

What does the gap mean for missions today?

- 1) Am I caught in a post-modern compromise?
 - a. Do I treat the Bible as *religious* only?
 - b. Am I tempted to mingle into the world?
 - c. Am I tempted to isolate from the world?

- 2) Am I treating tolerance as the ultimate virtue?
 - a. What did tolerance used to mean? And today?
 - b. How is the Christian to react? Eph. 4:29
 - c. Why do we need to explain tolerance to others?

- 3) Can I effectively see and bridge the gap to a postmodern person?
 - a. Acknowledge they have a gap to be bridged!
 - b. Realize that the "pie" is all gone (for them)
 - c. Remember a *postmodern* person cannot be saved
 - d. There is *no* sin for a postmodern person!
 - e. Defend the Bible as *true* and not *religious*

Test statements. Which of these are these is a postmodern statement?

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1) "God is whatever you want him to be" | _X_ |
| 2) "God is or He is not" | ____ |
| 3) "My church believes that . . ." | _X_ |
| 4) "Islam and Christianity have much common ground" | _X_ |
| 5) "My God wouldn't destroy Jericho" | _X_ |
| 6) "I am a Christian, a Hindu, and a Muslim" | _X_ |
| 7) "In the beginning God" | ____ |
| 8) "Christianity is right for you". | _X_ |
| 9) "You Christian's are so intolerant" | _X_ |

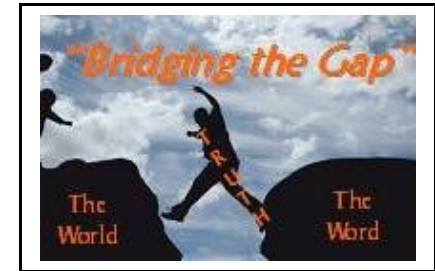
Bridging the Gap

Saturday: TRUTH ERODED

What is the gap?

Where did the gap come from?

What does the gap mean to missions?



"But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

1 Corinthians 1:23-25

Basic definitions:

Truth: **That which corresponds to reality**

That which corresponds to the way things really are

Postmodernism:

"Where modernism was a manifesto of human self-confidence and self-congratulation, postmodernism is a confession of modesty, if not despair. There is no truth; only truths. There is no grand reason; only reasons. There is no privileged civilization (or culture, belief, norm and style); only a multiplicity of cultures, beliefs, norms and styles. There is no universal justice; only interests and the competition of interest groups. There is no grand narrative of human progress; only countless stories of were people and their cultures are now. There is no simple reality or any grand objectivity of universal, detached knowledge; only a ceaseless representation of everything in terms of everything else." **Os Guinness, Fit Bodies, Fat Minds (Why Evangelicals Don't Think and What to do about it)**

“The nature of truth is crucial to the Christian faith. Not only does Christianity claim there is absolute truth (which is true for everyone, everywhere, always) but it also insists that truth is that which corresponds to the way things really are.”

Geisler Systematic Theology, Book One

1) So, what is the ‘gap’? What is the problem for missions?

“So this change in the concept of the way we come to knowledge and truth is the most crucial problem, as I understand it, facing Christianity today . . .”

Francis Schaeffer The God Who Is There

2) Has there always been a gap?

There has always been saved and unsaved; the found and the lost; believer and unbeliever. But there is one **fundamental difference** today that was not there before. One hundred or so years ago, the believer and unbeliever met across the table to ask the same questions (such as, “Is God real?”), but there was a consensus of opinion on one thing; “If this is true, then that is false.”

“If Christianity is not the truth, it is nothing, and our faith is mere sentimentality”

Chuck Colson The Faith

3) So, let’s have a drink with G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831)

Francis Schaeffer explains it this way, “Imagine that Hegel was sitting one day in the local tavern, surrounded by his friends, conversing on the philosophical issues of the day. Suddenly he put down his mug of beer on the table and said, “I have a new idea. From now on let us think in this way: instead of thinking in terms of cause and effect, what we really have is a thesis [standpoint], and opposite an antithesis, with the answer to their relationship not a horizontal movement of cause and effect, but a synthesis.” . . . When Hegel propounded this idea he changed the world.”

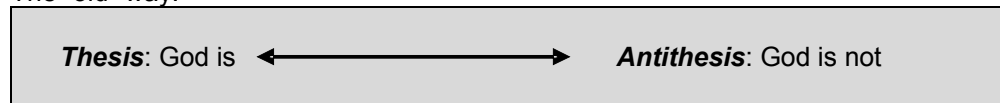
For example:

Person One: “I propose that God is real”.

Person Two: “I propose the opposite, that God is not real”.

Hegel: “Let’s not argue over this. Let’s have a third category, that God is whatever you want him to be, for you”.

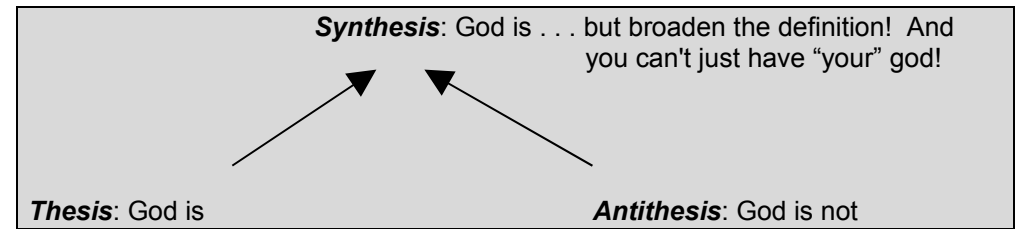
The “old” way:



This “old way” was a sufficient basis for concluding that God is, and I am a sinner in light of that. Without right and wrong **a postmodern person can NEVER get to the point of experiencing real guilt before a Holy God because there can be no such thing as sin**. Therefore a postmodern person never needs a Saviour.

The “new” way; the postmodern way:

Hegel suggests, let’s not have either / or, but rather find truth in a combination, where truth is to be found in **synthesis rather than antithesis**.



4) Is there any pie left?

The result? G. K. Chesterton said it well, “*Humility was largely meant as a restraint upon the arrogance and infinity of the appetite of man . . . But what we suffer from to-day is humility in the wrong place . . . Modesty has settled upon the organ of conviction; where it was never meant to be. A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. Nowadays the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert — himself. The part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt — the Divine Reason. Huxley preached a humility content to learn from Nature. But the new skeptic is so humble that he doubts if he can even learn . . . At any street corner we may meet a man who utters the frantic and blasphemous statement that he may be wrong. Every day one comes across somebody who says that of course his view may not be the right one. Of course his view must be the right one, or it is not his view. We are on the road to producing a race of men too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table. We are in danger of seeing philosophers who doubt the law of gravity as being a mere fancy of their own. Scoffers of old time were too proud to be convinced; but these are too humble to be convinced.*”

5) Tolerance today, is it vice or virtue? A vice!

“Tolerance has become the one cardinal virtue of the postmodern society, the one absolute, and, therefore, intolerance is the only evil.”

gotquestions.org, “. . . absolute truth”

Tolerance used to mean, “I disagree with you, but we can still be friends.” Tolerance today means, “You must accommodate all differing views, and you CANNOT have one view that says it is right and others are wrong. Every view must be equal.”