

Week Two Notes: What is Post-Modernism?

- **John MacArthur** - The chief tools employed by Post-modernism are relativism, subjectivism, the denial of every dogma, the dissection and annihilation of every clear definition, the relentless questioning of every axiom, the undue exaltation of mystery and paradox, the deliberate exaggeration of every ambiguity, and above all the cultivation of uncertainty about everything.¹

4 Major Time Periods in Western Civilization

- 1. Antiquity (B.C. – 300 A.D.)
- 2. Middle Ages (300 A.D.-1700 A.D.)
- 3. Modern Age (1700 A.D. – 1960's)
- 4. Post-Modern age (1960-2020)
- 5. Applied Post-Modern Age (2020 – on)

9 Tenets of Post-modernism

- **1st Tenet – Post-modernism is radically skeptical.**
- **2nd Tenet – Certainty is seen as arrogant.**
- **3rd Tenet - Truth is personalized.**

¹ *The Truth War*, John MacArthur Pg. 11-12

- **4th Tenet – Post-Modernism is relativistic by nature.**

- **5th Tenet – Post-modernism is cynical by nature.**

- **6th Tenet – Post-modernism is obsessed with language.**

- **7th Tenet – Boundaries are blurred.**

- **8th Tenet – Post-modernism prefers “narrative” to truths & facts.**
 - **Scott Allan** - A few years ago, people didn’t use the word “narrative” as we do today. Rather, they used the word “propaganda” - Willfully misleading people to further a particular agenda.²

 - 4 important characteristics of “narrative” (by Scott Allen – *A Toxic New Religion*)³
 - **1st Narratives are stories** – They tend to be compelling, easy-to-grasp morality tales. They lean toward bold, simple plotlines. Good and evil are clearly defined. They are carefully crafted characters: heroes, villains, victims.

 - **2nd Narratives are tools used to accomplish political, social, or cultural objectives** – They are employed to exert influence and shape policy and culture. Name any major issue of the day – global warming, LGBT rights, race, a particular foreign policy – and for each one narrative has been

² A Toxic New Religion – Scott David Allen pg. 12

³ A Toxic New Religion – Scott David Allen pg. 13

carefully crafted, promoted, and protected in order to advance a particular agenda.

- **3rd Narratives work through distortion** – While portrayed as true, they convey a highly distorted and ultimately false picture. Distortion works by focusing on a particular aspect of truth, fact, or evidence while purposefully ignoring or suppressing other related facts and evidence that are necessary to see the bigger picture.
 - **4th Narratives work by leveraging our emotions** – They appeal to our heart not our head, to our innate sense of justice, of right and wrong. We want them to be true, even if facts and evidence call them into question. This is what makes them so powerful and so dangerous.
- **9th Tenet – No Metanarratives**

4 Ways Post-Modernism Influences the Church

- 1. Priority on mysticism and experience**
- 2. Influence of eastern religions**
- 3. Affected hermeneutics**
- 4. The attack on truth**