

“The Cross and Whatever”

Postmodernism & Missions:

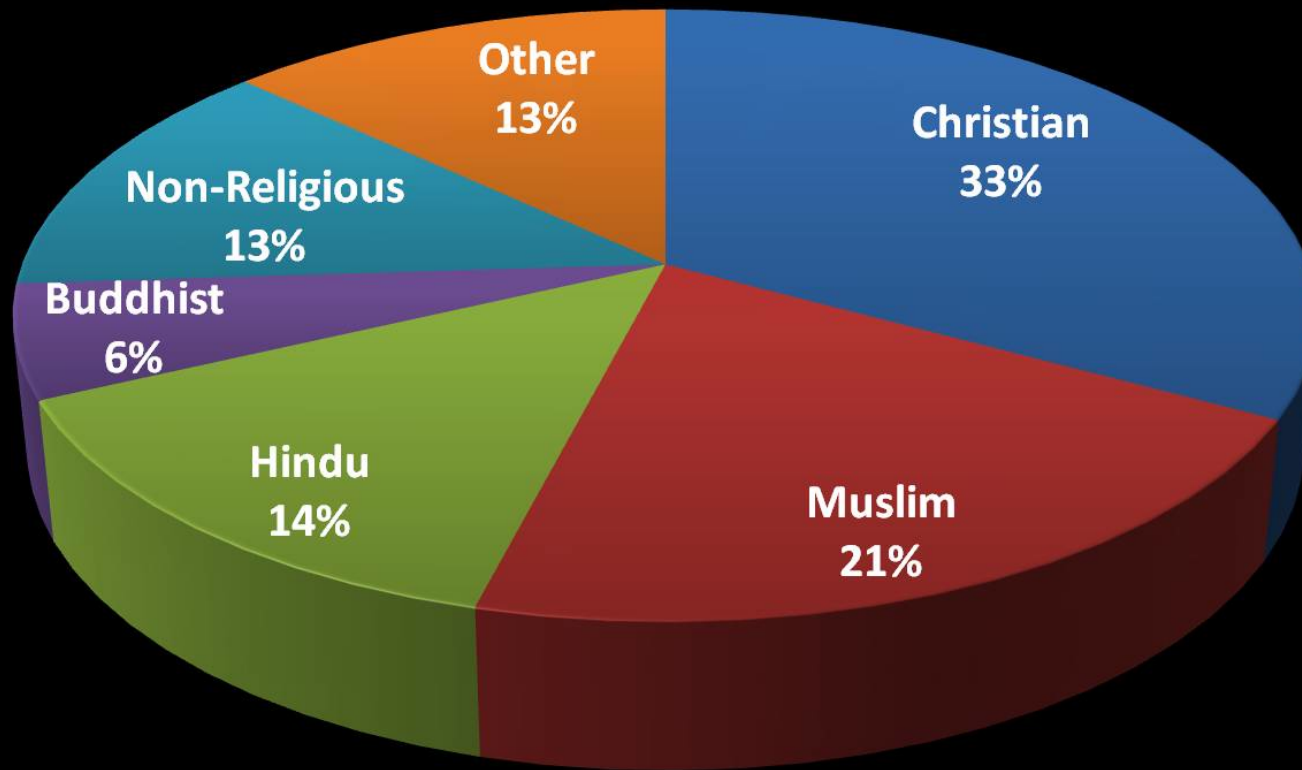
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GYC 2013
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Andrews University

Global Religious Affiliations

(approximates, based on 2007 CIA report)



The three main eras of Western worldviews

- **Pre-modern era**
- **Modern era**
- **Postmodern era**

The “pre-modern era”

- Ended with the French Revolution
- God exists. Truth exists. Both are real.
- The greatest truths were supernatural.
- Human knowledge was limited thus we need faith.

The French Revolution (1789-1799)

- “dawn of the Modern Era”
- challenged authority of monarchy & church
- exalted human reason & human rights



The Modern Era

- **The Modern World**
- **(French Revolution - 1960's)**
- **Humanity is progressing through science and reason.**
- **Belief in objective truth**
- **Belief in propositional truth**
- **The secularization of the world**

Postmodernism

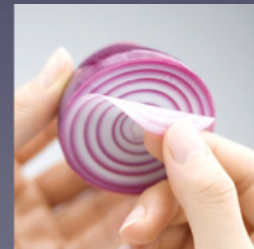
- 1960' s --> ?
- **Difficult to define; various definitions in various disciplines**
- **Transitional period (void) - a worldview “in process”**
 - **Western world in transition - not sure what will be**
- **A belief in the “unsecularization” of the world**
 - **movement toward spiritual things**

Characteristics of Postmodernism

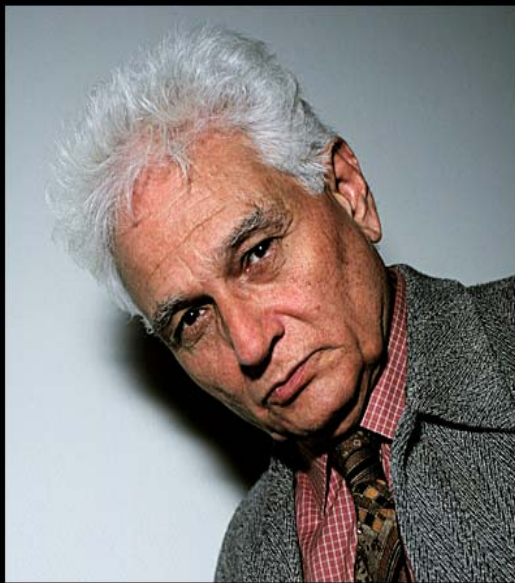
1. The decline of the West



2. Deconstructionism



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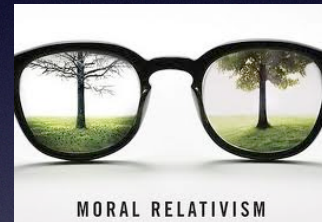
Jacques Derrida, 1997

At the end of Being and Nothingness... Being in-itself and Being for-itself were of Being; and this totality of beings, in which they were effected, itself was linked up to itself, relating and appearing to itself, by means of the essential project of human-reality.



Characteristics of Postmodernism

3. Relativism



4. Pluralism



Relativism



ABSOLUTES

Absolutely not!



an absolut world?



4)

Pluralism

- There is a diversity of truth but not empirical truth
- All the positive elements of various religions are **“true” to those who believe them**
- Pluralism is rooted in relativism. Doctrine is only expressive, not normative.
- **Truth is just truth for me....** may not be the truth for you.





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- “Untitled” by John Swihart
- Finding Spirituality
- In the absence of meta-narratives, people search for meaning in anything.

“Like Whatever...”



Contrasts between Modernism and Postmodernism

MODERNISM

- Design
- Hierarchy
- Creation of art & literature
- Classification & Systemization
- Interpretation
- Narrative

POSTMODERNISM

- Chance
- Anarchy
- Process and performance of art
- Anti-systems & individuality
- Against Interpretation
- Anti-narrative

Impact on Christianity

- Christianity today is often expressed in the context of the modern world view
- Postmodernism: **it is arrogant (sin) to claim to know “the truth”**.
- Postmodernism accepts the supernatural but not as a source of objective truth.
- **“Experience God --> then you will have the right theology.”**
- The church is under attack because the church is one of the few institutions in society which asserts morality and truth.



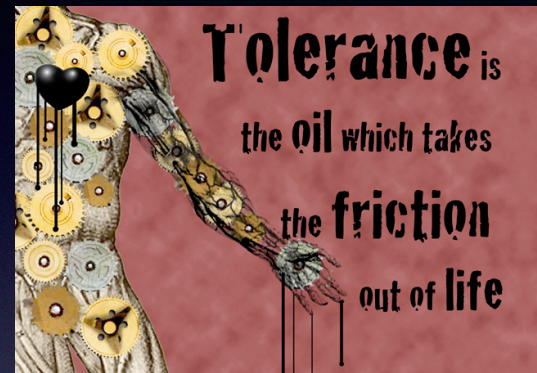
RELEVANCE

Tell Me What I Want to Hear
Or Else Shut Up and Go Away



Postmodernism's Most Important Value:

- Legitimate tolerance:
- Tolerance as moral weakness



TOLERANCE:

- “Tolerance applies to persons, never to principles. Intolerance applies only to principles, never to persons.” - Fulton Sheen
- Improper Tolerance:
- Proper Tolerance:

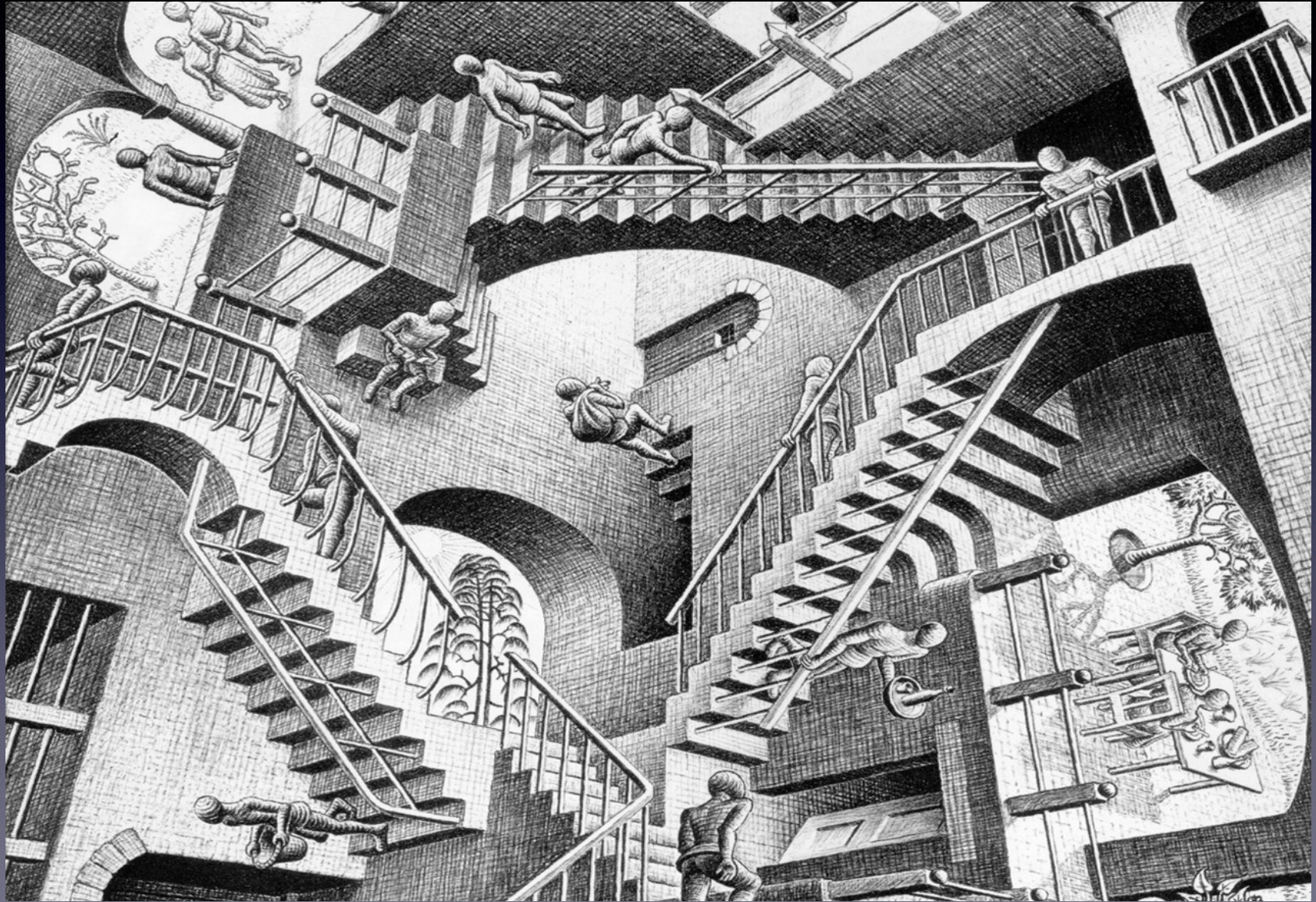


TOLERANCE

Let's Celebrate Our Differences and Diversity
Even Though You are Clearly Wrong



Viewpoints





POSTMODERNISM

Now we've finally found out that we can discover truth by a group hug.

What is Truth?

What difference does it make?



Truth Matters

- Theology matters.
- The **content of our faith** is of critical importance.
- **The way we perceive and interpret the Bible affects our beliefs and our lifestyle.**
- Postmodern response:

Characteristics of all religions

- Beliefs
- Behaviors

Beliefs & Behaviors

- Behaviors are more visible
- **Beliefs are more influential**
- Behind distinctive behaviors are specific beliefs.
- True for all religions. Ex: Muslim kneels five times a day facing Mecca.
- **What we believe affects how we live.**
- Beliefs are the source of behaviors

Beware of Truth Decay

- **What happens when new information conflicts with a previously existing belief?**
- **Cognitive Dissonance:**
- Conflict or anxiety: when beliefs and behaviors aren't consistent.
- Your brain seeks consistency between your beliefs, our behaviors and our experience.
- **Created to live what you believe!**

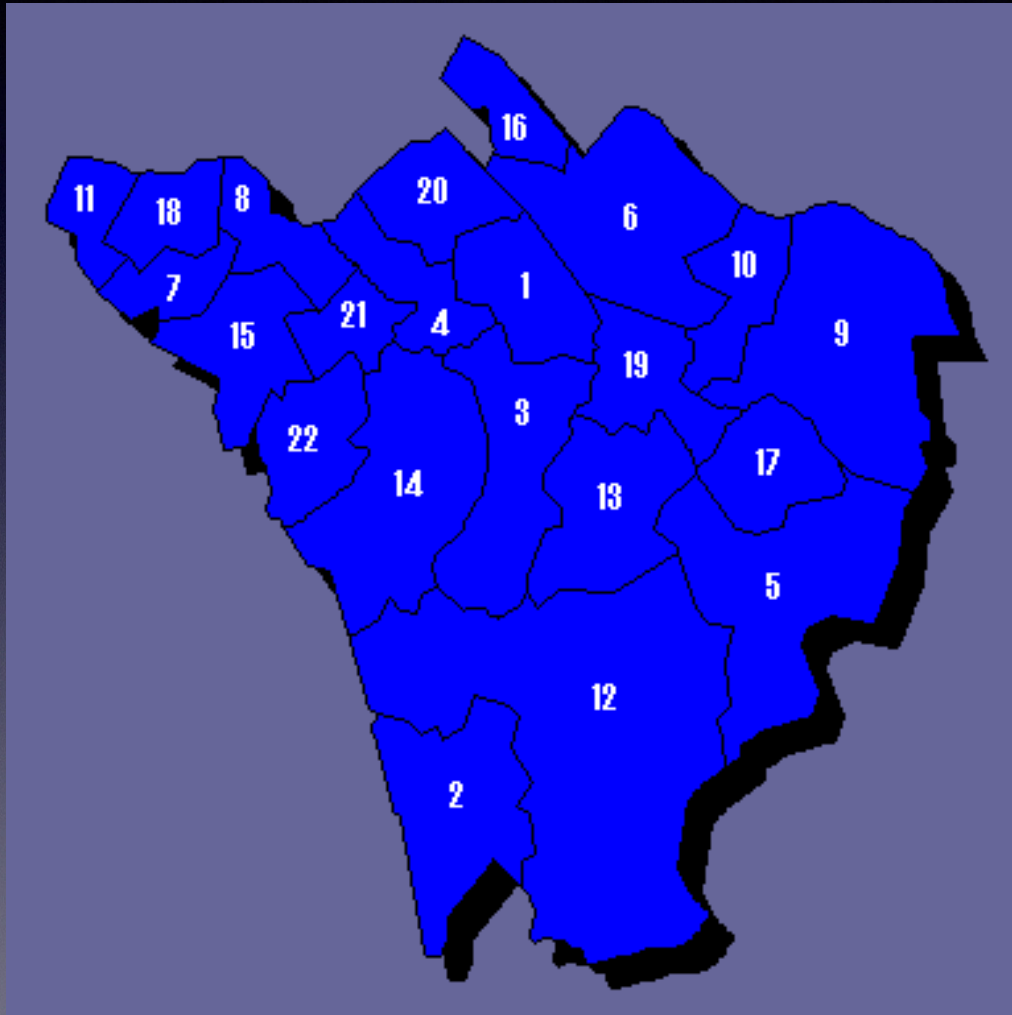
Building Bridges



Bridges join what is separated.

Bridges build relationships.

Establishing Boundaries



Boundaries protect.

Boundaries reveal rights and responsibilities.

Boundaries define truth and identity.

Establishing Boundaries and Building Bridges

Boundaries:

1. Ezek. 22:26
2. 2 Cor. 6:17
3. 1 John 2:15-17
4. Rev. 18:4

Bridges:

1. Romans 12:18
2. Ephesians 2:14,15
3. Mark 9:38-41
4. Matthew 28:19,20

I WANT TO BELIEVE

The **Sci** Files

The Evidence *Must* Be Out There

Extraterrestrial Life · Primordial Soup · Abiogenesis Endosymbiosis
The Multiverse · Fishapods · Junk DNA · The Tree of Life
Last Universal Common Ancestor · Urbilateria · The Missing Link

A new and exciting science detective drama unfolds each week

only on *The Evolution Channel*
www.evochannel.com



Positive side of Postmodernism

- **Rejection of dry orthodoxy** and passionless faith
- Inclusion of feelings and emotions in matters of faith
 - (note danger of imbalance)
- **Passion-driven** not purpose-driven
- Value symbols and meaning
(neglect commitment and sacrifice; cost of discipleship)
- **Primacy of lived faith**
- **Centrality of Relationships**

Power of an authentic life

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5



A Man Fell In A Hole

“The Cross and Whatever”

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Now is
the
time...

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