

## Postmodernity Characteristics:

Distrust of Institutions, Global Identity, Image vs. (Purely) Written/Spoken Word, Tribe of Individuals, Technology as Identity, Pluralism (Relativism?), Post-Christendom, Experience vs. Authority (Subjectivism?)

## Postmodernity (within) Church Characteristics:

Pre-modernity	Modernity	Post-modernity
Mystery	Reason	Tension
Story-centric Gospels	Word-centric	Centered Around Person of Christ (found in story)
Dependence on Authority	Trust in Authority	Skepticism Toward Authority
Sanctification Theology	Justification Theology	Justification and Sanctification Theology
Worship Space is Open	Worship Space is Seated Rows	Worship Space is Flexible
“Help Me!”	“Tell Me!”	“Show Me!”
The Body	The Mind	The Whole Self

## Touchstones in Postmodern Worship: Experiencing All Senses

### Unassuming

- (1) Do you use language, vocabulary and ritual that is contextual to your worshiper? Does your worshiper understand your meaning?
- (2) What expectations do you have of your worshiper? To be Christian? To have grown up in the church? To share your love of the hymnody? To dress or behave a certain way? To be as interested in the form as you? Will they care about your cultural touchstones if they have not grown up with them?

### Confronts our Comfort

- (1) Do you create worship for your worshipers, or for God?
- (2) What work do you do to provoke one another into Discipleship Practices? (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- (3) What elements of your worship gatherings challenge your worshipers, and to what degree? What expectations do you have for your worshipers' involvement? Are these communicated or, more importantly, modeled? (The greatest form of permission is an example.)

### Participation Instead of Perfection

- (1) Are you relational or presentational? Are you providing “rehearsal” for the rest of the week? Is your worship a place for people to escape their lives, or a place where people are equipped to live their lives?

- (2) How are you including your participants in planning worship? What freedom do they have in offering ideas, art, words, or music into worship? How is your worship both organic and organized?
- (3) Do you have worship that asks nothing from the participants other than reading and singing?
- (4) Is the quality of your worship dependent on the leader's offering or the participant's? Is the participant driving or the leader?

### **Hyper-Contextual**

- (1) Do you use images, songs, stories, and art from the indigenous culture?
- (2) Are you bringing the context in not just as an illustration, but as a touchstone between church and culture?
- (3) Does your language make sense to the people who live around you, not just sit next to you in worship?

### **Extra-sensory**

- (1) Touch/Movement: What does the worshiper feel (physically)? How does your worship space feel? Cold? Stuffy? Painful? Sleepy? How do you encourage engagement of the body? How do you encourage physical participation?
- (2) Hearing/Song: What does the worshiper hear? How do you encourage your community to sing? What songs arise from the culture that connect? Are you picking a song because it is theologically correct or because it encourages the participant into this way of prayer, thought, or growth? How does your community experience or create music? Are the sounds of your worship gatherings clear, or muddy?
- (3) Sight/Visual Cues: What does the worshiper see? How does this drive your worship? How do light and color inform your worship flow? What do people see when they enter? When they turn around? When they look up? How do worshipers and leaders appear in their worshiping?
- (4) Smell/Taste: What does the worshiper smell? How does the worshiper eat or drink in worship? What can you offer as cues to worship through incense, oils, baking bread, pages in a book? What other smells or tastes say "worship?" Do your communion elements beg a second helping, or are they penance?

### **Space Speaks**

- (1) How does the spatial flow (both physical and figurative) shape what you focus on? During worship, how could people get up and use the space? What does the permanent art in your space (architecture, wall color, lighting, paraments, room temperature) say about what you want people to consider during their time there?
- (2) What distractions from worship do you want to avoid? If you are projecting onto a screen, does it help your worship or does it always draw your attention?
- (3) Where is the pulpit? The altar? The font? Can these be moved to create a different flow and focus? Can you create new fixtures?
- (4) Does the seating in your worship space invite your worshipers to rest in God, or does it trap them?