

ENCOUNTERING AUTHENTICITY: THE GOSPEL FILLS THE NEEDS
OF A POST-POSTMODERN SOCIETY

by

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Wendland". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Advisor's Signature

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As long as people are sinful, they have spiritual needs which on their own they cannot satiate. Jesus' gospel of salvation fills those needs. This paper is a study of how Jesus' gospel applies to the specific spiritual holes in current society.

Current thought and behavioral patterns bear evidence that there is a philosophical shift in society taking place. The presuppositions that existed when witnessing to a postmodernism world are no longer as accurate as they were a generation ago. Therefore, to add current perspective to the assumptions of gospel witnesses, this paper examines the thoughts and behaviors of people in today's society and notes themes relevant to gospel ministry. With these observations and a study of the opinions of current philosophers, certain spiritual needs unique to this current point in time become evident.

Upon discovery of these needs, this paper then describes how Christ's gospel applies to those needs. It further explores areas in which a perspective from current philosophy might hone certain scopes of ministry. This study is a tool for improving the efficiency of a Christian's communication of the gospel to the needs of current society.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: AN ORGANIC MINISTRY	1
A. In the pattern of Paul	1
B. God’s Word works psychologically	3
C. God’s messengers work psychologically	3
I. A SHIFTING SOCIETY	4
A. A shift to modernism	6
B. A shift to postmodernism	6
C. The deterioration of postmodernism	7
II. THE EMERGENCE OF POST-POSTMODERNISM	11
A. Technology brings autonomy	13
B. Society and consumerism brings responsible hedonism	16
III. THEMES WITHIN POST-POSTMODERNISM	19
A. Autonomy	19
B. Encounter	20
C. Instability	22
IV. NEEDS THAT POST-POSTMODERNISM PRESENTS	22
A. Authenticity	22
B. Connection	24
C. Stability	25
V. RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO SOCIETY’S NEEDS	25
VI. JESUS FILLS JESUS-SIZED HOLES	27
A. Jesus confronts the world with authentic truth	27

B. Jesus brings stability to inconsistent instability	28
C. Jesus brings authentic connection	29
VII. PRACTICAL IMPLICATION OF POST-POSTMODERNISM ON MINISTRY	30
A. The post-postmodern preacher	30
B. The post-postmodern evangelist	31
C. The post-postmodern worship service	32
D. Other implications	33
CONCLUSION	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY	35

Introduction: An organic ministry

The context for gospel ministry is an organic one which contemporary society furnishes.¹ Gospel ministry, therefore, needs also to be organic. Needs arise at every moment that are unique to the immediate situation present in society.² The way society reacts to these needs reveals its general worldview. Any worldview apart from God's is insufficient to deal with those needs. The needs in society that it cannot resolve present opportunity for the gospel to exhibit its complete sufficiency. I intend therefore to demonstrate in this paper that current society presents a unique set of Jesus-sized holes which the gospel fills in a distinct way.³

To this end, I approach my thesis by way of observation. First, this paper examines the fluid nature of philosophy and its impact on society's worldview. It describes society's journey into modernism and then its growth to postmodernism. From that point, this paper observes the current progression which is rising from the ebb of postmodernism into what some philosophers call post-postmodernism.

The focus then narrows onto post-postmodernism. This paper takes note of themes that surface in current thought and behavior patterns which are unique to post-postmodernism. These are themes which current philosophers describe and which are easily visible in society.

As this study elucidates themes in post-postmodernism, the needs within society become evident as well. The post-postmodern worldview attempts to cope with these needs. Yet ultimately, any worldview requires the sufficiency that only the gospel brings. This paper connects specific applications of the gospel to the needs in post-postmodern society. In doing so, it also makes note of places in which awareness of the current post-postmodern worldview can shape ways in which Christians carry out their ministry of the gospel.

In the pattern of Paul

¹ By gospel ministry I refer to the service Christians render to God by using his gospel message to witness to unbelievers and edify fellow believers.

² Paul teaches in Romans 3:23 that "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." While it is true that every need can be summed up as the sinners' need for a Savior, Paul E. Kelm gives the insight that the "consequences of sin and alienation from God are multi-faceted and varied." Paul E. Kelm, "A *Biblical and Contemporary Philosophy of Ministry*", Paper to the Dakota/Montana District Convention, 1933. [essay online]; available from: <http://www.wlsessays.net/files/KelmMinistry.pdf>; Internet, 3.

³ St. Augustine understood the nature of these spiritual holes as being part of the nature of every human. "Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee." Saint Augustine. *The Confessions*. Translated by J. G. Pilkington. (Edinburgh: Clark, 1876), 1.

The Apostle Paul's ministry in Athens illustrates the rationale for this thesis. While waiting for his coworkers to join him, Paul used his abeyant time to reach out to the Athenians with the truth of Christ's gospel.⁴ He had done mission work in many other cities before, but none like Athens. Athens made a reputation for itself by being "common to all men" and nurturing a free thinking erudite culture.⁵ Paul knew, therefore, that the ministry he would conduct in Athens had to be as unique as was the city. He could not preach and teach here in the same way that he had earlier in Pisidian Antioch.⁶

Paul therefore toured the city in a social- religious study of Athens. He observed one need that repeatedly arose in the city: a need for spiritual security. The people of Athens were looking to guarantee their good position in the afterlife through pieces of wood and stone. Their rampant idolatry corresponded to their worldview. The Athenians were a people who "look for wisdom" and depended on their rationalizations to make sense of life.⁷ They applied this same reasoning to their spiritual needs. It made sense to them that the surest way to secure divine favor was to cover all your bases. They therefore built an altar to every god they knew of and even one extra for the god they might be missing. It was a logical fix for the Athenians to a spiritual problem. However, it was also a solution that led them farther from the fulfillment of Christ as they looked to their own wisdom for answers.

Paul saw the Athenian's Jesus-sized hole and inserted the gospel into their worldview. He went both to the synagogues and marketplaces where he shared Christ with Jews and Gentiles

⁴ Paul could have instead taken a well-deserved vacation. Yet he recognized the opportunity that Athens presented for the spread of the gospel. Niebuhr further explains how even if Paul had wanted for a time to separate himself from the world around him, it is impossible to separate Christ from culture: "His experience with Galatian and Corinthian, with Judaizing and spiritualizing Christian had taught him...that the anti-Christian spirit could not be evaded by any means of isolation from pagan culture, by any substitution of new laws for old ones, or by supplanting the pride of Hellenistic philosophy with the pride of a Christian *gnosis*." Helmut Richard Niebuhr. *Christ and Culture*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), 163.

⁵ Josephus. *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*. Translated by William Whiston. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987). Against Apion 2.262.

⁶ Luke describes in Acts 13:13-43 the ministry that Paul conducted in Pisidian Antioch. There Paul preached Christ to his audience through a lengthy Old Testament history lesson. For the Jews who lived in Pisidian Antioch, Paul's strategy was appropriate and worked. Yet the audience that Paul faced in Athens which Luke describes in Acts 17:16-34 was much more philosophic and much less Hebraic. Were Paul to preach this same sermon to the Greeks in Athens would be a gross misjudgment of his audience and a gross disservice to Christ's gospel.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:22.

in the Greek style. Finally, in the Areopagus, Paul showed the Athenians how Christ filled the spiritual hole that they had. Jesus is the true God who secures heaven for his people as a gift of his grace.

God's Word works psychologically

Paul's work in Athens demonstrates the psychological working of the Word of God.⁸ Clarity concerning this psychological aspect of God's Word is important to a thesis such as this which discusses gospel communication. The power which produces change in human hearts always lies in the gospel.⁹ Yet, in order for the gospel to work on a heart, it must reach that heart. If a Christian speaks the pure gospel to another person, but that person does not understand what the speaker is saying, the Word cannot work. Although the hearer may hear the words of the gospel, the words sound like a "resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."¹⁰

Therefore, the person who proclaims the gospel must also make sure that he is sharing the gospel's message in a way that is understandable. Human communication is a *causa ministerialis* in the transferral of God's Word to human hearts. When a gospel proclaimer understands both how people communicate and to what needs to apply the gospel, he is faithfully using his voice as a *causa ministerialis* for the gospel. The work that a gospel communicator does to make the gospel clear and directly show its relevance to spiritual needs will unloose the gospel to work freely on the hearts of humans.

God's messengers work psychologically

When Paul opened his mouth in the Areopagus, he demonstrated himself as a faithful *causa ministerialis*. If Paul had not spent the time to learn Athens and its people, he would not have so accurately seen the Athenian worldview and addressed its needs.¹¹ He would still have preached the true gospel. Yet the gospel would not have been as understandable and emotionally

⁸ "As ordinary speech does, the Word of God appeals to the psychological nature of human beings." Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. *Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Dogmatics Notes: Faith*. (self-published), 110.

⁹ God declares the absolute power of his Word in Isaiah 55:11, "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 13:1.

¹¹ Church planting gurus Ed Stetzer and David Putnam call this process of fitting the gospel's message into a context "contextualization." Ed Stetzer and David Putman. *Breaking the Missional Code: When Churches Become Missionaries in Their Communities*. (B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 187.

appealing as it was when he preached in the Areopagus.¹² Paul’s “identificational approach” enabled him to clearly proclaim the gospel to the Athenians’ worldview and needs.¹³ Through Paul’s work, God used the Word in both a psychological and supernatural manner.¹⁴

Like Paul, anyone who communicates gospel truths to others must take the time to identify and understand the specific needs of individuals and of society.¹⁵ This paper seeks to identify these needs through general observation of society’s worldviews and contemporary philosophy. Niebuhr expresses an apt concern, however, that while recognizing generalities is helpful, “no amount of speculative insight into the reasoning and believing of other men... can relieve the Christian individual or the responsible Christian community from the burden, the necessity, the guilt and glory, of arriving at such conclusion in present decisions and present obedience.”¹⁶ A general acquaintance with patterns in human thought is not a substitute for personal relationships. At the same time, such knowledge provides a solid platform from which one can search deeper within people for their spiritual needs. These holes that emerge in postmodern society present opportunities for Christ’s gospel to reach and heal the needs in human hearts.

A shifting society

The nature of current philosophy makes it a difficult subject of study. Heraclitus said it best, “You cannot step twice into the same stream.”¹⁷ At any given point on the world’s

¹² Paul had a good grasp on the Athenian’s trending topics. You can imagine how many Greek ears perked up when Paul in Acts 17:23 proclaimed in the Areopagus that he was going to make known the unknown to them.

¹³ Charles Kraft calls Paul’s preaching at the Athens a “prototypical example of an identificational approach” in which Paul matches his style of preaching to his target audience’s communication style. Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: a Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross Cultural Perspective*. (Orbis Books, 1979), 154.

¹⁴ Paul, of course, had the added benefit of divine inspiration. Students of Paul cannot simply “reduce the method of such a versatile, inspired witness of God to mere rules and systems” and expect to do what Paul did. Yet the Spirit speaks through the Word of God that his servants speak today as much as he did for Paul. Edgar Hoenecke, “St. Paul’s Missionary Approach to the Unchurched.” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (1964): 132.

¹⁵ If he does not, he is, as Paul Kelm describes, acting in a way that is either “insensitive, archaic or indifferent” and therefore setting himself as a hindrance to the clear communication of the gospel. Kelm, *A Biblical and Contemporary Philosophy of Ministry*, 9.

¹⁶ Niebuhr, 233.

¹⁷ Plato attributes this statement to Heraclitus in *Cratylus*. Plato, H.N. Fowler, trans. *Cratylus, Parmenides, Greater Hippias, Lesser Hippias* (Harvard University Press, 1939), 67.

timeline, a study of that point's philosophy will be different from that of any other point. It is only natural that philosophy is characteristically fluid, for the world which philosophy observes is likewise never stagnant. The climate of everything is perpetually changing: dispersion and concentration of world population, global economics, military dominance, technological innovation, and trends in literature and the arts. This is the nature of a world that humans populate. As the world in which they live shifts, so shift people's perceptions of the world.

Progression of 17th century philosophy exemplifies the changing nature of society's worldviews. During the 17th century, Isaac Newton, Galileo Galilei, Francis Bacon and others began to discover things about the world through science that contradicted centuries of assumptions. As science progressed, so did societal opinions. These scientist-philosophers' innovative thoughts ultimately changed the nature of truth in Europe. No longer did Europeans accept something as true simply because someone in authority dictated it to be. The canon of truth became reason. With this paradigm change came the period of rationalism. Under the reign of rationalism, the world looked to scientific discovery for truth, not their leaders. The world changed and its philosophies followed.

True to this pattern of change, modernism came into vogue in the end of the 19th century. Modernists looked to science and reason as the means by which they distilled truth. These truths that emerged through systematic thought brought with them the endorsement of reason and scientific method. With such an authoritative label, these truths touted grand claims of universal applicability. Yet as the 20th century progressed, modernism also proved unsatisfying. Globalization was on the rise and modernism's attempts at universality could no longer account for the world as it was. Many in society branched out beyond modernism and rejected objectivity. They decided that a concept of universal truth could not accurately apply to all the different cultures in the world. Postmodernism ensued. It comes as no surprise that the world did not stop changing during the middle of the 20th century.

Once again, as the world changes, the people within it change as well. The change that comes on the heels of postmodernism is the current worldview. Therefore, the witness for Christ who desires to make contemporary application, direct the gospel for current needs, and do so in a way that people easily understand, must understand this worldview. For as postmodernism shifts, a new set of spiritual needs present themselves. These are needs that were not prominent in the same way that they were in postmodernism of the last generation. Yet

while today's needs look different than those of previous generations, Christ's gospel still applies. It is the task of those who proclaim that gospel to determine how the gospel best fills the needs that come with the new prevailing thought patterns in people.

The current worldview has its roots within postmodernism and its predecessor, modernism. Therefore, before examining this developing area, it is helpful to look at modernism and postmodernism from the perspective of their formative influence on current society.

A shift to modernism

Postmodernism is largely a reaction to modernism.¹⁸ Modernism "placed man at the center of reality" and gave him the responsibility to determine truth.¹⁹ Science and reason were the tools that society used to refine this truth. In a scientific manner, people postulated, supported, and defended truth through logical evidence. Anything that did not have a reasonable or scientific foundation did not stand as truth.

On the other hand, the more a person could scientifically defend his truth against argument, the more people considered his truth universal. This goal of universality loomed in modernism as philosophers reached for truths that could stand against absolutely every argument and explain universal concepts. With modernism, answers were definitive. Ideas were overarching and complete.

A shift to postmodernism

After modernism ran its course, the world needed to breathe.²⁰ Society had had its fill of stringent definitiveness and reacted as one might expect—dramatically. As is common with a reaction against roots, such a reaction is prone to become an overreaction. The philosophical pendulum had swung. Modernism's objectivity gave way to postmodernism's lack of the objective.

Advances in technology and global communication enabled this antiphonal swing to reach the extent that it did. With the emergence of the internet, communication across the world

¹⁸ Paul Kelm posits this reactionary identity as one way of defining postmodernism. Paul Kelm, "Understanding and Addressing a Postmodern Culture." Presentation to the Board for Parish Services, 1999. [paper online]; available from : <http://www.wlssays.net/files/KelmPostmodern.pdf>; Internet, 3.

¹⁹ Ibid., 3.

²⁰ Gilles Lipovetsky says that postmodernism twenty years ago "was a breath of fresh air." Gilles Lipovetsky and Sebastien Charles. *Hypermodern Times*. 1st ed. (Polity, 2005). 30.

was no longer an expensive thing. Individuals connected across oceans and formed pancontinental communities with ease. As these connections materialized, cultures that geography once separated now encountered each other. As cultures met, so also met everything that makes up a culture: dress, religion, history, music, art, government systems, and every other cultural construct. Modernists lived knowing that their worldview was the best since they achieved it through science and reason. With the philosophical shift however, this certainty lost its foundation. Society no longer esteemed the opinion of objective reason in the way it once had. It called into the question the absolute values that modernism had taught it. People wondered why their manner of dress or standard of morality should be any better than that of another culture which did it differently.

In view of this question, standards by which people deemed something “right” or “wrong” disappeared. Therefore, instead of trying to judge between truths, postmodernism dismissed truth altogether. “Preferences and interpretations” rose to the place that truth once occupied.²¹ In fact, postmodernism belittled as passé and ignorant anything that claimed to speak any sort of truth that applied to all people. This was an attempt to be absolutely tolerant, so that one would never have to say that another’s way of doing things was wrong. Anyone who would make such an intolerant claim became a pariah to the postmodernism community.

In the void that postmodernism created, the only thing for which there was room was subjectivity. Truths were true for the subject who found truth, but the postmodern would dare not claim to know a truth that went beyond him. There was no objective standard of knowledge, and thus for the postmodern, “knowledge is always incomplete.”²² This subjectivism took away any authority and solidity from truth. Truth became nothing more than an opinion or preference.

The deterioration of postmodernism

As subjectivism neutered truth, institutions that stood on truth also lost their grounding. Most relevant to this thesis, Christianity found itself facing a major dilemma. Christianity stands entirely on historical facts that it considers to be absolutely true. God created the world in six days. Humans rebelled against God and brought sin into the world. Because of sin, physical and eternal death became the lot for all people. God sent Jesus to earth as a man to restore humans to

²¹ Kelm, *Understanding and Addressing a Postmodern Culture*, 3.

²² *Ibid.*, 3.

God. Jesus lived in Galilee and Judea, died outside of Jerusalem on an executioner's cross, and rose from the dead three days later. This work forgives the sins of all people and gives eternal life to all who believe in the fact that Jesus' work does this. In fact, the Bible is quite absolute in describing this as the only way for sinners to receive forgiveness and eternal life.²³ If truth is not objective though, as postmodernism teaches, then the entire system of Christian faith is uncertain and can never be certain. If Christ's work is not objectively true, then it is not effective, for opinions cannot atone for sin. A real historical event is necessary to save people from real eternal death in hell.

Postmodernism, however, dismisses this because it denies the grounds upon which Christianity makes its universal claims.²⁴ As postmodernism undercuts the core of Christianity, it says that the metanarrative of Christianity is true only for those who choose it to be true, but not for all. No system of religion or thought can describe universal truths. Many religions, both Christian and other, have bought into postmodernism's subjective view of religion. They deny the objectivity of Christ's work and its universal application. Instead, many Christian denominations claim that Jesus is a way to heaven, but not the way. They advocate a universalism by which ultimately all religious paths lead to the same place, as long as some sort of faith is present.²⁵ Roman Catholicism has even bent to the pressure of postmodernism with a renewed emphasis on their inclusive statements towards non-Roman Catholics. Roman Catholicism declares that while one must be part of the Roman Catholic Church to have salvation, one does not have to formally be a Roman Catholic. Anyone from a Muslim to an

²³ Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and again, "no one comes to the Father except through me."

²⁴ It is not necessarily the overarching nature of Christianity that leads postmodernism to dismiss it. Rather, postmodernism rejects the universality of Christianity because claims to explain universal truths which transcend the scope of human reason through both human reason and divine revelation. This, postmodernism says, is impossible for two reasons. First, the immanence of humanity cannot presume to be capable in any way of proposing transcendent truths. Also, since immanence is all there is for the postmodern, divine revelation has no place in the realm of postmodern consideration.

Scripture agrees that humans indeed cannot be so presumptuous as to make such grand conclusions. Yet Christianity is not a human metanarrative as postmodernism caricatures it. It is God's system he set up and passed down for saving people from eternal death in hell. History itself testifies to the immanence of God's transcendent plan. Myron B. Penner, *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views*. (Brazos Press: 2005), 125.

²⁵ Charles M. Schultz captured this prevailing sentiment through the character Linus van Pelt in a Peanuts comic: "It doesn't matter what you believe, just so long as you're sincere." Charles M. Schulz, *Go Fly a Kite, Charlie Brown: A New Peanuts Book*. (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960).

atheist can have salvation within the church, as long as he does not renounce the pope.²⁶ What results from postmodernism's influence on religious organizations is an emptying of religion. Postmodern Christianity has no transcendence and therefore no eternal and spiritual relevance. Churches become social clubs, humanitarian groups, and self-help communities. No longer do they proclaim the truth that points people to heaven.

This does not mean that postmodern Christian churches won't externally prosper. Like-minded people still congregate. People will flock to the social organization they call church because they like the identity of that tribe and enjoy the sense of belonging in their club. Ultimately however, those who try to fit Christianity into postmodernism subjectivity are as shallow as are the postmodern Christian churches they attend. Church becomes just one accessory of a trendy style. The secular world wears the postmodern style, and churches want to be stylish too. Often, this style comes with a rejection of the absolute truths upon which Christianity stands.²⁷ Within Christianity, those absolute truths are what form the basis of faith. A denial of the objective truth of Christ is a denial of the benefits that come through his work, namely forgiveness of sins and eternal life in heaven. Without the blessings of Christ, there is nothing left of Christianity. Thus, Christians who wear the name of Christ but deny the truth of Christ have very little Christianity within their Christian church.

The detrimental effects of postmodernism on Christian churches are just an example of the general deterioration of postmodernism. The very subjectivity that postmodernism exalts is the cancer which is eating away at it.²⁸

Postmodernism arose quickly and was attractive to many. People liked the sound of tolerance and the cosmopolitan reputation that came with being a postmodern. Postmodernism's

²⁶ Various statements in the Catechism of the Catholic Church teach this: "The Catholic Church recognizes in other religions that search, among shadows and images, for the God who is unknown yet near since he gives life and breath and all things and wants all men to be saved. Thus, the Church considers all goodness and truth found in these religions as 'a preparation for the Gospel and given by him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life.'" Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [book online]; available from http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p123a9p3.htm#831; Internet.

²⁷ The sacrifice of content for the sake of popularity is what this thesis mentioned earlier with regard to the religious pluralism within churches that adopt a postmodern view of religion.

²⁸ Jens Zimmerman insightfully captures in his article "Quo Vadis?: Literary theory beyond postmodernism" how "Theory's [that is, postmodernism's] positive contributions are outweighed by its self-contradictory and self-destructive tendencies" which ultimately lead to its non-existence. Jens Zimmermann, "Quo Vadis? Literary Theory Beyond Postmodernism." *Christianity and Literature* 53, no. 4 (Sum 2004): 497.

voices wrote in “dangerous and fashionable” ways that some considered to be more of a fashion statement than a philosophical statement.²⁹ Movies and books with postmodern themes brought a new perspective to entertainment that was refreshing after the suffocating smugness of traditional movie plots and characters.³⁰ It was a new style. Yet eventually the novelty was gone. When the trappings of novelty were no more, the structure of postmodernism was visible.

Very quickly, the anti-foundational foundation of postmodernism became evident.³¹ When a whole system of thoughts stands on a premise that denies objective premises, the system is self-defeating. “Theory requires a metanarrative of purpose,” and when theory denies that metanarrative, the theory simply negates itself.³² Any attempts on the part of postmodernism to exist independently of purpose or theory lead to an unending search for contexts in which to exist. Since “every sign promising some sort of originary knowledge is embedded in further contexts whose explication requires the setting of even more signs,” postmodernism’s struggle for existence is essentially a fruitless and endless endeavor.³³ Yet when postmodernism demands subjectivity, it creates an absolute rule and thus is hypocritical and inconsistent. A

²⁹ The Stuckists, a decidedly anti-postmodern art organization, criticizes postmodernism’s attempt to “peddle glibness and irony in its vacuous attempt to appear dangerous and fashionable.” Billy Childish and Charles Thomson. “An open letter to Sir Nicholas Serota.” [letter online]; available from <http://www.stuckism.com/serotaletter.html>; Internet.

³⁰ In determining if there is an endpoint to postmodernism, Alan Kirby studies a number of films from the late 1990’s to find the time at which their postmodern characteristics are no longer popular in mainstream culture. The films and explanations below are his commentary. Alan Kirby, *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture*. (1st ed. Continuum, 2009). (7-18).

Pixar’s *Toy Story* is one of these postmodern films which combines story elements for children (animation, magical speaking toys, and the child’s perspective) with adult humor and allusions to horror movies. It pulls heroes and heroines from all different stories and mixes them together in their respective roles. *Toy Story*, directed by John Lasseter (Pixar, 1995).

Also included in Kirby’s postmodern films is *Shrek*. This animated film brings together a smattering of fairy tales and mixes them with modern anachronisms. *Shrek*, directed by Andrew Adamson and Vicky Jensen, (Dreamworks, 2001).

³¹ Kirby indicates just how quickly it really was that postmodernism’s deterioration evinced itself. He brings up that “Nottingham Trent University sociologist Mike Featherstone quotes a newspaper announcing in August 1977 that ‘postmodernism is dead’ and that ‘post-postmodernism is now the thing.’” Alan Kirby, “Successor States to an Empire in Free Fall.” *Times Higher Education*, May 27, 2010. [journal online]; available from <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=411731>; Internet.

³² Zimmermann, 501.

³³ Raoul Eshelman, “Performatism, or the End of Postmodernism.” *Anthropoetics* 6, no.2 (Fall 2000). [magazine online]; available from <http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0602/perform.htm>; Internet.

philosophic system needs a foundation and postmodernism dissolves its. It is too ethereal to be applicable.

The emergence of post-postmodernism

Postmodernism's deficiencies are obvious. These deficiencies however do not suggest that postmodernism has passed out of existence. Instead, their disclosure is evidence that the "heyday" of postmodernism is passing.³⁴ Postmodernism is still an active philosophy in the world. For that matter, modernism still has a presence in society. Recently however, alongside these two systems is emerging a third school of thought in the lineage of modernism and postmodernism. This emergence is evident in present society and offers "the first glimpses of an embryonic and fascinating world."³⁵ As such, it is still indefinite as to how this resulting world will appear.³⁶ The best that philosophers today can do is to observe and describe. They posit conclusions, yet such conclusions resemble more closely conjecture.

Although a study of a current worldview is somewhat nebulous, it is a necessary field of study for anyone who communicates gospel truth to people. This shifting worldview exists in and influences the world in which the gospel is now working. It has a reciprocal relationship with society. People in church pews, neighbors, and little league parents all have a part in shaping current common worldview by virtue of the presence of their thoughts in a community. At the same time, the prevailing thought patterns of society affect the ways in which individuals think. Even if people are not able to articulate the fact that their postmodern worldview is not the same as it was twenty years ago, they still live in this current era. Thus, they are subject to the prevailing currents of today. Reaching people in the world with the gospel involves knowing those in the world. This process of knowing must be a continual learning. As worldviews shift, so do their respective spiritual holes. Postmodernism brought with it a unique set of Jesus-sized holes that those who work to share the gospel recognized and towards which they aimed the gospel. Postmodernism's holes are no longer the exact same holes present today though. Therefore, those who seek to proclaim the gospel need to recognize the new holes and

³⁴ Kirby admits that "although 'the death of postmodernism' makes a great headline, it isn't strictly true... But postmodernism's heyday is over; its reign has ended." Kirby, "Successor States to an Empire in Free Fall."

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Kirby, the author of digimodernism, one of the philosophies competing to take the place of postmodernism, grants that the "final picture is still unclear." Ibid.

appropriately aim the gospel once again. The witness for Christ who places proper importance on his work of bringing the light of the gospel to the world will make efforts to be abreast on the way people today think. This will give accurate direction to the framing of gospel truths.

Current philosophy and the worldview it cultivates is a progression from, reaction to, and symbiosis with postmodernism that societal change is shaping. Therefore, it is a post-postmodernism.³⁷ While some debate this nomenclature, the term post-postmodernism denotes in a general way the shift that is happening in society.³⁸ It comes both chronologically after postmodernism and its thoughts and premises flow from postmodernism.³⁹ Yet the emergence of post-postmodernism does not nullify the existence of postmodernism. They exist simultaneously.

Although the idea of post-postmodernism may seem radical, it really is nothing new. For some time, people have been discontent with postmodernism. It is exactly that discontentment that leads people to look for something more. Their active searching for meaning beyond postmodernism's subjective truth in many ways is a defining difference between postmodernism and what comes after it. A pessimistic attitude concerning the inability to attain an absent truth is satisfactory for postmodernism. Indeed, such pessimism is the "inevitable conclusion of...the denial of meaning."⁴⁰ Post-postmodernism however optimistically regards that truth as extant and looks for it to fill the vacuity of truth that postmodernism left.

Any time that a professor mentions in class that the key to reaching the postmodern world is giving them the stability that they need, this is post-postmodernism. Recently, even more common is the thought that the current generation of adults in their young twenties are looking for the stability and consistency that postmodern generations had formerly dismissed.

³⁷ Post-postmodernism here is not an official "brand" name of any specific philosophy. It refers in general to the rising philosophic movements that come after postmodernism.

³⁸ There are mixed feelings on the nomenclature of "post-postmodernism." For some, such as Raoul Eshelmann, the term "post-postmodernism" is a regular word in their vocabulary. Raoul Eshelman, *Performatism, or the End of Postmodernism*. (The Davies Group Publishers, 2008).

Alan Kirby however represents the front that considers "post-postmodernism" a "vile term" and blames its ascension on Wikipedia. Kirby, *Digimodernism*, 40. Wikipedia's agency in popularizing the term is thus a testament to the collaborative authorless nature of today's philosophy.

³⁹ Eshelmann considers all the works of his brand of post-postmodernism, *performatism*, to "feed in some way on postmodernism," either by a "break with it markedly," or "while others retain typical devices but use them with an entirely different aim." Eshelman, *Performatism, or the End of Postmodernism*, xiv.

⁴⁰ Kelm, *Understanding and Addressing a Postmodern Culture*, 3.

The increasing commonality of that desire for stable truth is a wholly post-postmodern aspiration.

Post-postmodernism looks similar to postmodernism in that both philosophies start from the platform of an absence of objective truth. Post-postmodernism however recognizes that this absence is due only to a lack of finding it, rather than to an objective lack of truth.⁴¹ Truth is there, it is foundational, and it is attainable.

Technology brings autonomy

Two main forces are taking the world from postmodernism to post-postmodernism. Technological developments are changing the nature of communication and personal identity, and thereby affecting the ways that people think.⁴² At the same time, consumerism is increasing its influence on society, and likewise shaping conceptions and worldviews.⁴³

Technology for postmodernism opened the door to different cultures. The postmodern individual picked from the global buffet line which cultural values he wanted and from where he wanted them. Society reveled in diversity. Digital communication however has the tendency to blur faces and cultural identities. As digital communication grew from email to online forums to instant messengers to SMS text messages to blogs to Facebook to Twitter to Google +, identities became more and more irrelevant. Information and communication was information and communication, regardless of who it comes from. Moreover, online identities became increasingly easy to create and modify at the users discretion. Thus, even if a user's profile gave personal information and pictures, it is hard to be certain if such information is accurate. While cultures united, culture disappeared. An Indian man's blog is indistinguishable from an American woman's, and there is no need or reason to distinguish between them. Identities have no impact on information.

⁴¹ Eagleton notes that postmodernism's attacks on objectivity and truth are anachronistic endeavors. Postmodernism's premise that there is no objective truth "belong[s] to a bourgeois world on the wane." Terry Eagleton, *After Theory*. (Basic Books, 2003), 17. Therefore, in current society, when people do not have truth, it is not because truth is objectively absent, but only because they have not yet found it. The conclusion that truth is objectively absent is an increasingly passé thought of postmodernism.

⁴² Alan Kirby in *Digimodernism* and Robert Samuels in *Auto-Modernity after Postmodernism* both base their philosophies on technological advances and its prevalence. Robert Samuels, "Auto-Modernity After Postmodernism: Autonomy and Automation in Culture, Technology, and Education." *Digital Youth, Innovation, and the Unexpected* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, October 4, 2011), 219-240.

⁴³ Gilles Lipovetsky's philosophy of "hypermodernism" stands in part on the premise that a rise in consumerism has changed society. Lipovetsky, *Hypermodern Times*.

The information is what is important. Less important are the people who author that information. The “death of the author” is not a new concept, however.⁴⁴ Postmodernism very much killed authors on its own as it redefined meaning. No longer was meaning what the author wanted to communicate. For the postmodern, meaning became the reader’s interpretation of the work.

Post-postmodernism goes to the next step. Now the work is the subject’s interpretation of the world. The internet and ease of online publication has radically changed the nature of the author and the text.⁴⁵ Online blog sites provide a newsroom for anyone with commentary on anything. These blog commentaries then become news sources to which one can subscribe the same as they would to New York Times. Instead of having to get headlines from the six-o-clock news on television, people can simply check their news feeds online which they themselves have made. They select which news sites or blogs they want to glean information from. As they naturally subscribe to blogs which coincide with their own opinions already, the reality in which people immerse themselves is an “automated mirror of self-reflection.”⁴⁶ They in turn regurgitate their collective absorbance of news with their own perspective and publish it as another news blog to which someone else will subscribe. Broadcast journalists are now even searching blogs for news that they publish in official venues.⁴⁷ This postproduction has diminished any concern for who authored what, because most likely, that author himself is just interpreting information someone else authored.⁴⁸ A single blog post is “a simple moment in an infinite chain of contributions.”⁴⁹ A proliferation of authors and interpretations of them have

⁴⁴Roland Barthes and Richard Howard. *The Rustle of Language*. (University of California Press, 1989). 55.

⁴⁵ Alan Kirby is even more forceful as he asserts that “the emergence of new technologies re-structured, violently and forever, the nature of the author, the reader and the text, and the relationships between them.” Alan Kirby, “The Death of Postmodernism And Beyond.” *Philosophy Now*. Issue 58, Nov/Dec 2006. [magazine online]; available from: (http://www.philosophynow.org/issue58/The_Death_of_Postmodernism_And_Beyond; Internet.

⁴⁶ Samuels, *Auto-Modernity After Postmodernism*, 233.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁴⁸ Nicolas Bourriaud postulates a theory of postproduction as it relates to art. His premise is that what people produce is just reused information. This theory applies beyond the realm of art to literature and thought as well. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction*. 3rd ed. (Lukas & Sternberg, 2007).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

dissolved the author.⁵⁰ While the postmodern author is dead in that the reader looks past the author's meaning to make his own, the post-postmodern author, his text, and even his readers, practically speaking, have become utterly irrelevant.

At the same time, every individual becomes the author, albeit, a re-author. Through search engines and blogs, he is in control of the information that comes to him.⁵¹ This control brings about a new level of autonomy that did not exist when news was present only in paper, on television, or over the radio.⁵² With those media, news was what publishers and broadcasting stations decided. The fluidity of information and communication online has since given all control to the individual. The individual is at the same time an information harvester and sower. He is an autonomous system of information production and consumption. No longer is the purveyance of information a communal matter, for it is self-contained within the individual.

In some ways, the autonomy that comes from an increasing influence of technology is paradoxical. Due to the prolific permeation of online technologies in every area of life, this paradox is one of "the defining contradictions of contemporary life in general and digital youth in particular."⁵³ Digital communication exists to facilitate community. Some of the most popular websites today exist to form connections between people. A video chat with a friend in Hong Kong is cheaper than a phone call or even a letter. A person can wake up, check his Twitter or Facebook, and instantly know the activities of all his friends. He can share with the world the most personal details of his life with a few thumb strokes. Postmodernism would claim this proliferation of digital connection to be a global community. There is definitely connectedness, but community that exists in the digital world is often too virtual to be real.

Digital connection often comes with a measure of projection and filtration. Who the individual is in the digital realm depends on his own discretionary formation of identity. It is much easier to hide undesirable qualities or manufacture popular ones when cyberspace

⁵⁰ Bourriaud describes how postproduction destroys the artist, and by correspondence, the author as well. *Ibid.*, 86.

⁵¹ At least, Samuel claims, people have "the sense that they are in control of the information that appears on their screen, just as they are in control of the perceptions that they let into their own consciousness." Samuels, *Auto-Modernity After Postmodernism*, 226.

⁵² "Instead of people having to rely on large, corporate media outlets for their news and information, private individuals can become their own public media reporters." *Ibid.*, 232.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 228.

separates those who are talking. While there is connection between people through the internet, this connection is hardly the type of connection that exists in person to person conversation. At least in person, an individual has to be a skilled liar to hide his identity. In digital communication however, it is just as easy to be someone else as it is to represent your true identity.

From the comfort of an individual's living room then, a person virtually connects to the world. This illusion of connectivity really is what makes the autonomy that technology encourages so distant from the world. People content themselves to have relationships through a 15.6 inch laptop screen.⁵⁴ Behind this screen, the user has complete control over relationships and communication. He gives a perception of himself instead of letting the person with whom he is talking form his own perception. He is able to simply close a dialogue box when a conversation does not transpire as he anticipated. He brings which parts of the world to him that he wants when he wants. Through his computer, he makes a virtual connection that, despite the almost overabundance of connectivity, distances him into himself.⁵⁵ This communicative technology solidifies people in their comfort zones and makes honest communication unnecessary. Technological autonomy in a large part defines the 21st century up to this point.

Society and consumerism bring responsible hedonism

Technology is not the only force that encourages autonomy in society. Society itself esteems autonomy more and more. The virtues that present society upholds evidence this. America prizes few things less than freedom and liberty. As America idolizes freedom, it becomes not just a collective virtue, but a personal virtue. America is more than just a free country. It is a country full of free people. American culture so esteems freedom that people consider the height of moral activity to be when an individual is acting in complete personal freedom.⁵⁶ People spend their entire career working towards vacation time or retirement. These

⁵⁴ "While the Web may enable digital youth to encounter multiple cultures and various social relationships, they often experience those interactions through the window and frame of their PC, and in this technological context, all encounters with others become visually boxed into the confines of the screen." Ibid., 232.

⁵⁵ "it is the individual who decides what to put up on the screen, and this sense of individual control reinforces the feeling of autonomy for the PC user." Ibid., 232.

⁵⁶ The American Declaration of Independence creates the pedestal for personal freedom and sets into motion the attitude of entitlement to personal freedom: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain *unalienable* Rights, that among these are Life,

are both eras of life that epitomize personal freedom. Therefore, “individual freedom in automodernity often represents a freedom not to do something,” as much as it represents a freedom to act.⁵⁷ Anything that impinges an individual’s freedom to act or not to act is an evil against that virtue.

Now granted, there are exceptions to the dominance of a freedom driven society. Society in general reasons that it is not virtuous to murder or steal, even if someone wants to. Therefore, society does not necessarily apply the principle of individual freedom in matters of civil conduct or when harm to another would result. Yet as far as personal aptitude to do what pleases, absolute freedom is society’s goal. For example, there is no legislation against smoking in private, even though the United States Surgeon General unambiguously describes how detrimental to health smoking is.⁵⁸ The individual understands why he should not smoke, yet he retains the right to decide that for himself. Most of the time, he will make the choice that would have been according to law had there been one anyway. The external actions would be the same. Yet the choice implies freedom, and freedom is autonomy.

“The boundless extension of the reign of consumerism” within society feeds that end.⁵⁹ It used to be that luxuries and the latest styles were for the enjoyment only of the upper class. Anything less than the upper tier would have to content itself with imitation brands or styles in clothing, cars, and technology from years past. Now however, this tier of luxury has become accessible to a much broader constituency. Since the 1950’s a phase of consumption has reigned in which “production and mass consumption were no longer reserved uniquely to a privileged

Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (emphasis mine). *Declaration of Independence* (text transcript) [online government document]; available from ://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html.; Internet.

⁵⁷ “Automodernity” is Robert Samuels’ philosophy of post-postmodernism. In it he sets forth that societal forces, especially an increase in automated technology have solidified individuals as autonomous. Samuels, *Auto-Modernity After Postmodernism*, 236.

⁵⁸ By law, the United States Surgeon General requires every pack of cigarettes sold in the United States to have one of four warnings against smoking, the most candid one being, “SURGEON GENERAL’S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.” United States Surgeon General. “Cigarette Labeling and Advertising” *United States Code*. [document online]; available from: [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/usc.cgi?ACTION=RETRIEVE&FILE=\\$\\$xa\\$\\$busc15.wais&start=7390608&SIZE=11181&TYPE=TEXT.](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/usc.cgi?ACTION=RETRIEVE&FILE=$$xa$$busc15.wais&start=7390608&SIZE=11181&TYPE=TEXT.;); Internet.

⁵⁹ Lipovetsky,15.

class.”⁶⁰ Instead, not only are necessities of life readily available to all economic classes, but there is “an extension, to all classes of society, of the liking for novelty, to promotion of everything futile and frivolous.”⁶¹ In 2012, the presence of smart phones in the hands of elementary school children and brand new cars in the garages of people who can hardly pay their rent is the form of this extension of frivolity.

This increasing influence of consumerism that Gilles Lipovetsky calls “hyperconsumerism” has had the effect of changing the end goal of wealth and the things that money can buy. People now consume “first and foremost for their own pleasure, rather than out of rivalry with others.”⁶² When only the richest could afford luxuries, the things they bought they used as standards by which they compare themselves to each other. Wealth and luxury were tools for competition and bragging. Since so many more people have the things that only a select group of people used to have, the grounds for bragging about such luxuries is less important. For a society that prizes autonomy, items of luxury are just another accessory of a lifestyle that fulfills the personal goals and wants of the individual. Simply, luxury is now a tool of “hedonistic individualism.”⁶³

This is not to say that the world has descended into a constant bacchanalian revelry. On the contrary, society is very adept at preserving appearances. More than ever, “individuals have been made responsible for their own lives.”⁶⁴ People in society are externally very conscientious about health and exercise. They are politically active and highly concerned about the environment, education, and establishing healthy communities.⁶⁵

Within this fusion of hedonism and responsibility is a “blindingly obvious” paradox.⁶⁶ The individual lives with concern only for himself. Yet he does not act on this selfish desire to the extent that it would tarnish his reputation. Society has a responsible exterior but a decadent

⁶⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁶¹ Ibid., 10.

⁶² Ibid., 11.

⁶³ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁵ These are some of the examples of social responsibility that Lipovetsky cites. Ibid., 11.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 12.

interior. To say though that this paradox is unique to post-postmodernism would be near-sighted. This paradox is the same for which Jesus censured the Jewish scribes and Pharisees two thousand years ago:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.⁶⁷

They were religious leaders who had a pristine appearance, but were prideful, scornful, and arrogant on the inside. This hypocrisy extends well before and after the New Testament era as well. Post-postmodernism is unique however in that this paradox is acceptable in society. People understand that who they are on the inside is different than on the outside. Not only do they accept this, but they encourage it as an outlet for the autonomous individual. For example, pornography in general is not something that society promotes blatantly, but very often radio talk shows or late night television hosts make light of it.⁶⁸ They legitimize what people do in secret so as to say that even the most moral people can fulfill their own desires in private, and it is commendable that they do so. Not only then is this an acceptance of people's inner depravity, but it the hallowing of secret immorality. The hypocrisy that this form of hedonistic autonomy brings is nothing new, but the ubiquity of its public acceptance is.

An observation of the courses that technology and consumerism have run in society gives a general idea of what the post-postmodern world is like. Of course, there are many other influencing factors that go into the shaping of a society, but this thesis is not an attempt to comprehensively exhaust the topic of post-postmodernism's roots. Its purpose is to explain the philosophical movement's emergence, observe some of its themes, notice its Jesus-sized holes, and then apply the gospel to those holes.

Themes within post-postmodernism

Autonomy

⁶⁷ Matthew 23:27-28.

⁶⁸ There are many instances of the minimization of pornography's destructiveness in public media. A timely example is in the January 27, 2011 Colbert Report where Stephen Colbert comically demonstrated that pornography can predict the 2012 presidential election. "Time-Traveling Porn." Stephen Colbert. *The Colbert Report*, Comedy Central, January 27, 2011. *Colbert Nation* [episode online]; available from : <http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/372474/january-27-2011/time-traveling-porn---daryl-bem>; Internet.

To find these holes, post-postmodernism's themes must first come to light. These themes arise from the formative currents of technology and consumerism that were just under observation.

Personal autonomy, as has become evident, is a major characteristic of post-postmodernism. It "is now being generated through technological and cultural automation."⁶⁹ As communicative technology evolves and the narcissism of an increasingly hedonistic society takes root more deeply in society, individuals are turning more into themselves. An individual is comfortable with the world outside of him only when he has a level of control over it. "Through the window and frame of their PC," people maintain a safe distance from the world.⁷⁰ They are able to limit input and output, and thus through the PC, maintain an "appearance of autonomous user control."⁷¹ Further, society has promoted communication in which one projects an image to others which he crafts for them to see. With digital communication, this projection requires little effort. Even in face-to-face communication however, individuals can shamelessly hide their dissolute desires under a surface image. This they do with the sanction and encouragement of a society that encourages their personal freedom in almost every manner.

Encounter

Technology has done more than just change an individual's relation of himself to the world. It has also influenced the way in which he perceives and experiences the world. Sessions of web browsing on the internet are a series of different encounters with websites.⁷² During each encounter, data presents itself, and the user has control over how long he will linger in that encounter or move on the next. Each encounter stems from a previous encounter with a webpage and will lead to a subsequent encounter with another webpage. In that way, these hyperlinks that bring together encounters are "only relating, but never uniting."⁷³ While connection exists

⁶⁹ Robert Samuels, *New Media, Cultural Studies, and Critical Theory After Postmodernism: Automodernity from Zizek to Laclau*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), ix.

⁷⁰ Samuels, *Auto-modernity after Postmodernism*, (232).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁷² Bourriaud describes the journey that occurs while browsing the internet. He draws from the chain of signs that hyperlinks create as he forms his *Altermodern* art philosophy. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Altermodern*. (Tate Publishing, 2009). 5.

⁷³ Laurențiu Malomfălean, "Hypertext. Cybertext. Digitext." *Caietele Echinox* 20 (June 2011). 152.

between webpages, it is a connection that lacks coherence and is unrepeatable. So many variables within each encounter influence the click of one hyperlink over another. Data on the webpage, how the webpage's author presents that data, the user's mood, and countless other externals all have bearing on what the next encounter in this journey will be.

Each encounter is by itself separate from every other, yet it is connected to every other. There is no past to a webpage nor is there an apparent future. When a user accesses the page, he is not interested in how this page came about or even who wrote it. This page is one that has come upon the heels of a previous page and is only as valuable as is the attention-catching information on it. The moment another hyperlink distracts him by offering stimuli more demanding than that which resides on the current webpage, he will follow that link to the next encounter. The encounter has become more valuable at demanding attention than the author.

This truth applies beyond web navigation. Data and intellectual stimuli is everywhere in the world. These stimuli function as internet hyperlinks. Each piece of data that confronts an individual's perception has the potential to affect it or to pass by without import. That data which affects the mind has captured its attention becomes information which the mind can process.⁷⁴ As the mind focuses on that information, it orientates its perception to receive a new influx of data and intellectual stimuli. That data in turn will again either capture attention or pass by. The process repeats itself continually, for this process of "hypertext as a thought process" is the post-postmodernist's perception of reality.⁷⁵

Within this hypertext thought process, only genuinely engaging encounters receive the attention of people who constantly face an inundation of information. This necessity for engaging encounters compounds with the inconsistencies of virtual identities and societally acceptable hypocrisy. When the majority of personal interactions one faces daily are surface deep and have no real meaning, there is little reason to waste attention on them. There are many other stimuli coming at a person at any given time that are more worthy of attention than shallow conversations. Therefore, if there is to be an effective encounter, the encounter must shout above the rest of the noise. It must seize the attention of the subject, for people will not willingly give

⁷⁴ Clifford Stoll and Gary Schubert receive credit for concisely differentiating between data and knowledge, "Data is not information, Information is not knowledge, Knowledge is not understanding, Understanding is not wisdom." Mark R Keeler, *Nothing to Hide: Privacy in the 21st Century*. (iUniverse: Lincoln, NE, 2006). 112.

⁷⁵ Bourriaud, *Altermodern*, 5.

their attention to something unless it deserves it. An effective encounter has the potential to break through the inconsistent life and rise above the mass of data to bring truth with meaning to people.

Instability

This constant inconsistency between externals and internals quite expectedly results in an unstable individual. He is one whom society tells to indulge in whatever he wants. At the same time, he recognizes that such indulgence gives an appearance that he doesn't want people to see. He finds himself between a world that consumerism drives to hedonism and a world that stigmatizes those who appear to not have control of themselves.⁷⁶

Following suit, the consumer joins in. He indulges in the luxuries that society has made accessible to him. He revels in the things that money can buy for himself, while at the same time supporting nonprofits and charities. There is nothing foundational in society, for all is a pursuit of the self.

Needs that post-postmodernism presents

These post-postmodern themes: a rising autonomy, a reality of encounters, and the paradoxically unstable individual, leave distinct holes in the growing influence of post-postmodernism on the world. The needs that this thesis looks into are those which are unique to post-postmodernism. They have connection to postmodern needs in many ways, for they come from world that postmodernism has ravaged. Yet while the needs have a similar appearance, they have distinct wants and expectations.

Authenticity

Because there is so much under the surface in the post-postmodern that is not visible from the outside, the quality of honesty is relatively rare. An individual for the most part knows what others want him to know about them, not necessarily who they really are. He is aware that the responsible character he sees in others is just a façade that hides the same deplorable attributes he himself keeps inside. While society tolerates these inconsistencies, this does not change the fact that they are inconsistent.

⁷⁶ At the same time, there are many who live an externally morally deplorable life and still garner the respect of society. This respect persists however only as long as the individual keeps control over his or her indulgent lifestyle. Contemporary examples demonstrate this well: Britney Spears, Paris Hilton, Lindsay Lohan, Robert Downey Jr. all had obvious issues with drugs or alcoholism. People did not seem to mind these problems though until they became something that the individual could not control. Once it got out that the celebrity was in rehab or in court for their problem, the pleasure seeking lifestyle that was once an ideal for the good life became something laughable.

In a society that upholds these hypocrisies, the one thing that stands out is authenticity. Authenticity is honest consistency. It exists when something or someone has the same interior as exterior, a relative rarity today. One is authentic then when he takes ownership of a truth and stands by that truth in all areas of life.

Postmodernism is clearly very far from authentic. While postmodernism considered truth a very personal thing, it made truth something that in itself was only relative. Truth's veracity depended only on the one holding that truth. His holding of that truth was with the understanding that that truth was something true only because he thought it to be so. Consequently, adherence to such a truth is really just adherence to oneself. The existence of truth is as transient as is the confession of truth. While discussion of truth according to such a subjective standard may be good fodder for writing, there is no practicality to that type of truth. There is no substance and thus no authenticity.

The impractical short-sightedness of postmodernism's truth is in direct opposition to the overwhelming oppression of modernism's quest for universal truth.⁷⁷ Modernism distilled truth through the crucible of reason and plastered this truth as authoritative on all people. On the other hand, it ridiculed anything that didn't fit the criteria of reason.

Authenticity exists somewhere in the "the tension between transcendence and immanence."⁷⁸ An authentic concept has meaning beyond the immediate circumstance, but is concrete enough to be relevant. It is true both objectively and subjectively. The advocate of authentic thought understands that both points of view are necessary for truth to be applicable. Therefore he connects to the subjective person in a way to show him the need for the objective truth.

The need for authenticity isn't necessarily explicit within post-postmodernism. Pop-culture does not blatantly promote some sort of quest for the authentic. Yet the desire for authenticity is clearly apparent. Although people may not articulate a search for the authentic, it is recognizable in normal parts of people's lives. Organic food grocery stores are becoming increasingly popular as people recognize the importance of eating natural foods. Even supermarkets are more and more beginning to offer food with the label "organic" or "natural"

⁷⁷ To find the future of literary theory, Zimmerman answers the question, "How can we have an ethic that is neither oppressive in its universal validity nor impractical in its utter transcendence of history?" Zimmerman, 502.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 502.

along with their normal fare. Food that brings with it no question of contents is preferable to food that has gone through extensive processing. Movies are becoming more raw and natural also. Writers and directors manufacture settings and contrive plots less now than do they express gritty reality and actual situations. Films of the *Dogme 95* movement are extreme examples of this raw filmmaking.⁷⁹ However, mainstream movies also have begun to reflect this trend towards authenticity in film.⁸⁰ In general, people recognize that the false fronts of food, movies, politicians, other people, and society as a whole are lacking when next to something with consistent authenticity. These inconsistent areas of life do not have a transcendent truth that gives authenticity. This lack of depth leaves something wanting.

Postmodernism also recognizes that society hasn't attained objective truth. Postmodernism even would confess that such a truth would be beneficial to society, and maybe even exists. Yet that truth exists outside of the grasp of the subjective human experience. Therefore postmodernism approaches the desire for truth in a thoroughly pessimistic manner. The need for authenticity within postmodernism is only implicit, for the postmodern individual does not actively seek authenticity. He merely despairs that it is not there. Post-postmodernism on the other hand is an "optimistic confidence in progress" towards authenticity.⁸¹ It recognizes the value of consistent honesty to truth. This recognition happens in a society where technological autonomy and hyperconsumerism have created a great void where authenticity should be. Yet when authenticity shows itself, people recognize it, accept its truth, and value it.

Connection

Authenticity is especially valuable in a society where relationships are predominantly only surface deep. Online communication places computer screens and self-manifestations as

⁷⁹ A Dogme 95 manifesto declared the movement to be a "rescue action" to bring truth back to the cinema. The movement follows a strict guideline that bars any contrivances from its films and focuses on the truth of characters and action. Kirby, *Digimodernism*, 18.

⁸⁰ Kirby cites *The Blair Witch Project* and *Borat* as exemplars of this authenticity in film. *Ibid.*, 22.

Even going back to the nineties, this trend was apparent in the hand held camera technique of *The Blair Witch Project*. *The Blair Witch Project*. Directed by Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez, (Artisan Entertainment, 1999).

In a different genre, *Borat* integrates the film alongside normal people and tells the story in a large part through simple interviews. *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*. Directed by Larry Charles. (20th Century Fox, 2006).

⁸¹ Without alluding to some sort of "post-postmodernism," Paul Kelm recognizes that this optimism within post-postmodernism is exactly what is lacking in postmodernism. Kelm, *Understanding and Addressing a Postmodern Culture*, 3.

barriers to honest communication. A society that breeds people who find themselves stuck between hedonism and responsibility confuses people. They are unsure as to how much they should honestly show themselves within relationships and conversations. What results is an environment where facades meet and true selves stay inside. These shallow relationships accomplish practical goals, but they leave individuals starving for true connection.

Stability

The inconsistencies that society promotes leave many without any stable foundation. While people try to maintain a semblance of responsibility, inwardly, they are impulsive. The only governing force over them is their desires. This self-serving life may be temporarily fulfilling, but it brings with it no constancy or transcendence. This hedonism becomes especially unstable when it wears the veneer of responsibility. The rift between the face and the impulses creates a confused individual who feels those inconsistencies in his life.

It may not be that the post-postmodern individual directly acknowledges that a self-fulfilling life is actually unfulfilling. It could even be the opposite. Yet as the inconsistency between how he acts and how he portrays himself becomes more apparent, his personal integrity comes into question. At that point, one wonders what it is that is missing. His instability becomes clear.

Overall, the holes that come with post-postmodernism all have connections to a deprivation of authenticity. The autonomous individual lacks authentic connection and needs an authentic encounter to reach him. The responsible hedonist craves something that is the same on the inside as on the outside. The authenticity that post-postmodernism longs for is the only thing that can bring stability.

Relation of the church to society's needs

Post-postmodernism raises up a new set of needs in society, but never has there been an epoch in the history of the world in which there were no needs. The church does not exist to offer "ecclesiastical panaceas" to the world's deficiencies.⁸² It is not an institution to provide food for the hungry or humanitarian aid to other countries merely for the sake of giving this aid. This is not to say that if a church does these things it is acting in a way contrary to God's will. Such assistance that a congregation or church body lends can be a very fitting and God pleasing

⁸² Paul Kelm limits his philosophy of ministry: "[Our philosophy of ministry] does not mean jumping onto passing bandwagons offering ecclesiastical panaceas, as though "movements" or programs were simple solutions to what ails the church." Kelm, *A Biblical and Contemporary Philosophy of Ministry*, 9.

faithful response to Christ's gospel. Yet while a church may work to help with societal issues, it must always bear in mind that such help is not its purpose. Humanitarian aid or support for the needy can be a pathway by which the church can work to its real purpose, but that help is never the purpose itself.

Christ has given his church on earth a higher purpose. Its purpose is to glorify God as it promotes Christ's gospel in the world and spiritually nurtures those who are in the faith. As such, its primary activity is preaching the gospel to believers and non-believers alike. This preaching happens from the pulpit, through missionaries abroad, in Bible classes, or in any other way that a church body proclaims the truth of God's Word. There are times when the needs of society are also spiritual needs or at least have such needs contingent to them. When these spiritual deficiencies are present in the needs of society, then the purpose of the church coincides with the needs of society.

Those Jesus-sized holes then become targets for the gospel. The needs in post-postmodern society exhibit clear Jesus-sized holes. To ignore them would be irresponsible on the part of the witness of the gospel. Faithfulness in spreading the gospel means that the individual to the best of his ability will proclaim Scripture's message without hindrance. Hindrances can come from either side, either from the proclaimer or the recipient. Of course, there is only so much one can do in removing all hindrances to the gospel, for as long as there is sin in the world, Satan will attempt to block the gospel. Yet there is no excuse for the gospel proclaimer if his ignorance of people becomes a hindrance to his proclamation. If there are needs common to society, and he instead chooses to address needs of a society from fifty years ago, his ignorance is proving to be a hindrance.

Now, each individual, of course, has needs specific to him. Likewise, not every individual fits into the template of post-postmodernism that this thesis has demonstrated. Yet a starting point is helpful in determining the exact spiritual needs people have. This thesis locates those general starting points. From there, the gospel proclaimer can further specify the exact nature of the Jesus-sized holes in his audience.

To be clear, a gospel proclaimer's ability to understand society and reach people is never what effects changes in the hearts of people or gives power to the gospel. The gospel on its own has the power through the Holy Spirit to create and nurture faith. Since the power is in the gospel, "we won't substitute programs for the gospel, but we will generate every program

possible to minister with the Gospel.”⁸³ Any departure from this gospel, even in the name of understanding or reaching society, is absolutely unacceptable. Faithfulness to understanding society should never happen at the cost of faithfulness to the Word. The external appearance of the church may change as it exists in different times and places in the world, but its identity in the Word of God remains consistent.⁸⁴

Since the world is constantly changing though, the applications of Scripture also change. While every society has the same ultimate spiritual deficiency, a total depravity because of sin, there are specific Jesus-sized holes in today’s society that were not present in years past.⁸⁵ Those needs are those which this thesis has illumined: the need for stability, connection, and authenticity. Each of these needs has a spiritual deficiency with it. Therefore, each of these needs is a Jesus-sized hole that Christ’s gospel fills. The church and Christ’s servants within it then have a real obligation to address the unique holes that post-postmodernism is bringing to current society.⁸⁶

Jesus fills Jesus-sized holes

Christ is sufficient to fill the spiritual needs in the world. He brings stability to the unstable world. He encounters individuals with a truth that transcends even human existence. In his truth and the community that gathers around, individuals can have honest personal connection.

Jesus’s confronts the world with authentic truth

⁸³ Ibid., 6.

⁸⁴ This is the fear many feel when addressing the church’s relation to society. President Wendland articulates the nature of this fear, “In a sense, the question is a basic one, made more pressing because of these changes whizzing by us. In such a world, who am I? How, in other words, can we WELSers preserve our gospel identity at a time of accelerating cultural change? How much change is too much? How little is too little? And how can we know if we’re keeping a good balance between the two? We fear those two poles: of either coming apart as we find ourselves driven along the crest of each new wave, or of becoming increasingly petrified as we seek refuge and comfort in a past that for us can be turned into a sort of shrine of everything good.” Paul Wendland, “*The Apostle Paul and Culture*,” Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Winterim Course Outline, 3.

⁸⁵ In Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul clearly describes the spiritual death of humans before the Holy Spirit gives them spiritual life through faith in Christ.

⁸⁶ Paul Kelm describes this responsibility, ““Contemporary” does mean that we care about the society and community to which God has sent us ... enough to study and understand our world... Contemporary does mean that we want our church to be relevant.” Kelm, 9.

Just as the desire for authenticity is a driving force in the needs of post-postmodernism, Christ's fulfillment of this need is the primary way in which he fills society's spiritual holes.

There are no truths more global than that of sin and grace. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Paul tells the Romans.⁸⁷ This fact is the great universality that so many throw out in attempts to find righteousness in themselves. The postmodern denial of objective morality is nothing but a refusal to acknowledge the obvious truth of universal accountability. A subjective standard of morality is an artificial salve for consciences.

In Christ however, people do not have to try to forget this objective truth. The truth of Christ's atoning life, death, and resurrection is just as objective as is the law. It frees people from the logical end to the universal condemnation of the law as they "are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."⁸⁸ In Christ, believers stand without fear of the law because Christ has objectively forgiven their sins. They can therefore honestly admit the universality of the law and not have to find a way to dismiss it for themselves. In his forgiveness, Christ brings authenticity to life.

In a world where communication is a manufacture of individuals and outward appearance hardly ever indicates who a person really is, the authentic effects of Christ's work are truly transcendent. His gospel allows an individual to live in the world honestly and see the reality of life on earth. Christ is the truth for which post-postmodernism looks.

Jesus brings stability to inconsistent instability

This authenticity is the encounter which can confront the autonomous control of the individual who is too insecure to open up to others. Before Christ's cross, he can expose himself to the law's mirror and not have to fear a backlash. Only upon honest admission of his sin can he be the person that society only attempts to portray: a responsible and content individual.

No longer does he need to portray himself as something that he is not. He has gazed into the law, seen that he on his own is on a path to destruction in hell, and through the Spirit repented of his sinfulness and taken on the new man.⁸⁹ In Christ, he is thus consistent. His inner

⁸⁷ Romans 3:23.

⁸⁸ Romans 3:24.

⁸⁹ "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Romans 6:4.

desire is no longer to fulfill the banal wants of the flesh. Instead, he lives in service to Christ.⁹⁰ This life is one that has integrity and is the same on the inside and out. When inconsistencies again arise, through repentance and faith, the Spirit brings him back to the wholeness that only is present in Christ.

In this wholeness is peace. The disconnect between what people show themselves to be and what they really are no longer applies to the person in Christ. He lives in stable confidence that Christ has made his relationship with God perfect and the life he lives is one that will result in eternal life in heaven.

Jesus brings authentic connection

Christ enables authentic connection with himself and with other believers. The autonomous individual who has confronted himself through the law and found his identity in the gospel has an absolutely honest relationship with Christ. There is no need for control on the part of the individual, for vulnerability is acceptable when there is forgiveness. He does not need to project an identity, for Christ has given him a new identity. This identity starts internally and manifests itself externally. For the individual who in the world connects through a computer screen, this honest relationship fills his need for real connection.

Once such a relationship exists with Christ, it extends to the whole body of believers.⁹¹ Christ's body is a community in which everyone sees their own identities in Christ and each other's identities in him as well. Among such people there is no need for false fronts.⁹² Believers understand the sinner-saint dichotomy in every believer, and their intentions to each other mirror Christ's selfless love. They accept each other through forgiveness, because they know that they themselves have found acceptance in Christ.⁹³ Their acceptance does not depend on each other's abilities to impress. It depends solely on the position in his family that God has given believers through Christ.

⁹⁰ "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires." Romans 8:5.

⁹¹ "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us." 1 John 4:16, 17.

⁹² Paul speaks about the new life believers enjoy in the body of Christ, "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." Colossians 3:9,10.

⁹³ "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:32.

Only through Jesus can one deal with the realities of sin in society. Therefore true authenticity exists only in him. Yet in him comes authenticity in every spectrum of life, from relationships to personal peace. Jesus is the fulfillment of post-postmodernism's spiritual holes and the spiritual holes of every time.

Practical implications of post-postmodernism on ministry

With the advent of new philosophic thought comes a plethora of other considerations for reaching people. Post-postmodernism has implications on every area of ministry that deals with connections to people. To address these all of these implications is far beyond the scope of this thesis or even of any one thesis, for that matter. Since however this thesis has demonstrated that society's worldview is once again shifting, it would be remiss to at least not peer into some of the doors that this topic opens.

The post-postmodern preacher

The post-postmodern worldview has tremendous impact on preaching. With a demand for authenticity high among people, the preacher has an obligation to be authentic and deliver an authentic message.

This obligation should be evident by the very nature of the message that the preacher preaches. Scripture and its truths are always authentic, as well as are its applications to people. However, people are developing more and more of a sensitivity and aversion to rhetoric for the sake of rhetoric and a quality among preachers that appears most like phoniness.

This aversion is understandable considering the disregard for the author that superabundance of online publishing has brought about. In the vein that people do not care who wrote a webpage, people do not care necessarily about the credentials of the preacher. Any attempt of the preacher to impress or give an air of something that he is not is an instant sour note for the post-postmodern.

It is incumbent therefore on the preacher that he maintain an honest personal ethos. He must recognize that his message is Christ's and his position is one of service to Christ. The authenticity which he brings to his hearers is a connection to Christ and reality in Christ. Nothing of what he preaches is his own. His attitude is that of John the Baptist who made it a goal that others would see only Christ in him.⁹⁴ The post-postmodern preacher's authentic ethos should also be one that reflects Christ and points entirely to him.

⁹⁴ John the Baptist said to his followers in John 3:30, "he must become greater; I must become less."

The authentic preacher does well to not place himself on a pedestal above those he serves. Rather, in his showing Christ to others, he himself is an example of the work of Christ in his life. As he makes himself transparent to others in the fact that he too struggles with a sinful nature, his congregation sees the transforming and empowering sufficiency of Christ that makes sinners into faithful servants of God.⁹⁵ In this way the repentance and forgiveness he preaches is not an abstract concept for him. Those who hear him talk honestly about his own reliance on Christ recognize that his “words and actions are aligned.”⁹⁶ The preacher’s authentic ethos then leads others to find through the Spirit the forgiveness that comes with open confession of sins and the freedom of an authentic and honest relationship with Christ.⁹⁷

The preacher’s sermon is an integral part in leading his congregation to this end. The post-postmodern preacher needs to make his sermon an authentic encounter of Christ to Christ’s people. Anything less than a radical encounter will not engage the individual who lives daily in front of a constant stream of data. This demand is not too much to ask of a preacher, for the gospel is never anything less than radical. It defies human reason and challenges societal conventions.⁹⁸ The preacher’s task is to bring that earth-shattering truth to the congregation in all its raw power. He will present Christ unabashedly and strip the people of their pretenses and self-projections. When he brings Christ to encounter the honest individual, he will then have done his work of removing obstacles to the gospel and bringing Christ’s saving authentic truth to the people.

The post-postmodern evangelist⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Paul understood the benefit and power of showing Christ’s power in his own experience. He readily listed his past sins to others and even confessed that he still dealt regularly with sin as he does in Romans 7:7-25. He did this never to put the attention on himself, but to make himself a living example of the grace of Christ in action. Through his example, Paul sought to lead others to see as he did Christ’s transforming forgiveness and power over sin.

⁹⁶ Stetzer and Putman. *Breaking the Missional Code*, 74.

⁹⁷ Ed Stetzer and David Putnam in their book on creating a missional church recognize the value of a leader’s character in drawing followers. For them, his character makes the congregation, “willing to invest themselves in the leader’s dream and vision.” In other words, they recognize his passion for the gospel and follow suit. Stetzer and Putnam, *Breaking the Missional Code*, 74.

⁹⁸ Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 describes how the wisdom of the gospel does not make sense to the understanding of the world and in fact appears “foolish” to the world.

⁹⁹ An evangelist here is one who bears the good news of salvation in Christ to anyone, not strictly one who does gospel outreach to those who do not yet know the gospel.

The same principles of post-postmodern preaching apply to any sort of gospel outreach or in-reach. The evangelist will do well to recognize the need for authenticity and connection that exists in a post-postmodern mission field. In that recognition he will seek to form real relationships with those to whom he is reaching out. These relationships must come out of a genuine concern for souls and have all the intention of a relationship with an old friend. Anything less will appear inauthentic, and indeed will be so. If the person to whom the evangelist is reaching out senses inauthenticity, the evangelist will have done great harm to his opportunity to encounter this individual with the gospel.

The content of his message must be that, an encounter with Christ. As in preaching, he will reach the post-postmodern individual by confronting him with the authenticity of Christ. This is especially important in the bounds of an already existing relationship where the evangelist has come to know some of the specific and intimate needs of the individual. He then can directly confront those needs with Christ.

The post-postmodern worship service

Authenticity is a key concept in the realm of worship also. Authentic worship is that which has meaning and consistency. The message from the pulpit should match the focus of the service and the content of the songs. Anything that in any way contradicts the gospel which is central to the service has no place in the worship service.

A congregation maintains authenticity when it avoids gimmicks in worship. Such gimmicks can appear in liturgics and music. Often they are a worship planner's attempt to do something new in worship. They can even come from a self-serving agenda to impress others with ability in music or worship planning. Newness in worship is not a bad thing, except when it is newness for the sake of newness.¹⁰⁰ In that case, it is subjective to itself and has no foundation under it. Such newness is shallow and destructive to worship.

The depth of worship comes in its content. The worship service thus is "done so that the Word may have free course" both in scripture readings and in the sacrament.¹⁰¹ In this way, "our dear Lord himself may speak to us through his holy Word and we respond to him through prayer

¹⁰⁰ Contemporary "does not mean chasing the winds of change in order to be 'chic,' popular or 'with it.'" Kelm, *A Biblical and Contemporary Philosophy of Ministry*, 9.

¹⁰¹ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Liturgy and Hymns*. Vol. 53. (Fortress Press, 1965), 14.

and praise.”¹⁰² Through the speaking of God to his people and their response of prayer and praise, the worship service is an encounter between God and man. It is the duty of the worship planner to highlight this encounter between the gospel and human hearts and make it evident in every part of worship. The authentic worship encounter stands on a rich liturgical tradition in the church. As it has taught Christ to worshipers for many years, the Lutheran liturgy still continues to be effective in reaching people in the current shifting world.

Other implications

Besides worship, evangelism, and preaching, there are many other areas which the emergence of post-postmodernism affects. Bible classes, for example, could incorporate a control of information on the part of the technologically autonomous individual. As long as there are places where the gospel touches people, there are places where those who bear the gospel must determine how Jesus best fills Jesus-sized holes.

Since society never stops changing, there will never be an end to the new needs that surface in society. As often as the needs of society change, so often will there be new implications of society’s changing worldview on areas of ministry.

Conclusion

The change in society on which this thesis focuses is only a small part of the perpetual shift that the world goes through. As important as it is to understand the current shifts from postmodernism to what comes after postmodernism, even more important is an understanding of the responsibility that every proclaimer of the gospel has to knowing those whom he is reaching with the gospel.

This responsibility requires the Christian witness to go to the work of being up to date on the latest philosophies and thought trends in the world. This work will demand time and effort. Yet it has direct value to the gospel’s proclamation, for it facilitates one’s ability to remove obstacles between the gospel and those he is reaching with the gospel. What makes this work especially difficult is that it can lead one out of his comfort zone. To “be all things to all men,” a gospel witness must often think about people and aspects of his own ministry in a new light.¹⁰³ Often this works requires change in areas such as preaching or teaching. As is the case with any

¹⁰² Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works, Sermons I*. Edited by John W. Doberstein and Helmut T. Lehmann. Vol. 51. (Fortress Press, 1959), 333.

¹⁰³ 1 Corinthians 9:22.

work that God gives to his people, faithfulness takes extra effort. Yet God's "workmanship, created in Christ to do good works" readily and joyfully go to this effort because their motivation is not from themselves.¹⁰⁴ They serve the Lord only in response to his ultimate service for them. God will bless this work and use it for his glory.

In the end, this paper is nothing new. People have been sinners with spiritual deficiencies ever since the fall into sin at Eden.¹⁰⁵ That fact will not change until Christ returns and makes a new earth.¹⁰⁶ Yet with each new wave of thought, spiritual needs take on new shapes. Every new shape of a need is a new opportunity for the gospel to fill the world's Jesus-sized holes. Therefore, a contemporary ministry brings the ageless truths of Scripture to current Jesus-sized holes so that it can fill them with the transcendent and authentic gospel of Christ.

¹⁰⁴ Ephesians 2:10.

¹⁰⁵ Romans 5:12.

¹⁰⁶ Revelation 21:1.

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