

Living in a Post-modern, Secular, Pluralist Society

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Text

Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind (Romans 12:2)

What does it mean to have a Christian mind?

What is the Framework within which we think?

The thinking behind thinking. Plausibility structures, social imaginaries, tacit knowledge.

Hermeneutics

Interpretation, initially of texts, then of narrative then of the way we view the world, and the way in which we see our patients' stories.

Seven Myths of modernism

Myth 1 Secular:

That we cannot speak about our faith in a secular environment.

Various understandings of secular

Secular 1a. Secular as distinct from sacred (Smith)

Secular 1b. Where the religious is removed from public discourse, but people still hold private religious beliefs (eg Poland during Communism) (Taylor)

Secular 2. Where religion is removed from public discourse because people no longer believe. (what I call empty secularism)

Secular 3. Move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest one to embrace. (Taylor's main definition)

Secular 4. The Indian form of secularism where the different viewpoints of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity (along with Jainism, Parseeism...) are understood, acknowledged and respected as part of daily discourse. (My modification)

Answered by encouraging a healthy pluralistic society "Where difference is understood and respected and yet commitment are neither hidden or diluted (Barth)

Myth 2 Immanent frame

That this world is all there is and that there is no transcendent world

- Theist - The unseen God actively interacts with the created order (not least through those who pray)
- Deist - God started this world going as creator but that the world continues on without God
- Semi-deist - God only interacts with the world every now and then
- Atheist - there is no God to intervene in the world

Developing a transcendent imagery

Which community shapes your imagination?

How do you read the Scriptures?

How do you pray?

How do you worship?

How do you walk with God in your daily life?

How do you see your history? Macro- and micro-

Myth 3 Disengaged reason

Reason and emotions are not opposed

Motivational research points to cycles of change

Romantic reaction to a rationalist structure

Compassion is part of what Christians are called to do

Faith and science are not opposed

Science is an interaction of faith, facts and theories

All facts are theory laden

Science is a cultural pursuit within a plausibility structure

Myth 4 mechanistic view of humans

Against nothing buttery

In neuroscience

In administration

Humans are made in the image of God and have a history marked by pain and resilience

Myth 5 Self-referentialism – that humans are autonomous

I am a citizen of a nation and subject to its laws (these laws are shaped by its people)

I am not the centre of the universe (nor are human beings, or the earth!)

The world is greater than me

The world is bigger than humans can understand

We are a community of believers (Christians also)

Myth 6 A-teleology

Even businesses have mission vision and core values

“I am the Alpha and the omega”

Myth 7 Ethics and nomolatory

Where does ethics get the *motivation* and the *power* to do good?

How can Paul, an ex-legalist, get a community of ex-hedonists to behave morally?