



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XXVI

April 2006

Number 9

Postmodernism/Deconstructionism Emerging Church/House Churches/Community Churches

By

Jackie M. Stearsman

It may be the above title does not register with you, but rest assured it does affect you if you are a member of the Lord's church or a part of the religious climate of our world.

It is impossible to fully understand and appreciate the letters of the New Testament if you do not know something of the environment in which they were written. One of the most important items in the study of any book of the Bible is to know as much as possible about the circumstances which necessitated its writing.

If we are to preach what is profitable for genuine spiritual growth and development today, we must understand the climate (environment) in which we are teaching the gospel. Therefore, the following philosophies and movements are cited to help us understand what we face today.

Postmodernism Deconstructionism

Readers who have access to the internet are encouraged to do a search for either of these

terms. If you do, you will be impressed with the volume of material being circulated on these subjects. From Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia (on the internet), the following is taken: "Deconstruction is a term which is used to denote the application of post-modern ideas of criticism, or theory, to a 'text' or 'artifact.' A deconstruction is meant to undermine the frame of reference and assumptions that underpin the text or the artifact." It is further stated, "deconstruction proves that texts have multiple meanings, and the 'violence' between the different meanings of text may be elucidated by close textual analysis."

How does this relate to us? We read, "Post modern church expression, on the other hand, encourages followers to deconstruct each element of their faith experience and reassemble the pieces according to his or her own unique journey of deconstruction."

Those who have bought

into this philosophy will seek "to undermine the frame of reference and assumptions that underpin the text." Study is not to obtain what is the meaning of the text but to undermine what the text stated. When applied to the Lord's church these advocates are not seeking to reconstruct the Lord's church as recorded in the pages of the Bible. They seek to "deconstruct" each element and to reassemble a church of their own making.

Do you think those in the "Change Agent Movement" among our people might find more harmony with the Postmodern/Deconstruction crowd than they do with those who do not want to see the Lord's church destroyed and reconstructed after the manner of men?

If you read this paragraph from the same internet encyclopedia cited above, you may better understand the "scholarly jargon" being written. "An important concept in postmodernism's view of

language is the idea of 'play' text. In the context of postmodernism, play means changing the framework which connects ideas, and thus allows the troping, or turning, of a metaphor or word from one context to another, or from one frame of reference to another. Since, in postmodern thought, the 'text' is a series of 'markings' whose meaning is imputed by the reader, and not by the author, this play is the means by which the reader constructs or interprets the text, ... Play then involves invoking words in a manner which undermines their authority, by mocking their assumptions or style, or by layers of misdirection as to the intention of the author."

Note these significant facts: (1) They are committed to undermine the authority of the text. (2) They undermine the text by misdirecting the meaning of the author (God is the author of the Bible, right?). (3) These "scholars" impute their meaning into the text, and have no intention of permitting the author to provide his meaning with the words he uses. (4) If this philosophy were applied to their own writings, it would make their communication totally absurd. (5) Advocates of this philosophy could not even object to what I am writing. Why? Because my words may mean anything to anybody.

Do they expect you to read their material and learn from it, or do they simply "dump" a series of terms for you to input your own meaning to them?

How long do you think

they would remain silent if you applied their misdirecting, undermining of the text, denying the authenticity of their documents, books, journals?

Emerging Church

There are activities associated with "church growth movements" that need to be considered by those who wish to exalt the Christ and His body, the church of Christ.

The reader is encouraged to consult the internet for this topic and read for himself/herself what is circulated about the connection of the various ideas relating to remaking the church in the 21st Century.

We read the following at secularpostmodern.org: "The Emerging Church movement is closely related to the House Church movement in that both of them are challenging traditional notions of how the Church should be organized. Not all House Churches are as influenced by Postmodern philosophy as the Emerging Church, but many Emerging Churches are also House Churches."

Have we forgotten what happened in the Crossroads Movement, the Boston Church of Christ, and the International Church of Christ? Were house churches a major component of this movement? Did this movement seek to deconstruct congregations and mold them into groups devoted to a single mind set of a human being?

Many of this generation are Biblically illiterate. We are foolish if we think they have sufficient knowledge to see the

problem. How many leaders of the church have things going on in their very midst that will undermine the very foundation of the Lord's church? Do we care? How can we not be concerned, if we care for the cause of the Christ?

Marcia Ford, "Emerging Church: Ancient Faith for a Postmodern Word," at the website explorefaith.org, provides the following two paragraphs:

"So where can you find examples of the emerging church? Some postmodern-friendly churches have sprung from an international and interdenominational effort, such as Brian McLaren's Cedar Ridge Community Church near Washington, D. C. Pretty much everyone in the emerging church recognizes McLaren as the movements's elder statesman; his books, with titles like *A New Kind of Christian* and *Adventures in Missing the Point* (the latter with Tony Campolo), have

The Harvesters

Published Monthly
Florida School of Preaching
1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, Florida 33803
(863) 683-4043

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Brian R. Kenyon, Associate Director
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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

helped define the emerging church.

Sometimes, the names of a particular church is a dead giveaway that it's part of the movement, such as Scum of the Earth in Denver. Little question that it's not, say, a Southern Baptist congregation. Many, like Solomon's Porch in Minneapolis, which meets in a living room setting in an industrial building, see themselves as an experimental community. Still others aren't really churches but ministries affiliated with traditional congregations, like The Crucible, a postmodern outreach of the huge Belmont Church in Nashville. Vintage Faith in Santa Cruz, California, Apex in Las Vegas, and Holy Joe's in London are but a few others."

Some of us are aware of the history of the Belmont Church. What produced this Church? For sure, it was not a deep devotion to the teaching of the Bible. Could it be postmodern, deconstruction philosophy? The author of the above two paragraphs identifies them here. Please note, it is not me that so labeled them, but the writer. She knows them as one of the crowd.

Do you know of churches of Christ that have removed the church of Christ from their publicity items and are proudly promoting themselves as "community churches"? Where do these ideas originate? If you are a part of one of these Community Churches (formerly known as churches of Christ), what do you think this lady

would think your religious convictions would be?

If we walk like a duck, quack like a duck, eat the food of the ducks, always associate with ducks, should we be surprised if someone thinks we are a duck? (For the deconstructionist, insert community church for duck, I want you to get my meaning, not insert your own.)

To those who are ashamed of the church of Christ, and feel the need for changing the name over the building to reflect their community connection, "rock the baby

The church of Christ is offensive to some. Let us rename it after one of the postmodern churches. How does "Scum of the Earth" or "Holy Joe's" sound?

boomers while you feed them pablum (Pablum: Trite, insipid, or simplistic writing, speech, or conceptualization, *American Heritage Dictionary*)." Perhaps they could obtain permission to use the title "Scum of the Earth."

Do you think the "scholars" among them would be honored to wear the title, "Holy Joe's" if their London brethren would permit it?

For those of you reading this who do not have computers or access to the internet, you may contact your local library for the book by Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1999), xl-xliii, 611-626. McDowell provides

extensive quotations showing what Postmodernism is, and he also provides quoted rebuttals of the philosophy.

Closing Observations

We are living in an age that has little respect for authority. The philosophy popular to many surrounding us makes it very difficult to teach objective truth (Jude 3; John 8:31-32).

The philosophy of many, both from within and without the church, is to deconstruct the teachings of the Bible, not to reconstruct the teachings of the Bible and make them applicable to us.

In harmony with their philosophy, it is their goal to make light of the teachings of the Bible, to misdirect gullible and uninformed, uncaring souls to accept the chaos and confusion that is so prevalent in our world.

Dear reader, do the words of the Lord mean anything to you? "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48 KJV).

Never forget: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Cor. 10:12). "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Cor. 10:18).

Gene Burgett Report

It was my privilege to preach in a gospel meeting for the Lord's church in Sebastian, Florida in the month of February. The association of the Sebastian church with the Florida School of Preaching is a long one. When I attended the School from 1983 - 1985 one of my instructors was the preacher for the Sebastian church. I also remember the Sebastian church having "school of preaching days" where students would preach and lead singing during a Sunday worship assembly. Our association with the Sebastian church continues to be a blessing. Their financial support of the Florida School of Preaching has continued unabated for several decades. Also, brother Al Woodard, a graduate of the FSOP has been serving as preacher for the Sebastian church since his graduation.

The meeting in Sebastian was a blessing for me in many ways. There was the joy of preaching God's word to people attentive and hungry for knowledge of the Bible. There was the joy of making new acquaintances among God's people. Added to all

of this was the fact that a number of people I haven't seen in almost twenty years made the long drive from West Palm Beach to attend many of the meetings.

In early March I was invited to speak before the Sunday morning assembly of the church in Live Oak, Florida. The Live Oak church began financially supporting the Florida School of Preaching in January of this year. I enjoyed the opportunity to get to know the brethren, and I especially enjoyed the lunch-time hospitality brother Wayne Howard, one of the elders in Live Oak, and his wife, Mary, proffered.

Though several churches began supporting the Florida School of Preaching in 2006, we are still far short of what we need to continue doing the work of preacher training. Any of our readers interested in fellowship with us in this effort are urged to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Gene Burgett
burgett@atlantic.net
 352-339-3195

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WEB SITE: www.fsop.net
 E-MAIL: fsop@gte.net

FAX: 863-683-0750
 PHONE (863) 683-4043 (800) 320-9780
 LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33803-2653
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