

TRINITY BIBLE COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

A PHILOSOPHICAL EVANGELICAL APOLOGETIC FOR CONTEMPORARY POST-  
MODERNISM

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A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS THROUGH THE CENTURIES

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## INTRODUCTION

Secular humanism and pluralism coupled with post modernism has reached into the very heart of our Western culture. Our society, largely, has turned neopaganistic. We have turned the ability to look at empirical evidence in an objective manner into a subjective rationalization of self-actualized ideologies and beliefs. Dr. Wayne House noted in his inaugural editorial in *The Journal of Conservative Apologetics*,

“The Bible is often no more understood or accepted by our society than was the preaching of Paul to Athenians. The need now is greater than ever for Christians to be knowledgeable about the defense of the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). (And there is a need to go “back to Genesis” as Paul did with the Greeks) Moreover, those believers who have seen the need of apologetics and desire to make an impact on their world and win people to our Lord need additional information to help them in the struggle with those intellectual strongholds which exalt themselves above the knowledge of God.”<sup>1</sup>

The self-evident subjective “truths” we have rationalized into what we believe has led to the question; that is “We” in “We the people (...)” Politicians offer up conservative oratory to sway a political group to their way of thinking solely for the purposes of electivity. Once in office they pursue their own approaches to politics, liberal or conservative. One man, has forced the moral voting majority, through the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, to accept the deletion of “under God” from our pledge of allegiance. In education, we find teachers no longer teaching; instead, they have

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<sup>1</sup>Michigan Theological Seminary. (1997; 2002). *Journal of Christian Apologetics Volume 1* (Vol. 1, Page 1). Michigan Theological Seminary.

become facilitators of the students. They no longer instruct, but aid the student in the constructs of a New Age style of thinking. Rational post modernity has become very subjective even to the point of manipulating self-evident truths. John A. Jelnik notes in a recent journal article concerning morality,

“In an autonomous world, everyone becomes his own truth detector. Everyone has the right to his opinion, Many people will not object if you disagree with them, as long as you do not attempt to get them to change their opinions. At that point, many become defensive and sometimes even angry at the challenge to their “God-given” autonomy. By today’s standards, each person has the right to determine his own absolutes.”<sup>2</sup>

At this point, we can begin to see how post modernism manipulates these self evident truths into self serving ideologies that change our society. When these views are manipulated by the constructs of post modernity, the question of morality comes into view. We must ask ourselves at this juncture, are we a moral society or has our society turned amoral?

When we look at the definition of Post modernism, (Appendix)<sup>3</sup> we find a world view concentrating on radical subjectivity with a rejection of the modernistic (Appendix)<sup>4</sup> spirit, which includes empiricism and the possibility of certain knowledge. There is some

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<sup>2</sup>Michigan Theological Seminary. (1997; 2002). *Journal of Christian Apologetics Volume 1* (Vol. 1, Page 4). Michigan Theological Seminary.

<sup>3</sup>John A. Jelnik, “Why Be Moral? The Contradictions of Post Modern Morality in America,” *Journal of Conservative Apologetics* 1, no. 1 (1997).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

debate among Gerald Graff, Susan Sontag, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jurgen Habermas, and Fredric Jameson as to whether Post modernism is an entity into itself or an extension of modernism. Graff, Sontag, and Lyotard believe that post modernism is a continuation of the modernistic view, although, Lyotard adds a political overtone to his understanding. Habermas views it as a political nihilism and Fredrick Jameson views post modernity as a new entity. To this end, there seems to be still undefined lines of clarity involving post modernity since 1989, the end of enlightenment.

Marshall Berman's view is of a self perpetuating ever changing totalizing monolith. Berman also believes that post modernism is fluid and pluralistic along with dynamic and secular; all of which characterize post modernism.<sup>5</sup> It is Berman's view that initiates our analysis of post modernity and this abets the development of a philosophy based Evangelical apologetic. His views hold the keys to establishing and maintaining an effective apologetic for today's secular and pluralistic worldviews. The other views are important and are out there for examination, but are only marginally essential to this textual discussion. The Evangelical ideological needs that exist in today's apologetics should be at an all time high. The internal crisis post modernism has created within the church has caused heresy and false teachings to come to the fore front. Taking this statement, adding the concept of pluralism (Appendix)<sup>6</sup> and political correctness

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<sup>5</sup>Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Thin Air. The Experience of Modernity.*, first ed. (London: Verso Publishers, 1982), 1-3.

<sup>6</sup>Jelnik, Why Be Moral? The Contradictions of Post Modern Morality in America." Pgs. 27-29 Appendix

(Appendix)<sup>7</sup> to it, and you have generated a “warm, fuzzy feeling” internally within the church. Later in the text, as you will see, this applies externally in society as well. You are what you believe you are, and this comes from what you think you believe. All of what you believe you are comes from preconceived sensory perceptions. Post modernism uses a paradigm (Appendix)<sup>8</sup> assessment wherein each paradigm uses its own logic and the rules of one paradigm cannot be used for another. This naturally breeds the question as to the subjectivity/objectivity rationale used in those rules. In other words, how much of ones rational objectivity is lost to subjectivity because of the preconceived sensory based perceived values noted above. Multiculturalism (Appendix)<sup>9</sup> is blatant in the education system. Post modernists note, that multiculturalism, as an approach to education, advances a cognizance and valuation of different cultures and subcultures (including those that are deviant). Therefore, as Dr. Jelnik notes in his article:

“In this arena of postmodern thought, multiculturalists think that all cultures are empowered by this paradigm theory that they should be able to preserve their cultural distinctives and realities without interference from outside cultural powers.

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<sup>7</sup>Jelnik, Why Be Moral? The Contradictions of Post Modern Morality in America.” Pgs. 27-29 Appendix

<sup>8</sup>Jelnik, Why Be Moral? The Contradictions of Post Modern Morality in America.” Pgs. 27-29 Appendix

<sup>9</sup>Jelnik, Why Be Moral? The Contradictions of Post Modern Morality in America.” Pgs. 27-29 Appendix

It has perhaps been more popularly expressed in the concept of empiricism: we come to know reality through what we can see, hear, feel, smell, or touch.<sup>10</sup> In modernism, then, authority is consciously and purposefully vested in the individual (self) as the final arbiter of truth. Many modernists believe that science can enable the engineering of a perfect society, or at least that science is our best hope toward that end. (Quite futile)

“Postmodernism” refers not to a focused, articulated world view<sup>11</sup> but to a cluster of anti-modernistic attitudes that permeate the elite and popular cultures of today. It is, at least conceptually, a reaction to modernism. In its essence it rejects reason, rationality, and confidence in epistemology (theories of knowledge) and science as cultural biases but does not deny authority in the individual. This definition, as we shall see, does not exhaust the broad categories that are subsumed under the heading “Postmodern.”<sup>11</sup>

It is these series of clusters that we are interested in order to develop a systematic theological approach toward developing an apologetic. We can glean from the systematic rejection of reason, rationality, epistemology, and science as foundations for our cultural values but not the individual’s right in having the final authority over his beliefs.

It is obvious by now that we can spend an entire paper dissecting the intricacies of this text on the intra and inter relationships of these terms, definitions and philosophies.

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(Note: 10.) Empiricism sets limits on what we can know by rooting knowledge in sensory perception. A correspondence view of truth establishes its basis. Ideas or concepts are true when they correspond to reality outside of a person. The strict empiricist, however, is fideistic on at least one point: he must assume that his senses create impressions in his mind reflecting reality as it actually is. Postmodernists reject the correspondence theory of truth. (Notes on a quote within a quote)

The intent is to move on into an apologetical solution through an analysis of what has been described. We have the foundational grounds for looking at what an apologetist would have to know relative to his Christian faith, the desperate need for a philosophical understanding of the arena he enters, and a reasonable knowledge of the rules used by the opponent. As Dr. J. P. Moreland further states;

“Philosophy undergirds other disciplines at a foundational level by clarifying, defending, or criticizing the essential presuppositions of that discipline. Since philosophy operates as a second-order discipline that investigates other disciplines, and since philosophy examines broad, foundational, axiological, epistemological, logical and metaphysical issues in those other disciplines, then philosophy is properly suited to investigate the presuppositions of other fields. Thus philosophy plays a regulative role for Christian intellectual activity—including apologetics—and is critical to our community if we are to articulate and defend our theology to thinking people, especially to those outside the Church. Philosophy can provide structure and sharpness to our discourse in the public square. For example, in linguistic studies issues are discussed regarding the existence, nature and knowability of meaning. These issues, as well as questions about whether and how language accomplishes reference to things in the world, are the main focus of the philosophy of language and epistemology. Again, science assumes there is an external world that is orderly and knowable, that inductive inferences are legitimate, that the senses and mind are reliable, that truth exists and can be known, and so on. Orthodox theology assumes that religious language is cognitive, that knowledge is possible, that an intelligible sense can be given to the claim that something exists that is not located in space and time, that the correspondence theory of truth is the essential part of an overall theory of truth, and that linguistic meaning is objective and knowable. These presuppositions, and a host of others besides, have all been challenged. The task of clarifying, defending, or criticizing them is essentially a philosophical task. If evangelicals wish to speak out on issues and move beyond a surface analysis of them, we need philosophy.”<sup>10</sup>

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(Note: 11.) It is a worldview that does not have consistently formulated and dogmatic statements. It defies the traditional concept of a worldview. (Notes on a quote within a quote)

<sup>10</sup>Dr J.P. Moreland, “Philosophical Apologetics, The Church, And Contemporary Culture,” *Journal of Evangelical Theology Society* 39, no. 1 (1196,2002). J.P. Moreland is professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California.

At this juncture, we need to have a tool that we can use to initiate and perpetuate our apologetic based upon philosophy and Evangelism. Language and linguistics will be those tools. One of the finest quotes I have seen is by Dr. Alistair McGrath, of Oxford University, when he notes of C. S. Lewis thoughts on the use of language and/or linguistics;

“C. S. Lewis, unquestionably the greatest apologist of his time,<sup>2</sup> made this point memorably.

We must learn the language of our audience. And let me say at the outset that it is no use laying down *a priori* what the “plain man” does or does not understand. You have to find out by experience. . . . You must translate every bit of your theology into the vernacular. This is very troublesome . . . but it is essential. It is also of the greatest service to your own thought. I have come to the conclusion that if you cannot translate your own thoughts into uneducated language, then your thoughts are confused. Power to translate is the test of having really understood your own meaning.”<sup>3 11</sup>

In conclusion, we have seen post modernism develop from modernism. There are two ways with which to analyze the foundational aspects of post modernity as it affects our socialization processes in the existing culture of today. The use of philosophy and the use of language will be extremely important in the understanding of post modernism and

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(Note 2): See the assessment provided by Basil Mitchell, “Contemporary Challenges to Christian Apologetics,” in *How to Play Theological Ping-Pong* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), 25–41, esp. 25. Notes on a quote within a quote.

(Note 3): C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 96. (Notes on a quote within a quote.)

<sup>11</sup>Dallas Theological Seminary. (1998; 2002). *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 155* (Vol. 155, Page 4). Dallas Theological Seminary.



the development of an apologetic for today's society. Both of these tools will also be needed to evaluate the outcome and use of the philosophy based Evangelical apologetic we develop.

## CHAPTER 1

### CONCENTRICITY OF RINGS-AN ANALYSIS

Analyzing the current worldview of post modernistic religion and apologetics requires some much-needed re-evaluation of current thinking. In looking through 40-50 articles of journal related and book related texts, the idea occurred that everyone is aware of the problem but most take a singular approach to the solution of apologetical degeneration. Some of the texts apply solutions, as did Dr. Jelnik, to specific problems with a sphere of postmodern impact on that affected area. Secularization and plurality prevent an apologetist from knowing everything about everything that post modernism affects. Additionally, a dilution of the apologetic defense would occur due to the cognitive concepts of post modernistic truth. These concepts of truth are pervasive into our culture, history, religion, society, and education. These are the communal truths expounded in the “wholeness of post modernism”. Taking this analogy of communal truths one-step further, we can conclude that our whole existence is shaped by our cultural socialization into the way we know what we believe to know.

“However, while knowledge per individual may not be totally objective, that is not to deny the actuality of a true reality independent of our personal perceptions. We must both distinguish and connect knowledge and truth. David Clark puts this well when he writes: <sup>12</sup>

“Apologetics teachers should nurture in their students a certain comfort level with the dual nature of human knowledge as both limited and yet objective... We need not abandon the concept of absolute truth even though we must recognize the relative-yet-objective character of human knowledge.” <sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Michigan Theological Seminary. (1998; 2002). *Journal of Christian Apologetics Volume 2* (Vol. 2, Page 28-29). Michigan Theological Seminary. [\(Need to list authors here, as well as in the text\)](#)

<sup>13</sup>Michigan Theological Seminary. (1998; 2002). *Journal of Christian Apologetics Volume 2* (Vol. 2, Page 28-29). Michigan Theological Seminary.

Philosophy will play an important part in the nature of analyzing post modernistic thinking and every apologetist should have that knowledge. As we will see in further texts that need is imperative from a linguistic point in evaluating and understanding the concentricity of rings. The twentieth century owes much to C.S. Lewis, Blasé Pascal, and Augustine and their instituting a philosophical approach into apologetics. Now we must use that philosophical approach, coupled with apologetics, and a linguistic understanding of the senses (and their perceptions) in defense of Christianity against post modernism.

Some interesting comments come from Dr. Albert C. Outlar in his introduction to Augustine's *Confessions*, wherein he states (edited and translated);

“He was far and away the best—if not the very first—psychologist in the ancient world. His observations and descriptions of human motives and emotions, his depth analyses of will and thought in their interaction and his exploration of the inner nature of the human self—these have established one of the main traditions in European conceptions of human nature, even down to our own time. Augustine is an essential source for both contemporary depth psychology and existentialist philosophy. His view of the shape and process of human history has been more influential than any other single source in the development of the Western tradition which regards political order as inextricably involved in moral order. His conception of a *societas* as a community identified and held together by its loyalties and love has become an integral part of the general tradition of Christian social teaching and the Christian vision of “Christendom.” His metaphysical explorations of the problems of being, the character of evil, the relation of faith and knowledge, of will and reason, of time and eternity, of creation and cosmic order, have not ceased to animate and enrich various philosophic reflections throughout the succeeding centuries.”<sup>14</sup>

There are few presuppositions involved in understanding the concentricity of rings analysis regarding post modernism. If, by definition, post modernism is a large ring

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<sup>14</sup>Dr Albert C. Outlar, “Introduction,” in *Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. and ed. Dr Albert C, Outlar. First ed. (Dallas Texas/SMU: 5021, MCMLV, 5021, Library of Congress 55, n.d.), 1-3. Dr. Outlar is a Professor of Theology at the Perkins School of Theology at SMU in Dallas, Texas (PH.D and D.D.) This quote is from NavPress Software-1997.

with other rings attached to it according to their individualistic views, then we have an analysis of post modernism. As indicated in previous text, the autonomy of the individual dictates the individual is the final arbiter of truth. We perceive and subjectively evaluate what we feel fits the constructs of our individual rationale. As mentioned earlier, language can be used to manipulate the senses, influencing the subjective rather than objective perceptions of the individual. This is done today, as indicated in previous quotes as the socialization of the individual by his culture. “Spin” masters can easily manipulate the subjective rationale of the individual through linguistic usage and/or number interpretations. “Figures don’t lie, but liars figure” is an old adage from the business world. You can “spin” language usage through marginalization. Manipulate (or just leave out those you don’t want to present) figures or language usage to influence the socialization of the individual and his rationale any way you want to. After all, in post modernism the individual is the final authority on their interpretation of truth according to his/her values and societal culturalization. Language is the key that unlocks the door, and if used correctly, keeps it open for the post modernists. We are currently a culture of perceived values relative to individual interpretations fostered by societal ideologies. Words used in language carry heavily weighed perceived values. Manipulation of these values comes from the perceptions created through language usage. Again, we are what we believe we are, and now, because that’s what we are told we are to believe we are.

If the definitions afforded in the appendix are used to form rings attached to and overlapping into a ring of post modernism, an individual’s approach to his own subjective rationale can be developed for understanding by the apologetist (sp) . Using the adage

that psychologist like to employ, “93% of communication is non verbal” we can see how important language and its communicated perceptions are to understanding how the subjective rationale of the individual is developed. Note, both avenues of the 100% communication rule must be used by the Evangelical apologist. Word usage, at 7%, is almost as important as the perceptions of values each word carries in the 93%. Presuppositions are developed from perceived values of the subjective rationales constructed by the individual.

“This is precisely the apologetic approach commended by Francis Schaeffer and others. Dialogue enables the apologist to explore the other person’s worldview and to probe its defenses. For example, all belief systems rest upon presuppositions. Schaeffer treats the manner in which dialogue enables these presuppositions to be identified and explored:

Let us remember that every person we speak to...have a set of presuppositions, whether he or she has analyzed them or not... It is impossible for any non-Christian individual or group to be consistent to their system in logic or in practice... A man may try to bury the tension and you may have to help him find it, but somewhere there is a point of inconsistency. He stands in a position which he cannot pursue to the end; and this is not just an intellectual concept of tension, it is what is wrapped up in what he is as a man.<sup>10</sup>

The basic point Schaeffer makes is of considerable importance to a person-centered apologetics: Many people base their lives on a set of presuppositions that are (1) unrecognized and (2) inadequate and that gentle and patient inquiry through dialogue can bring to light. Experience suggests that such gentle explorations can sometimes be devastating, in that they expose the inner contradictions and confusions within someone’s outlook on life. A crisis may result, in which faith can be born. (Schaeffer himself provides a number of examples of cases in which exposure of contradictions and tensions within worldviews has important [and negative] implications for their credibility.)” 15

Looking inside the church, using our rings of concentricity, we can see doctrinal issues arising out of self-centered self-interpretive doctrinal issues involving dialogues

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(Note: 10.) F. Schaeffer, *Trilogy* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1990) 132-133.

that don't offer the contextual understanding that was intended by the author. As Francis Schaeffer continues to note;

“But I do not wish to suggest that Christian dialogue with non-Christians will be of benefit only to the latter. One of my interests concerns the development of Christian doctrine.<sup>11</sup> I have often noticed how significant doctrinal developments are in response to dialogue with those outside the Christian faith. I am not for one moment suggesting that this means that some Christian doctrines are a response to non-Christian pressures. Rather, I am stating as a matter of observable fact that dialogue with non-Christians can provide a stimulus to Christians to re-examine long-held views, which turn out to rest upon inadequate Scriptural foundations.

To give an example: It was not so long ago that it was regarded as irresponsible and shocking for Christians to speak of God suffering or experiencing pain. Yet dialogue with non-Christians, especially those who espoused what has become known as “protest atheism,” provided a stimulus to reexamine the Biblical and theological basis of the doctrine of the *apatheia* of God.<sup>12</sup> This stimulus led to the rediscovery of the suffering of God, both in Scripture and in Christian tradition (exemplified by writers such as Martin Luther and Charles Wesley). Dialogue is a pressure to constantly reexamine our doctrinal formulations with a view to ensuring that they are as faithful as possible to what they purport to represent. Evangelicalism must be committed to the principle that

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<sup>15</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1992; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 35* (Vol. 35, Page 490-491). The Evangelical Theological Society.

(Note: 11.) See A. E. McGrath, *The Genesis of Doctrine* (Oxford/Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990).

(Note: 12.) See R. B. Edwards, “The Pagan Dogma of the Absolute Unchangeableness of God,” *RelS* 14 (1975) 305-313; J. G. McLelland, *God the Anonymous: A Study in Alexandrian Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge, 1976) 37- 40; J. K. Mozley, *The Impassibility of God* (Cambridge, 1926); T. E. Pollard, “The Impassibility of God,” *SJT* 8 (1955) 353-364. On the notion of a suffering God see J. Y. Lee, *God Suffers for Us: A Systematic Inquiry into a Concept of Divine Passibility* (The Hague: Nijhof, 1974); A. E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985); W. McWilliams, “Divine Suffering in Contemporary Theology,” *SJT* 33 (1980) 35-54; J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974). On the more general question of the intrusion of secular philosophical ideas into Christian theology during the patristic period see J. S. O’Leary, *Questioning Back: The Overcoming of Metaphysics in Christian Tradition* (Minneapolis, 1985); W. Pannenberg, “The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology,” *Basic Questions in Theology* (London, 1971) 2.119–183.

the *ecclesia reformata* is an *ecclesia semper reformanda*. Dialogue is one pressure to ensuring that this process of continual self-examination and reformation continues. It is a bulwark against complacency and laziness and a stimulus to return to the sources of faith rather than resting content in some currently acceptable interpretation of them.”<sup>16</sup>

As we can see, both inside the church and in society as a whole, individuals are made up of a series of concentric rings. The degree to which these rings overlap into the ring of post modernism is solely based on the subjective rationale of the individual. The philosophy used by the evangelical is critical in not only determining an apologetical approach but also in determining the linguistic dialogue they wish to establish. We must use this individualistic approach to determine our apologetical dialogue with that individual. The application of the definitions related to post modernism in the appendix to form an individual’s concentric rings must be understood and used not only to defend our faith to that individual but to indicate to that individual the inherent need for their consideration of the Christian faith. We must also employ this approach to the Christian that needs to renew their faith and understanding. As Blasé Pascal notes,

“Faith is a gift of God. Do not imagine that we describe it as a gift of reason. Other religions do not say that about their faith. They offered nothing but reason as a way to faith, and yet it does not lead there.”<sup>17</sup>

The use of the ring approach and the subsequent definitions associated with post modernity is due in part to post modernism’s vagueness and ill defined ideologies. It is the opinion of Alister E. McGrath, in his discussion of deconstructionism, that,

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<sup>16</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1992; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 35* (Vol. 35, Page 491-492). The Evangelical Theological Society.

<sup>17</sup>Blase Pascal, “Various XXIII,” in *Pensees*, trans. Dr. A. J. Krailsheimer, 2d ed. (80 Strand; London, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1966), 199.

“The area of Christian theology that is most sensitive to this development is apologetics, traditionally regarded as an attempt to defend and commend the truth-claims of Christianity to the world.<sup>11</sup> Apologetically the question that arises in the postmodern context is the following: How can Christianity’s claims to truth be taken seriously when there are so many rival alternatives and when “truth” itself has become a devalued notion? No one can lay claim to possession of the truth. It is all a question of perspective. All claims to truth are equally valid. There is no universal or privileged vantage point that allows anyone to decide what is right and what is wrong.”<sup>18</sup>

Intellectual pluralism and secularism, post modernism, constructionism, psychologism, metanarratives, deconstructtionsim, rationalism, and all the other appendix<sup>19</sup> definitions will conceptually foster the development of today’s individual. The rings of post modernity will develop, and will overlap with varying degrees into each other, shaping the individual’s subjective perspectives on truth is embedded into the cultural aspects of their society.

The diagram below will show a purely simplistic view of the theory of the conceptualization of rings. How the rings are assembled, to the degree they overlap one with the other and/or with center ring of post modern thinking, and to the degree they remain fluid(constantly changing) will have to be identified by the apologetist. As stated previously, the individual is the final arbiter of truth. Coupled with language perceptions

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Notes: 11. I myself have attempted to develop an apologetic approach that deals with the specifics of the postmodern situation, including the pluralist agenda; cf. A. E. McGrath, *Bridge-Building: Effective Christian Apologetics* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1992; North American edition forthcoming from Zondervan). ([A good project](#))

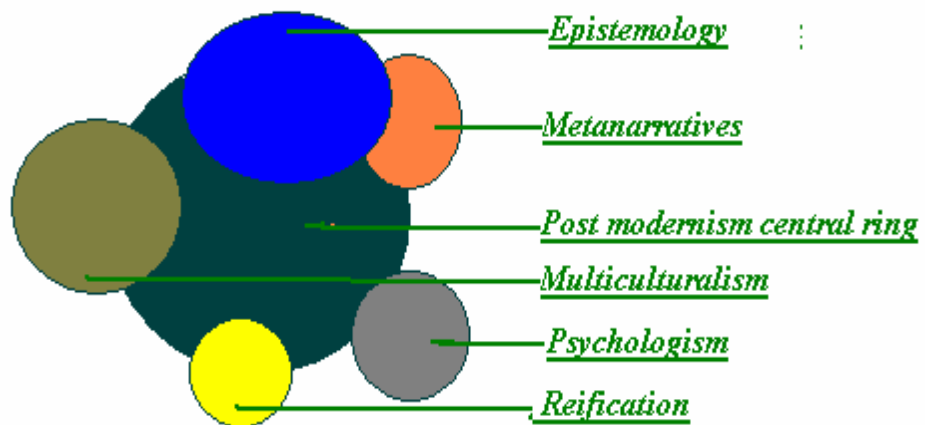
<sup>18</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1992; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 35* (Vol. 35, Page 365). The Evangelical Theological Society.

<sup>19</sup>John A. Jelnik, “Appendix I,” in *The Journal of Christian Apologetics Volume 1*, (ed. 1. vol. 1, Vol.1 Page 1-29). Michigan Theological Seminary (Plymouth, Michigan: Michigan Theological Seminary, 1197). From the article entitled "Why Be Moral? The Contradictions of Post Modern Morality in America. Dr. Jelnik is a professor of Theology at Michigan Theological Seminary.



and the fluidity of change within the scope of the rings (the individual will change to his position to one of strength and comfort) will be a daunting task for the philosophy based Evangelical apologetist.

*Concentricity of Post Modernism Rings Concept*



*The rings are an individual constructed using post modernism as the center ring. The degree of overlap and the number and scope will vary by individual socialization/cultural processes.*

(Interesting)



## CHAPTER 2

### UNLOCKING THE RINGS--PHILOSOPHY AND APOLOGETICS

The combinations and permutations of rings in our analysis are almost limitless, but remember they are all bound by perceived values dictated by the societal influences of the individual's culture. Why does an Evangelical apologist need philosophy in their approach to unlocking the postmodern rings? In 1756, John Wesley addressed a gathering of clergymen on how to carry out their pastoral ministry, and focus on issues of the day. However at the top of his list was an idea that,

“Ought not a minister to have, first, a good understanding, a clear apprehension, a sound judgement, and a capacity for reasoning with some closeness?”<sup>20</sup>

In his “*DeGeneri ad Litteram* (1.21), Augustine used a philosophical approach to the church fathers when he said,

”We must show are Scriptures not to be in conflict with whatever [our critics] can demonstrate about the nature of things from reliable sources.”

Philosophy has become a need for ministerial training, just as Wesley and Augustine used it to convey a sense of wholeness to the pastoral calling of the day. J. P. Moreland notes in a recent article that,

“Today things are different. Most evangelical seminaries with which I am familiar do not have professional philosophers on their faculties, nor do they train ministerial candidates to do philosophy or motivate them to see philosophical acumen as part of their calling. And in my experience of speaking in literally

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<sup>20</sup>John Wesley, “An Address to the Clergy,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishers, 1979), 481.

hundreds of churches, the first thing that comes to many Christian minds when they hear the word “philosophy” is that Col 2:8 (on their view) warns them to stay away from it. It is no accident that these facts run concurrently with an increasingly marginalized evangelical community, which as a result is struggling with a crisis of self-image as the culture turns neopagan.”<sup>21</sup>

Dr. Moreland continues to foster the addition of philosophical teaching and its utilization when he indicates,

“In my view, if the evangelical community would give greater attention to philosophy—especially philosophical apologetics in both formal educational settings, publishing, and local church life—this could help a great deal in our efforts to penetrate effectively our culture and proclaim Christ and a Christian worldview to outsiders and to our own brothers and sisters. But if we continue to eschew philosophy we will continue to speak largely to ourselves, and our dialect will, I fear, be fideistic.”<sup>22</sup>

When developing an apologetic for today’s world, we need to have a working definition for unlocking the post modern rings we have created as a means to understanding today’s cultural values and the socialization process that the individual acclimates himself to believe in. Philosophy, as Dr. Moreland notes, is hard to define and the working definition of philosophical apologetics is harder yet. Dr. Moreland further notes in his article, *Philosophical Apologetics, the Church, and Contemporary Culture*;

“If philosophy is hard to define, philosophical apologetics is harder still. Nevertheless as a working definition let us characterize philosophical apologetics as a philosophical activity that has as its goal (or perhaps as its result) the

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<sup>21</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1996; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 39* (Vol. 39, Page 123-124). The Evangelical Theological Society. \* J. P. Moreland is professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, 13800 Biola Avenue, La Mirada, CA 90639.

<sup>22</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1996; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 39* (Vol. 39, Page 124). The Evangelical Theological Society.

increasing or maintaining of the epistemic justification of a Christian worldview in whole or in part.<sup>4</sup> Let us accept this gloss as adequate. Note two things about the definition. (1) Philosophical apologetics involves the direct use of philosophy. Thus historical evidences *per se* are not part of philosophical apologetics. (2) Philosophy, as well as its employment by Christians, goes beyond philosophical apologetics. All cases of philosophical apologetics are cases of philosophy, but the converse does not hold.”<sup>23</sup>

As we can see in, looking at the list of definitions, in the appendix that is used throughout this text; linguistic values and language perceptions permeate them. Keeping this in mind, we need to take a look at some propositions that come out of this analogy. These propositions were extracted from the texts of the quotes used so far and additional quotes will be used where necessary for further explanation in order to start unlocking the rings for our apologetic.

As the individual is the final arbiter of truth and that same individual uses their senses as an interpretative tool of his socialization process (rational post modernism), we can use the following lists of propositions as a tool to develop a philosophically based Evangelical defense of Christianity.

***Proposition 1: The whole truth is readily available but often times is never presented or utilized in its entirety. Do individuals manipulate the presentation and/or utilization of the truth until it can be rationalized and effectively developed to support the ideologies of the post modern culture?***

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(Note: 4)Does an atheist who offers good arguments for the soul (assuming as I do that Christianity teaches that souls exist) practice philosophical apologetics? Not if the latter is defined by good epistemic intentions toward Christianity. Still, such arguments have the result of increasing our justification for believing in the soul and may be counted as philosophical apologetics, at least in a secondary sense. Yet in this case would these arguments have to be used by Christian theism to support a Christian doctrine before they would count as philosophical apologetics? I leave the matter open.

<sup>23</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1996; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 39* (Vol. 39, Page 124-125). The Evangelical Theological Society.

***Proposition 2: There are currently, according to this writer, three forms of literacy in a post modern culture. The first two you will readily recognize as literate, and illiterate. There is a third aspect of literacy, alliteracy. By definition, alliterate is a person who is able to read but is disinclined to gain additional information from literary sources. This is where a vast majority of people function. How does this affect the individual's ability to perceive values in post modern world?***

***Proposition 3: The speed with which cultures/ideologies communicate, operate, and change their cultural attitude affects their ability, in terms of time, to make objective empirical objective decisions about the way post modernism socializes their culture? In terms of lifestyle and the socialization processes, does the speed with which this lifestyle moves affect the ability of the individual to objectively evaluate evidence or does the individual simply "sensitize" and accept it as the rational truth.***

***Proposition 4: In terms of value perception, is there a recognizable difference between the perceived values of the senses and the objectivity/subjectivity ratio. For example, what sense does the individual rely most on when determining what is objective or subjective in their lifestyle and societal constructs. Do they believe more of what they see than what they hear? (Vice versa) Can they repeat precisely what they see and/or hear in an objective manner? Do they evaluate the sensory perceptions and rationalize them away into their arbiter of truth syndrome? Do they let the societal pressures of culturalization make their arbiter of truth decisions for them?***

***Proposition 5: As the fluidity of the socialization process impacts cultural individualism, to what extent does it change the individual's position to a comfort zone of ambivalence (Warm fuzzy feeling)? How readily do they accept the status quo? Do they just acquiesce to societal pressures and rationalize that it doesn't affect us? (Non positional issues)***

All of these propositions were developed by this writer and acquired through observable experiences and acquired interpersonal relationships with people in general. There are probably many more propositions out there that can be added however, given philosophy and language as the keys to developing an apologetic; we can see the direction to take in analyzing post modernism and how to develop a defense of Christianity. We have seen the need for ministerial training in philosophy as well as seminary training for young apologists. We have seen the definition of philosophy as it relates to today's society and its pressurized culturalization processes. We have a reasonable of the manipulation that occurs when dealing with self evident truths and their

affect on the individual as the final arbiter of truth. We have shown how language holds the keys to reestablishing the truths of Christianity. Yet in today's society, we see those same words used, virtually, without meaning and context because the words used today have no meaning, except in the perceived values of the individual construe them.

There are many avenues by which the apologists' (x) of today use. There are many pitfalls in those avenues one can fall into using this apologetic. Two things remain constant, as we look into the next chapter on an evaluation of our apologetic.

1. The use of philosophy, its study, its use, and probably more importantly its relationship philosophically to Christianity and today's societal values. Berman got us to see the need for philosophy. J.P Moreland, Alistair McGrath, John Jelnik and others will show us how to use it.

2. Language and linguistics are the communication tools that must be used to establish a communicative level with Christian and non-Christian alike. The application of vernacular, cant, articulation and inflection as well as usage will be the tools in establishing a common ground upon which to present our philosophical apologetic as a defense of Christianity.





## CHAPTER 3

### **A Philosophical Evangelical Apologetic for Contemporary Post Modernism: An Application and Evaluation**

The application of this apologetic requires a lot of the apologetist that uses it. It is not for the faint of heart. It requires an above average understanding of your faith and your relationship to your faith. It requires an above average knowledge of applied philosophical apologetics with a complete understanding of the accessorial dimensions of the post modern culture (appendix)<sup>24</sup> including how post modernism affects the societal changes of its cultural base. As C. S. Lewis noted, an excellent working vernacular is required with more than an adequate understanding the full implications of the meaning of each word. The ability to select a “level” of communication understandable is a must. Dr. Moreland indicated that the apologetist must able to ascertain positional changes in both the Christian and the non Christian.<sup>25</sup> There are many avenues and many pitfalls

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<sup>24</sup>John A. Jelnik, “Appendix I,” in *Journal of Christian Apologetics* Volume 1, ( ed. 1. vol. 1, vol. 1, Page 27-29). Michigan Theological Seminary (Plymouth, Michigan: Michigan Theological Seminary, 1997). From the article entitled "Why Be Moral? The Contradictions of Post Modern Morality in America. Dr. Jelnik is a professor of Theology at Michigan Theological Seminary.

<sup>25</sup>J.P. Moreland, “Philosophical Apologetics, The Church, and Contemporary Culture,” *Journal of Evangelical Theology Society* 39, no. 1 (March (1996) Dr. Moreland is a Professor of Philosophy at the Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, Ca.

along the way. These are but a few of the areas that may be problematic to the apologetist. As society and the culture we live in undergo constant change so does our ability to defend Christianity change. New rationales will develop, some of the “isms” (appendix)<sup>26</sup> will change, and our ability to adapt our communicative skills and philosophical knowledge to these changes will also have to change. As Dr. Marshall Berman indicated society and its post modern views are fluid and dynamic.<sup>27</sup>

What is imperative with this apologetic is an understanding of some of the approaches to using it. Philosophical apologetics requires an understanding of the four basic defenses in utilizing this apologetic. Dr. J.P. Moreland notes;

*Direct defense.* In direct defense, one uses philosophy with the primary intention of enhancing or maintaining directly the epistemic justification of Christian theism or some proposition taken to be explicit to or entailed by it (hereafter I will simply refer to Christian theism). There are two basic forms of direct defense, one negative and one positive.<sup>5</sup> The less controversial of the two is a negative direct defense where one attempts to remove defeaters to Christian theism. By contrast, a positive direct defense is an attempt to build a positive case for Christian theism. Arguments for the existence of God, objective morality, the existence of the soul, the value and nature of virtue ethics, and the possibility and knowability of miracles are examples. This type of philosophical apologetics is not accepted by all Christian intellectuals. For example, various species of what may be loosely called Reformed epistemology run the gamut from seeing a

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<sup>26</sup>John A. Jelnik, “Appendix I,” in *Journal of Christian Apologetics* Volume 1, (ed. 1. vol. 1, Vol.1 Page 27-29). Michigan Theological Seminary (Plymouth, Michigan: Michigan Theological Seminary, 1997). From the article entitled "Why Be Moral? The Contradictions of Post Modern Morality in America. Dr. Jelnik is a professor of Theology at Michigan Theological Seminary.

<sup>27</sup>Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Thin Air. The Experience of Modernity.*, 1-3.

(Note 5): See R. Nash, *Faith and Reason* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988) 14-18.

modest role for a positive direct defense to an outright rejection of this type of activity.<sup>28</sup>

*Philosophical polemics.* In philosophical polemics, one seeks to criticize views that rival Christian theism in one way or another. Critiques of scientific naturalism, physicalism, pantheism and normative ethical relativism are all cases of philosophical polemics.<sup>29</sup>

*Theistic explanation.* Suppose we have a set of items  $x_i$  through  $x_n$  that stand in need of explanation and we offer an explanation  $E$  as an adequate or even best explanation of the explananda. In such a case,  $E$  explains  $x_i$  through  $x_n$ , and this fact provides some degree of confirmation for  $E$ . If a certain intrinsic genre statement explains the various data of a Biblical text, then this fact offers some confirmation for that statement. Now Christian theists ought to be about the business of exploring the world in light of their worldview and, more specifically, of using their theistic beliefs as explanations of various desiderata in intellectual life. Put differently, we should seek to solve intellectual problems and shed light on areas of puzzlement by utilizing the explanatory power of our worldview. For example, for those who accept the existence of natural moral law, the irreducibly mental nature of consciousness, natural human rights, or the fact that human flourishing follows from certain Biblically mandated ethical and religious practices, the truth of Christian theism provides a good explanation of these phenomena. And this fact can provide some degree of confirmation for Christian theism. I will mention shortly how the discipline of philosophy enters into this type of intellectual practice because it overlaps with the way philosophy is relevant to the next type of philosophical apologetics.<sup>7 30</sup>

*Integration.* The word “integration” means “forming or blending into a whole; uniting.” The human intellect naturally seeks to find the unity that is behind diversity, and in fact coherence is an important mark of rationality. In conceptual integration one’s theological beliefs are blended and unified with propositions judged to be rational to belief as true from other sources into a coherent, intellectually satisfying worldview. One of the goals or results of

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<sup>28</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1996; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Volume 39 (Vol. 39, Page 125). The Evangelical Theological Society.

<sup>29</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1996; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Volume 39 (Vol. 39, Page 125-126). The Evangelical Theological Society.

(Note 7): Explanation can be seen as one purpose for certain types of integrative practices. But because of its importance I make it a category of its own.

<sup>30</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1996; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Volume 39 (Vol. 39, Page 126). The Evangelical Theological Society.

integration is to maintain or increase both the conceptual relevance of and epistemological justification for Christian theism.<sup>31</sup>

Looking at the defenses espoused by Dr. Moreland, one can readily see there are a variety of ways to go in applying our apologetic. The ones to use are the theistic and integration defenses. There is evidence that a blending of these defenses would be advantageous to the apologetist in diffusing objections from a worldview toward his defense of Christianity. Philosophical utilization of these two defenses, integrated with each other, coupled with the skills of communication should provide the apologist with a solid foundation from which to operate. The other skills previously mentioned at the outset of this chapter become functional and mandatory. In order for the apologist to visualize the necessity for these two approaches, Dr. Moreland provided a list of examples wherein the apologist could use these techniques to work an apologetic. This list is supplied as Appendix 2. When looking at this list of examples, relate the impact of the concentricity of rings philosophy on the constructs of each individual you encounter from Appendix 1 to see what their makeup consists of in terms of their socialization and culturalization processes. The apologist must recognize all the “isms” from Appendix 1, how they affect the makeup of the individual, and how the apologist will use these characteristics to mount a defense of Christianity.

The pitfalls involving this style of apologetics can lead to frustrations in the apologist. There are propositions in the worldview that scientific methodology will place a limit on theology. Philosophy will go a long way in apologetics by tearing down the

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<sup>31</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1996; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 39* (Vol. 39, Page 126). The Evangelical Theological Society.

boundaries between one field of study or discipline and another. Understanding the concentricity of the rings philosophy will also aid the apologist in being perceptive to changes wherein the defense of theology crosses over into philosophy. Not being able to do this will result in a terrible pitfall and must be avoided.

Utilization of your Christian faith and the defense thereof must be integrated into a vernacular language consistent with worldview meanings. (C.S.Lewis) Being able to utilize all the tools discussed is imperative to any apologetic. Any deficiency in any area must be strengthened or the apologetic will falter into the weakest area of your faith and/or knowledge.

Recognition plays a key role in philosophical Evangelical apologetics. It can also be a viscous pitfall. The apologist must be able to systematically “peel away the skin of the onion” to expose the core of the worldview and recognize what the individual constructs of his socialization. Any failure of the apologist to do so is a pitfall that must be avoided.

Philosophy underscores the foundational aspects of other disciplines. It clarifies, criticizes, and dissects other disciplines. As is philosophy’s nature, by definition, it is well suited for use by the apologist in evaluating presuppositions of other disciplines. This fact must be utilized by the apologist in the techniques of application and, more importantly, linguistic delivery. If not, points of conflict within that discipline cannot be scrutinized, philosophically or otherwise. A lack of understanding in this area can lead to a loss of position by not being able to discern cognitive elements of a particular discipline. A final pitfall (for the sake of brevity), lies in philosophy’s unique ability to cause external conceptual problems for other disciplines relating to their own appraisal of

rational theories conceived within those disciplines. Not recognizing this is a pitfall for the philosophically based apologist. (Writer note: *Carpe diem*)

According to Dr. Moreland there are some ways to make the pitfalls less tragic, (some have been discussed in the text)

“First, philosophical apologetics should be focused on those areas of study that seem to be intrinsically more central or foundational to the Christian theistic enterprise. For example, work in religious and moral epistemology would get high marks on this criterion. Second, philosophical apologetics should be focused on areas that are currently under heavy attack. Philosophy of mind comes readily to mind in this regard. A third and perhaps less important criterion is this: Philosophical apologetics should be focused on those areas of study in which such activity is underrepresented (relatively speaking). Political and social philosophy would get my vote here.”<sup>32</sup>

In summation of this expose, several notes should be brought forth. The complexity of this apologetical approach for the culture we live in today requires the use of philosophy as it's only beginning to be used. The nature of this apologetic requires that the user be diverse and knowledgeable in the socialization processes that exist today as well as being adroit in the language usage and meaning of today's vernacular. The faith that is exhibited by the user of this apologetic must be pervasive and totally from the heart (Mark 12:30-KJV). There are areas within the contemporary worldview that any non believer can run and hide and profess a rational position for defense in not accepting Christianity. There are also places a believer can run and hide under faddist doctrinal issues or the umbrella of the socialized mega churches, where success is measured in membership not scriptural knowledge. There are areas where the user themselves can run and hide. Running from the attacks to this apologetic does not solve the problems

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<sup>32</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1996; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 39* (Vol. 39, Page 133-134). The Evangelical Theological Society.

associated with the use of this apologetic, it weakens it. The apologist that uses this has to be able to think on their feet using a multiplicity of approaches to solving the issues of the Christian and non believer alike.

I have found in researching this project in the various journals associated with the fields of Evangelism, Philosophy, and Theology (i.e. Bibliotheca Sacra, Journal of Christian Apologetics, Conservative Theological Journal, Journal of Evangelical Theological Society, Michigan Theological Journal, Trinity Journal, and Westminster Theological Journal) that there are hundreds of articles to varying degrees of discussion of the topics eluded to here. Operating agendas and/or programs initiated toward using an apologetic of this style and nature are few and far between. I am sure there are implementable programs out there in Christendom that have eluded my search. There are two quotes that I feel should be included in the conclusion of this article that illustrate the importance of this expose. Dr. J. P. Moreland notes in his closing remarks to a journal article entitled “Philosophical Apologetics, The Church, and Contemporary Culture”:

“We now find ourselves *largely marginalized in the culture and ingrown in the issues we address, the activities we perform, the books we read, and the categories in which we think and speak.* Our marginalization and ingrown texture are the result of several decades of academic bullying from the outside and intellectual cowardice or indifference on the inside. For some time now, with rare and notable exceptions, *Christian intellectuals have largely focused their studies on religious issues within the Church or on technical minutiae regarding Biblical exegesis.* As important as exegesis is, we do not need another commentary on Ephesians or a new book on the doctrine of salvation. *Instead we need a renaissance of evangelical statements of and defenses for what we believe about the broad issues being debated in the academy and the broader culture. And we will never succeed at this if we do not give philosophical ability and training a central place in church and seminary education. If the giants of the past like Wesley and Baxter saw philosophical apologetics as crucial in this regard,* we neglect this activity to our own peril. Failure to rethink church life and seminary education in this context will only contribute to our increased marginalization and the ingrown texture of our presence in an increasingly secular

and alien culture.<sup>24</sup> <sup>33</sup> (Highlighted texts are for added emphasis by the writer of this paper)

The last quote regarding applied Theology comes from Dr. Alister E. McGrath in a lecture series at Dallas Theological Seminary on February 4-7, 1997:

“Theology is essential to effective apologetics in two ways. *First, it provides apologists with a network of beliefs and doctrines that enable them to detect weaknesses in alternative worldviews and to identify the strengths of the Christian proclamation.* This is of major importance to the apologetic strategy developed by Francis Schaeffer, who argued that for theological reasons every non-Christian worldview, if pressed to its limits, would collapse under the pressure of internal contradictions. *It is essential to be convinced of the truth of the gospel, even in a postmodern culture that seems to regard truth as unimportant.*

*Second, theology provides the apologist with a way of bringing the full resources of the gospel to bear on the situation in hand.* Theological analysis allows the complex unity of the Christian faith to be viewed in its constituent parts, thus enabling the apologist to decide which of its many aspects may be most effectively deployed. By analyzing the enormously rich Christian truths of the death and resurrection of Christ, their various aspects can be identified and exploited.

*The gospel proclamation must be receptor-oriented. That is, it must be addressed to the opportunities awaiting it among its audience. Just as the science of apologetics is partly concerned with the theological analysis of the Christian proclamation, so the art of apologetics is concerned with the imaginative and creative application of its respective components to its audiences.”*<sup>34</sup> (Highlighted texts added for emphasis by the writer)

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(Note 24): I wish to thank R. D. Geivett and J. M. Reynolds for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>33</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1996; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 39* (Vol. 39, Page 140). The Evangelical Theological Society.

<sup>34</sup>Dallas Theological Seminary. (1998; 2002). *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 155* (Vol. 155, Page 8). Dallas Theological Seminary. Dr. McGrath is a lecturer in Theology, Oxford University, Oxford, England and a Research Professor, Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia. These notes are from a four part lecture series at Dallas Theological Seminary on February 4-7, 1997



## *APPENDIX I*<sup>35</sup>

### ***“Definitions: Understanding Postmodern Thought”***

“Afro centrism - An approach to history and race relations that is put forward as a surrogate for Euro centrism. Afro centrists claim that Egypt is the mother of Western civilization. They claim (among other things) that the European culture and advancement are due principally to the technological advances imported by an early, undocumented black Egyptian culture.

Amoral - Unable to make moral distinctions or judgments. With reference to society, it could indicate that nothing is inherently good or bad and there is no objective means to determine what could be.

*Autonomism - A view which asserts that texts possess meanings on their own. See psychologism.*

*Coherence - With reference to theories of truth, coherence stresses that truth is what conforms to the laws of logic. See rationalism.*

*Constructivism - The postmodern belief that truth is not discovered, but created or constructed in the minds of those who observe. Reality itself is seen to be a social construct, a creation in people’s minds.*

*Deconstruction - The literary discipline involving uncovering the opposing ideas implied in a text in order to demonstrate that/how the author of such a text has come to prefer one side over the other because of his social context. In this way, textual truth claims can be demonstrated to be self-defeating, Deconstruction is the preferred method of post modernism in dealing with ideas and constructs. Since language is the encapsulator of reality (for the*

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<sup>35</sup>John A. Jelnik, “Appendix I,” in *Journal of Christian Apologetics* Volume 1, (first Ed.) Page 27-29). Michigan Theological Seminary (Plymouth, Michigan: Michigan Theological Seminary, 1197). From the article entitled "Why Be Moral? The Contradictions of Post Modern Morality in America. Dr. Jelnik is a professor of Theology at Michigan Theological Seminary.

*postmodernist), all meaning is seen as socially constructed in language. Thus meaning is relative to the author and the reader*

*Epistemology - In general, epistemology refers to how we know what we know. According to modernists' epistemology is determined through the application of reason to what can be perceived through the senses. Nothing can be known with certainty outside of that which is perceived by the senses.*

*Euro centrism - According to postmodern historians and afro centrists, this is the white male bias which informs Western understandings of history, the arts, the sciences, and culture in general. It is the interpretation of reality from within the oppressive perspective of European man's consideration of what is important in history.*

*Marginalization - End product of a totalization system or dominating culture which excludes people by driving them to the margins of society.*

*Metanarrative - a religious or philosophical understanding or system (worldview) that presupposes and promotes the idea that all knowledge reduces to a set of universally applicable truths. Postmodernists consider metanarratives a form of "cultural tyranny," or fictitious indoctrination aimed promoting uniformity with the status quo.*

*Marxism - An ideology based on the teachings of Karl Marx in which history is viewed as a succession of class struggles which will eventually lead to a class-less society. Many postmodernists utilize Marxist thought in their views of social oppression and for the Marxist view that the different classes have alternate ways of viewing reality.*

*Modernism - As defined in the article, another word for thought characterized by the main features of the Enlightenment (1789–1989). Those who hold to a modernist view advocate the values of human autonomy (sovereignty, self-determination) and human reason for authority en-route to the progress of humankind.*

*Multiculturalism - An educational approach designed to advance a cognizance and valuation of different cultures. Within postmodern thought, multiculturalists teach that all cultures should be "empowered" in order to preserve their unique cultural distinctives and realities without interference (labeled "oppression") from other dominating or colonizing cultures*

*Nihilism - Taken literally, from the Latin nihil, it means "nothingness." The Oxford American Dictionary defines it as "a negative doctrine, the total rejection of current beliefs in religion or morals; a form of skepticism that denies all existence. Practically, for the purposes of this discussion, nihilism is a denial of the possibility of knowledge, a denial that anything is valuable. When it proceeds to the absolute denial of everything (knowledge, ethics, beauty, reality), it must deny the reality of existence itself. In the thinking of Friedrich Nietzsche, human existence is totally and irremediably meaningless. Nothing in the world has value.*

*Paradigm - As used in this article, a model of/for reality. It may refer to a metanarrative or to a narrative or to a world view. In a postmodern assessment, every paradigm has logic of its own and the rules of one paradigm cannot be applied to any other paradigm.*

*Pluralism - Related to the question of the validity/viability of other religions, pluralism is a viewpoint that is tolerant of cultural, religious, or personal viewpoints?*

*Political Correctness - A policy aimed at enforced or enforceable tolerance. The idea is that one shouldn't do or say anything that some other group might find offensive. The overt goal of PC is to enforce a uniform standard of tolerance (regardless of race, gender, cultural background or sexual orientation).*

*Post modernism - A worldview or movement arising in the late twentieth century characterized by a radical subjectivity and a rejection of the modernistic spirit (including empiricism and the possibility of certain knowledge). Postmodernists are usually either nihilistic (reality is meaningless) or optimistic (reality can be changed through our activism).*

*Psychologism - the view in which due to the psychological differences between the author and the reader, the reader cannot understand the meaning of an author. See radical historicism, and autonomism.*

*Rationalism - The belief that reason is a sufficient and efficient guide to understanding reality. As an ideology, it extols human reason above all other means of obtaining truth or values.*

*Reader - centered interpretation -A hermeneutic which discounts the value of the text or authorial intent in determining meaning. Instead, the reader invents or constructs the meaning for him.*

*Reification - The error of mistaking language about reality with reality itself. Many postmoderns charge that we reify concepts when we forget that our ideas or principles are merely linguistic constructs.*

*Social Constructions - Beliefs about reality which are informed or shaped by our culture.*

*Subjective Truth - Truth that is "true to me."*

*Totalization - An attempt to assemble all knowledge and reality into a philosophy/paradigm which then professes to fully explain the world. See Metanarrative.*

*(Very well done and helpful)*

## *APPENDIX 2*

“(1) A Biblical exegete becomes aware of how much her own cultural background shapes what she can see in the Biblical text, and she begins to wonder whether meanings might not reside in the interpretation of a text and not in the text itself. She also wonders if certain hermeneutical methodologies may be inappropriate, given the nature of the Bible as revelation.

(2) A psychologist reads literature regarding identical twins who are reared in separate environments. He notes that they usually exhibit similar adult behavior. He then wonders what free will amounts to, if there is really any such thing. And if not, he ponders what to make of moral responsibility and punishment.

(3) A political science professor reads John Rawls’ *Theory of Justice* and grapples with the idea that society’s primary goods could be distributed in such a way that those on the bottom get the maximum benefit even if people on the top have to be constrained. He wonders how this compares with a meritocracy, in which individual merit is rewarded regardless of social distribution. Several questions run through his mind: What is the state? How should a Christian view the state and the Church? What is justice, and what principles of social ordering ought we to adopt? Should one seek a Christian state or merely a just state?

(4) A neurophysiologist establishes specific correlations between certain brain functions and certain feelings of pain, and she puzzles over the question of whether there is a soul or mind distinct from the brain.

(5) An anthropologist notes that cultures frequently differ over basic moral principles and wonders whether this proves that there are no objectively true moral values that transcend culture.

(6) A businessman notices that the government is not adequately caring for the poor. He discusses with a friend the issue of whether businesses have corporate moral responsibilities or only individuals have moral responsibility.

(7) A mathematician teaches Euclidean geometry and some of its alternatives and goes on to ask the class if mathematics is a field that really conveys true knowledge about a subject matter or if it merely offers internally consistent formal languages expressible in symbols. If the former, then what is it that mathematics describes? If mathematical entities exist and are timeless, in what sense did God create them?

(8) An education major is asked to state his philosophy of education. In order to do this he must state his views of human nature, truth, how people learn, the role of values in education, and so on. He wonders how his Christian convictions inform these issues.

In each of the cases listed above, there is a need for the person in question—if he or she is a Christian—to think hard about the issue in light of the need for developing a Christian worldview. When one addresses problems like these, there will emerge a number of different ways that theology can interact with an issue in a discipline outside theology.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>The Evangelical Theological Society. (1996; 2002). *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 39* (Vol. 39, Page 127). The Evangelical Theological Society.

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