

Mo and PoMo, Part 1

Romans 1:18-20

A204

Modernism

Consider the record of the past century, for example. A hundred years ago, the church was beset by modernism. Modernism was a world-view based on the notion that only science could explain reality. The modernist in effect began with the presupposition that nothing supernatural is real.

It ought to have been instantly obvious that modernism and Christianity were incompatible at the most fundamental level. If nothing supernatural is real, then much of the Bible is untrue and has no authority; the incarnation of Christ is a myth (nullifying Christ's authority as well); and all the supernatural elements of Christianity -including God Himself -must be utterly redefined in naturalistic terms. Modernism was anti-Christian at its core.

Nonetheless, the visible church at the beginning of the twentieth century was filled with people who were convinced modernism and Christianity could and should be reconciled. They insisted that if the church did not keep in step with the times by embracing modernism, Christianity would not survive the twentieth century. The church would become increasingly irrelevant to modern people, they said, and soon it would die. So they devised a "social gospel" void of the true gospel of salvation.

Of course, biblical Christianity survived the twentieth century just fine. Wherever Christians remained committed to the truthfulness and authority of Scripture, the church flourished. But ironically, those churches and denominations that embraced modernism were the ones that became increasingly irrelevant and all but died out before the century was over. Many grandiose but nearly empty stone buildings offer mute testimony to the deadliness of compromise with modernism.

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