*For far too long, we have made the Christian experience a head trip and have somehow forgotten the heart along the way. We have confused our intellect with our* beingness.

*(Bishop Strong)*

**Are We Modern Yet?**

By Fred C. Plumer

Then he said with a strong voice:

The fact is that you *postmodern* folks seem to be avoiding the real issues.

**1.  Was Jesus God or wasn’t he?**

**2.  Was he killed in some cosmic, sacrificial act by God to redeem the souls of believing sinners or did he die as a result of his controversial teachings and his unwillingness to bend his knee to Caesar?**

**3.  Was Jesus about abundant life or life in the hereafter?**

**These are the questions that have been left unresolved for over 1600 years. It seems to me that until we can talk about those issues openly, we are not *post*anything.”**

+ + +

Jim, *et al:*

 *Is it OK to have “Wiegel Room?”*

For a man without a job you still are busy asking some very interesting questions. Of course, Bishop Spong is helpful too. The question you raise about the theology—or lack of it—of the Postmodern Generation and their relationship to the contemporary (flowered shirt and no socks) present day church leadership—

does have an answer:

*Whether they know it or not, the Postmodern Generation already is the future of the church. Their struggle is made difficult because their teachers/clergy/seminary profs, pulpit masters, SS teachers, etc., all teach, preach, or write about from the point of view of the Modern (Newtonian) Worldview of the last 700 years.*

 Until we elders get out of the way—and most of us are hurrying as fast as we can—the Postmodern generation continues to live and serve contaminated by living “In Between” two mutually exclusive worldviews. As the future of the church leadership, it can be said, **they are but they ain’t yet.**

 Spong uses my phrase, “Head Trip Analysis.” Marcus Borg liked it too. I support the statement, “All the metaphors belong to all the People.”

 In earlier communications, you mentioned a struggle with the God Issue as evidenced with those things you find yourself “up-against.” Isn’t this the traditional O.E./I.E./ICA position?

 I’m never comfortable with this definition as I experience the impossibilities of life as “The Way Life Is” instead of “The Rock in a Hard Place.” What I do experience is a transformation of our human existence.

 For 10 years, I was a visiting chaplain at the Saline County Jail and the Ellsworth Correctional Facility. During this time I had 90 visits. In order to be prepared to take seriously the issues presented to me, I identified 7 major themes and 7 appropriate responses. This became a counseling paint pallet from which I was ready to respond to most issues and concerns.

 I was ready to write a book exploring this material. The title would be, “Conversations In Jail: for the prisoner in all of us.” This project was put off so that I had the time to write the first 3 books of the **IHOP Bible Study\*\***. It may be a mistake. I know Lynda Cock is a Holy Thorn in my side to write the book. Now, I’m too far down the road and forgotten most of the illustrations. The Colorado Prison Association writes me every year with encouragement to write the book.

Ah, but I digress~

 On Saturday nights, I have a Bible Study at my house with three people whose lives have been awakened; all spent time in prison. One is addicted to pornography, one is a former angry-alcoholic, and his soon-to-be wife was sexually abused by her minister father;

# 1 Steve was encouraged to attend by his parole officer. He just entered Phase III, and this is a season when the spiritually asleep experience awakening. He is working to find the words to identify how his heart was “strangely warmed” and how a cleansing peace came over him;

 # 2 In desperation, Todd knelt in his jail cell and confessed he was no longer strong enough on his own to fight the anger/bottle battle. He asked God for help and a sign—while knelling, a prisoner picked up a book and tossed it at his feet. It was a Bible. He testifies a radical change flooded through him and he immediately was empowered and his anger was gone;

# 3 Crystal is a brilliant woman living and loving with Todd. I’ll marry them in August. She figured out that unless she forgave her father, her anger and alcoholism would eat her alive. Now, her father plans to attend Crystal’s wedding, and will publish in a newsletter his daughter’s creative work concerning her personal experience of Awakenment.

 These are shared here because these three people are born on the cusp of 1985; now understood as the Sociological End Times. Each of these people understand their transformation as an Awakenment to live in obedience to God they experience as loving forgiveness or Tough Love.

**# 1 For them, Jesus is a brother who demonstrated how and why it is crucial to die to the world’s definitions of abundant life;**

**# 2 Observe this experience is not substitution theology; it is a demonstration of what is necessary to live a transformed life. The *transformed life* has nothing to do with *a transcendent life*. Transcendence is the old Modern Metaphor no longer understood, while transformation is Postmodern and is easily absorbed.**

**#3 The experience of these three representative people is exactly the abundant life that the Postmodern generation understands.**

 Can it be said that these answer our three questions and makes God smile? Compared to the ICA vision, the scope is personal instead of global. Isn’t this like the story of the person who at low tide is throwing back into the ocean the trapped Star Fish? For the many not rescued they will die, but for the few it is life saving.

The difficulty Postmodern people experience is they do not have the language, metaphors, symbols, etc. that clearly describe the transformation experience that each have embraced as they viewed a burning bush, walked through the parting of the Red Sea pursued by the demons with whom they lived for a good part of their young adult existence, and/or died while serving a variety of Golden Calves.

*What about us old folks, long awakened and living on the Journey to the East?*

 The unusual experience of those called into service by the voice of The Order Ecumenical/E.I./ICA is that we are privileged to live on the Point between the No Longer and the Not Yet. Truly, we are a Vanguard of Hope for the lost generations of the Postmodern Experience.

 It was said of those at the Great Turning, “At least they weren’t found shoveling shit in Louisiana.”

 Inner Peace, people.

 Bill Salmon

PS: Washing the toilets in the 5th City Program Center is an act of transformation and has nothing to do with Louisiana. It comes close though. LOL

\*\*All of my publications and writings are archived at the following addresses, and they are FREE for the accessing:

 www.Triumc.org/web1/SermonStarter

 [www.Triumc.org/web1/BibleStudy](http://www.Triumc.org/web1/BibleStudy)

For $15.00, I have one DVD disk of the three books forming the Trinity Commentary on the New Testament. The disk contains numerous other articles on topics associated with giving a Postmodern language to Postmodern people.

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