchanging truth of evangelical Christian theology (Jude 3) and holding in one open hand the many cultural ways of showing and speaking Christian truth as a missionary to America (1 Cor. 9:19–23).[31]

In other words, whatever else the emerging movement is, it is a reaction or protest against modernity.   And to be sure, it IS just emerging and already polymorphous!   Jim Belcher for instance, in *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional* affirms a three-fold typology of emerging spirituality that was first posited by Ed Stetzer.   This is significant since as noted by Kevin DeYoung, Belcher "has the advantage of having been an insider in the movement at its inception.   He knows the journey of the emerging church… and knows many of the key players." And according to Belcher, the emerging church consists of: *The Relevants* (Driscoll, Kimball and some "young, restless, and reformed types") who are "trying to contextualize ministry while still maintaining conservative theology; *The Reconstructionists* (e.g. Cole, Hirsh, Barna, Viola) who are experimenting with organic house churches and monastic communities; and *The Revisionists (e.g. McLaren, Jones, Pagitt)* who are questioning key evangelical doctrines on theology and culture.[32]

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[30] A New Kind of Christian, p. 16)
[31] Mark Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission* Rev. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006) 22.
[32] Quoted from Jim Belcher *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional, p. 45-46.*

Now to be honest, I'm not sure even the third group is so much "post-modern" as "transmodern" albeit wanting not so much to question canonical Christianity as modernist evangelical Christianity however much the later might be equated with "traditionalist" Christianity after modernity!   But to the present point, according to Belcher what they all share in common is "a protest against the traditional church (or the "modernist-evangelical church").   The emerging protest, says Belcher, is therefore protesting seven issues:

1) Captivity to Enlightenment rationalism
2) A narrow view of salvation
3) Belief before belonging
4) Uncontextualized worship
5) Ineffective preaching
6) Weak ecclesiology
7) Tribalism

To be sure, it will be our contention here that these are as much suited to a "pre-modern" critique of modernist evangelicalism as perhaps even a post-modern critique, especially #'s 1, 3, and 6! In other words, in so far as the emerging movement is itself participating in the present fluidity of the "transmodern" search for authentic Christian spirituality and church practice *after* modernity, the stage is set for a vibrant reconstruction of canonical Christianity representing a future return to the past!   This seems to coincide as well with Robert Weber's observation about emerging spirituality that laments modernist Christianity in so far as it was "shaped primarily by need, private interest and self" as then believed to "miss the point of a *biblical and historical* Christianity" altogether. [33].
Again, I suspect that even the "revisionists" camp (McLaren et al) is not so wed to post-modernism as to anti-modernism.   His driving question is representative of THE emerging question:

> *So what does it look like to conceive of a Christianity in another way that's not modern? "Can you imagine what happens to the church, the whole Christian enterprise, when it has so thoroughly accommodated to modernity – so much so that it has no idea of any way Christianity could exist other than a modern* way?"

McLaren further explains " if we have a new world, we will need a new church." And yet to be absolutely clear as to what he is NOT intending by this, he continues, "we won't need a new religion per se, but a new framework for our theology. Not a new Spirit, but a new spirituality. Not a new Christ, but a new Christian. Not a new denomination, but a new kind of church in every denomination."[34] Interesting!   This "new church," according to McLaren is infinitely more than a

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[33] *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches*, gen. ed. Robert Webber, contributors, Driscoll, Burke, Kimball, Pagitt, Ward (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Zondervan, 2007)p. 18 (emphasis mine)
[34] *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix, (2006).p.* 18 and 14 respectively.

"renewed" church that merely seeks to be more relevant" and "that tends at best to be a temporary or stopgap measure." And again, it is much more than merely the " restored" church that might well "go back to the New Testament to rediscover our original vibrancy" and yet "latch onto some peripheral matter of early church life and prescribe it as the missing feature… the church of the last detail… or magic pattern."

Herein, it seems that McLaren is in concert with Dan Kimball, a self-confessed "conservative evangelical" who then says: "I am not a conservative evangelical who only tries to fix the outer wrappings of a church with each generation. If we are only trying to be 'relevant' (a word churches love to use) by adding candles and coffee, using art in worship, and playing hip music, this is not good. Those are only surface fixes." He then continues, "I believe true emerging churches must go deep within, and from the inside out, rethink, reshape, and revalue how we go about everything.[35]

And so if nothing else, it is our desire here to work in sympathy with wanting to go beyond just rethinking the socio-culture "forms" or "vernacular" of spirituality and practice in order to rediscover spirituality and practice in a way that will transcend "forms" albeit if never separated from them. It is again to pursue with Brian McLaren has envisioned as the *new church* in his *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix.* The "new church" is NOT "new" relative to a pre-modern and Biblical orientation necessarily, but "new" relative to the modern/postmodernist preoccupations with "forms" rather than "elements" vis-à-vis spirituality and practice. In McLaren's words, it is the "new church" that "can be of any age, any denomination. It goes through a process of peripheral change similar to the renewed and restored churches, a process of radical self-assessment, of *going back* to the roots, sources, and first things" in order to "come up with a new philosophy of ministry that prepares it to meet whatever unforeseen changes are to come."[36] Sounds pretty "transmodern" doesn't it, albeit self-confessedly wanting to "go back to the roots and sources" of a pre-modern orientation even.

And so with guarded optimism, the intent here is to work in sympathy with the emerging program in so far as that program is at once "transmodern" within an otherwise "pre-modern" orientation and intention. And especially, it is to sympathize with Tim Chester and Steve Timmis in search for the "Total Church" that seeks to bring together both "gospel" and "community" (what we will discern as the covenantal and temple orientation) even as the two trend toward being polarized within the modernist vs. post-modern orientations respectively. Or stated differently, the

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[35] Dan Kimball, *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches,* p. 86
[36] *The Church On The Other Side*, p. 26-28. (emphasis mine)

emerging church, at its best expresses a refreshingly invigorated interest in wanting to think about the church ontologically (in terms of elements) versus just sociologically (in terms of forms), even if as pastor-theologians we are cognizant that the two—ontology and sociology—are distinct if never separate in the spirit of Christology applied!

This pre-modern canonical church *after* modernity might very well translate into a praxis that is reminiscent of the modernist and/or post-modernist praxis, propositional and/or communal for instance, even if not to affirm either of their epistemic orientations. And this is actually a very significant observation. For whatever else BOTH modernity and post-modernity were, they reflected an epistemic reduction at its core (the former related to a *nothing-but* rationalist or *nothing but* communal). The emerging voice is again at its best when it is simply NOT interested in continuing the *either-or* style dichotomies in spirituality and praxis reflective of modernity and post-modernity respectively. Rather, it is to pursue a "both-and" more holistic spirituality as to reflect a reunion of praxis previously fragmented. Again, it is the "Total" church idea of Chester and Timmis, or perhaps the "Deep Church" idea of Belcher that we are after here.

And to be clear, this back to the future "pre-modern" kind of spirituality and practice will at once express BOTH modern and post-modern vestiges, albeit within an otherwise pre-modern oriented supernaturalist and "open" cosmology. This will prove important to the present thesis. For if both modernism and post-modernism express a reductionist trend in epistemology, albeit related to a "*nothing but*" rationalist or communalist oriented epistemology respectively as within a world without windows relative to the perspicuity of divine revelation, the thesis of a transmodern and back to the future oriented pre-modern spirituality will represent a *"both-and"* reunion of the rational-covenantal and communal-temple aspects of a pre-modern spirituality, albeit held together by a single revelatory narrative initiated by God in both the time and place of redemptive history. That is, the thesis here is that only a covenantal ("by divine law") spirituality coupled with a temple ("by divine participation") spirituality as being reunited and held together by a pre-modern hermeneutic can deconstruct the "either-or deconstructionist oriented fragmentation that is represented by modernity and post-modernity past. Practically, this will result in what could be described as a *both-and* "High gospel" covenantal theology and "high church" temple theology of Christian spirituality as reflective of Christology Applied!

By way then of preparing for the rediscovery of a pre-modernist, canonical, Christian spirituality and Church practice, the following questions are illustrative of the sorts of issues that we will need to consider within increasingly transmodern context for doing it. That is, if the modern to post-modern represents an "either-or" paradigm in spirituality and Church practice, we will discern how

the pre-modern orientation admits of a "both-and" paradigm, albeit subject to being misunderstood as either-or by those who remain in one or the other—modernist-postmodernist—orientations. And so into the transmodern context, we are of course left with questions—might we say many "exhilarating" questions. As directed to spirituality and church practice, Thomas Odens states it well in his *After modernity… WHAT?*

> *Where did we get the twisted notion that orthodoxy is essentially a set of ideas rather than a living tradition of social experience? Our stereotype of orthodoxy is that of frozen dogma, rather than a warm continuity of human experience--of grandmothers teaching granddaughters, of feasts and stories, of rites and dancing. Orthodoxies are never best judged merely by their doctrinal ideas, but more so by their social products, the quality of their communities… They await being studied sociologically, not just theologically.*

Clearly, Oden anticipates by his last statement a more post-liberal answer. And yet we ought expand Odens questions as to make room for the transmodern context that involves emerging spirituality *after* postmodernity! So for instance.

1. With respect to epistemic foundationalism and faith, is the after postmodern church for people who have already come to faith in order to grow in faith (modernist), or is the church a place for people with no faith to find faith (postmodernist, pre-modernist?)

2. With respect to hermeneutical subjectivism, does the after postmodern church stress the importance of reading the Bible individually/subjectively (modernist) or corporately/confessionally (post-modernist, pre-modernist?

3. With respect to the question of modern bureaucratization, is the after postmodern church best a conglomerate oriented and program focused organization with a populist oriented celebrity pastor-preacher (modernist), or is the church best a simple, less program, oriented organic and local focused communalism (post-modern, pre-modern?)

4. With respect to organizational authority, does the after postmodern church stress the importance of membership(modernist, pre-modernist?), or is membership something generally frowned upon as extra biblical (post-modernist)?

5. With respect to the question of modern democratization (correlationism), does the after postmodern church trend toward socio-cultural transformation directly as a church (modernist, post-modernist) through seeking ways to directly impact culture, or does the church trend toward a more sectarian identity albeit in order to both preserve its Christian values and for the sake of cultural transformation indirectly through its individual members who are more directly involved in cultural transformation movements and organizations (post-liberals, pre-modernist?)

6. With respect to the question of modern evangelical mission, does the after postmodern church sees itself "sending" itinerate missionaries into the world (both at home and abroad) (modernist), or is it primarily a church that sees itself as missionary by its nature in the things it does together so that the church itself, together with its practices are all done as if the whole culture is present (post-modernist, pre-modernist?).

7. With respect to the question of modern spirituality, is the after postmodern church, per her inherent nature at best an essential element of the gospel (pre-modern), or is the church per nature at best a subsidiary element of the gospel? (modern, post-modern?)

8. With respect to spiritual authority, does spirituality after postmodern church affirm the perspicuity of divine law, albeit humbly reliant upon a plurality of socio-cultural interpreters and perspectives via the one holy catholic church of all places and times to best discover its meaning (pre-modern), or does Christian spirituality after post-modernity affirm inherent subjectivity in Biblical authority such as to admit of relativistic pluralism (modern, post-modern)?

Admittedly, the above questions beg for a "pre-modern" description in spirituality within an otherwise transmodern context. It has been argued that this is fundamentally what emerging spirituality is after—this project being but one attempt within conversation. And if the above questions do anything at all, they help clarify that the "emerging movement" may well reflect a "both-and" sort of answer in *praxis*, albeit I will suggest within an otherwise "pre-modern" intention. More specifically, it has been argued how the emerging movement is a "back to the future" kind of impulse awaiting pre-modern reconstruction *after* postmodernity. As such, the transmodern context is perfectly suited to a "both-and," modernist-post-modernist," oriented *praxis* albeit reunited within an otherwise pre-modern oriented worldview with respect to the perspicuity of divine revelation and its corresponding meta-narrative. Beyond both the modernist and postmodernist reductionism in spirituality and practice, a pre-modern narrative will advocate for the reunion of epistemic rationalism of covenantal spirituality (*jure divino*, "by divine law") with an epistemic communalism of temple spirituality (*participatione divina*, "by divine participation"). As such, it is as well an emphasis that in broad strokes at least will want to see a reunion of all things "east" and "west" with respect to Christian spirituality and Church practice.