

## SESSION 3: ESSAY BY TYLER PEACHEY

### *How the Postmodern Worldview Impacts Evangelism*

This month's Car Talk features an essay by Tyler Peachey, Hesston College sophomore, on postmodernity and evangelism. If you're still wondering what this whole postmodern worldview is about, this article will give you some helpful definitions.

#### ***How the Postmodern Worldview Impacts Evangelism***

**by Tyler Peachey**

In this world that is changing every day, views and beliefs are always changing as well. The way we did things in the past has to change in order to be effective in today's society. How we do evangelism is one of those things that needs to change.

People in the modern worldview like things that are clear and concise. They want an answer for everything—and a straight answer at that. Postmoderns don't think that you can totally know the answer. They don't want a straight answer.

Since the worldview has changed, evangelism has to change with it as well. We can't approach it the same way we did in the modern age. We can't preach to just individuals anymore. We need to preach to groups of people. These days, youth don't want to be left alone to make the decision for themselves. They want to do it in a group. Youth feel safer when they have a group that they can make the decision with because they feel like they are part of a family. They have somewhere to go when they have questions about their faith. Postmoderns want a Christianity that is communal. They tend to reject "I" songs. They feel like worshipping is a group thing and by singing "I" songs, they aren't worshipping together.

Preaching to groups instead of individuals has its advantages. You can get more youth involved in the youth group and thinking about God. You might get more kids coming back because their friends are doing it and they don't want to be left out. Groups of youth can generate more enthusiasm, and that makes your job as a youth leader easier and more fun.

Postmoderns don't believe that there is only one way to faith. They don't want a one, two, three step process on how to be a Christian. They believe that faith is an ongoing process. Postmoderns understand that no one is perfect and that no one can follow a one, two, three step process. They believe that it is okay to doubt what you know and what belief you have. As youth leaders, we need to live in a way that shows that we are people of God. Showing how we live our lives is the best way to show how they need to live theirs.

Postmoderns don't always need to reason their way into believing; they can behave their way into believing. For postmoderns, doing is believing. If they are able to do something enough, than they will believe that what they are doing is right. They will eventually want to do a little bit more after a while. They will jump in and become a bigger part of the church. After getting that feeling of knowledge, they will want to know more. They will dig deeper and will want to learn more about God.

With postmoderns, you need to make sure that you aren't trying to give them answers that are too simplistic. They believe that you can't put God under a microscope. They think that God is too mysterious for that and that God is too complicated for us to fully understand. Give them something to think about. Challenge them. You can give them something that

will challenge the way they've been previously thinking without turning them off. If you give them something that is too much by rule, or is structured by propositional truth statements, they won't think that is real. It is too much "one way of thinking" and they won't listen to you.

When evangelizing, we need to make sure that we don't compromise our own beliefs. Postmoderns believe that everything is relative, so you can't argue them into believing. You don't have to prove anything to them. The best way to evangelize is to live a radically different, Christian life and let them observe you. Always show them love. Give love and just as importantly, let them give to you.

The biggest difference from the modern world to the postmodern world is that postmoderns believe more in walking the walk instead of just believing it in your head. They think that you can believe it in your head, but if you don't show it, than you really don't have the faith (which, by the way, is biblical!) Postmoderns don't want the rules of what God is. They want the real life examples of what God is.

Perhaps the best way to evangelize in today's world is to make sure that our faith is expressed more by the way we live our lives and not just our words. Our evangelism needs to be genuine. It needs to show that we love and have a concern for others and that we want them to feel the joy that we have every day with our faith. We also must be willing to share God's story with others through our own individual lives and demonstrate the truth of the words by the way we live our lives.

#### **Works Cited:**

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