

# **A Rational Defense For The Christian Faith**

*By Ted Broadway*

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## **Is The Postmodern Age The Final Phase of Western Society**

Last month we took a look at American popular culture as a society in disintegration, a dying culture, which is exhibiting the marks of dead cultures from the past. Rejection of morality, escapism, lack of control over their own lives, guilt, promiscuity and an indiscriminate acceptance of anything and everything, these are the order of the day in America. This is the question at hand: Is the postmodern age the final phase of Western society, a society dominated by anxiety, irrationality and helplessness, unable to seek transcendence, unanchored to any universal ground of justice, reason or truth? We will look at whether this world of postmodernism, to which we are transitioning, is liberating, as many believe, or whether it signals the end of Western civilization, as Toynbee predicts. Or will there be, in this chaos and pain, a turnaround by means of a spiritual awakening?

Walter Anderson, author of the book *Reality Isn't What It Used to Be: Theatrical Politics, Ready-to-Wear Religion, Global Myths, Primitive Chic, and Other Wonders of the Postmodern World*, sees a shift in thinking as profound as any in human history. By the way, Anderson welcomes this shift. He says that there are three processes driving this change. First, conflicts over what is true for society is polarizing us. We are in the midst of "culture wars" and are divided over education, morality (and moral instruction) and sexual issues. Secondly, we are becoming more of a global culture. As cultures and values are more and more "in each other's face" it is hard to accept any of them as absolutely true. And thirdly, there is a breakdown of belief. There is exceedingly little consensus as to what is true and we live in a "kind of unregulated marketplace of realities in which all manner of belief systems are offered for public consumption."

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The result of this, in Anderson's view, is that there is now a split between "objectivists", who believe truth is objective and can be known, and "constructivists", who believe people make up their own realities. The "constructivists" are getting more powerful. And an agenda of deconstructing old history and old truth and constructing new realities and histories is begun. Next month we will look some more at what it means to do without truth.