

Telling the Truth:
Daniel 4 and Postmodern Evangelism

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November 2004
Evangelical Theological Society

“Consider for a moment if it is not evangelism, rather late-twentieth-century styles of evangelism that deserve our disdain and avoidance.”¹ This statement of Brian McLaren typifies the disdain for modern evangelism methods by some who posit postmodern evangelism. McLaren expanded on his anti-modernist comment:

For starters, we could talk about the whole career of modernity—where explorers were called *conquistadores* (conquerors)—where evangelistic initiatives were called *crusades*, like military invasions of conquest; where the Good News was phrased in terms of laws (who can argue against *laws*?) or steps (assembly instructions for a bicycle? What is to converse about there?) or simple diagrams (engineering schematics of the soul?). We could also talk about the language of “winning” people for Christ, a term with some biblical roots (1 Corinthians 9) to be sure, but in our modern competitive culture, our winning implies someone else’s losing in a way that the image did not in ancient culture. More productively, we could consider how our rationalistic modern age, where “mind” is everything, the Christian gospel really has become an argument, and evangelism has located itself rhetorically somewhere between courtroom prosecution and door-to-door sales or cable TV infomercials, complete with clever closes (“Is there any reason, Mrs. Jones, why you *wouldn’t* want to buy our new Dirt-B-Gone Vacuum System?).²

McLaren believed that modernism led to negative and actually non-biblical approaches to evangelism. His argument, that the blame is to be placed in the “late-twentieth-century,” does not coincide with the teaching that modernism began with the onset of the Enlightenment (circa 1789).³ However, the above citation is indicative of what many authors are saying in the context of postmodern evangelism.⁴

¹Brian McLaren, *More Ready than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 13.

²Ibid., 25. Tony Jones is much harsher than McLaren (Tony Jones, *Postmodern Youth Ministry: Exploring Cultural Shift, Cultivating Authentic Community, Creating Holistic Connections* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan and Youth Specialties, 2001], 119-22).

³Ibid., 13.

⁴“Popular evangelistic schemes include such approaches as Bible tracts disguised as hundred dollar bills, phony religious surveys designed to get a foot in the door for a gospel presentation, and ‘secular’ business or marriage seminars with unadvertised altar calls” (Steve Sjogren, Dave Ping, and Doug Pollock, *Irresistible Evangelism: Natural Ways to Open Others to Jesus* [Loveland, CO: Group, 2004], 30). “Need to break out of our conventional ways of presenting the word of God” (Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Church: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003], 165).

This paper will not be a survey of attitudes or methods of postmodern evangelism, but rather it is an attempt to understand the context from which postmodern evangelism emanates, and how this relates to a biblical theology of evangelism, with the addition of an Old Testament (OT) passage. Daniel 4 and Postmodern Evangelism, touches on many issues where there are differing views: (1) Defining postmodern; (2) describing postmodern evangelism; (3) the relationship of the OT to the New Testament (NT) in conversion and evangelism; and (4) the relationship of theology and culture. Culture is the trump card in practical theology. Anything said from the basis of theology, faith, or the Bible is eligible to be trumped by culture.

Yet there is a steady stream of writings promoting cultural relevance. Church sociologists like George Barna “earn their keep” by keeping an eye on culture.⁵ Christian futurists like Leonard Sweet write one book after another to motivate the church to engage the culture.⁶ Practitioners like Brian McLaren⁷ and Steve Sjogren⁸ encourage others to engage the culture for the purpose of reaching souls. And even theologians like Millard Erickson provide training on cultural relevance.⁹ In his discussion, Erickson not

⁵For example, some books by George Barna include: *Marketing the Church* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988); *The Frog in the Kettle* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 1990); *User Friendly Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1991); *The Power of Vision* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1992); *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville: Word, 1998); *The Habits of Highly Effective Churches* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2000); and *Growing True Disciples* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2001).

⁶One of many examples of Sweet’s emphasis on culture is found in his book *Postmodern Pilgrims* (Nashville: Broadman, 2000). In this book Sweet wrote, “The church of Jesus Christ ‘Stays in touch.’ Christianity is a contact culture, a tactile religion Biblical spirituality is a contact sport” (ibid., 16).

⁷“Evangelism in a postmodern world has to be less like argument. That is not to say that it will not be logical, but rather that it will not be about winning and losing, which is why I think the image of dance works so well” (Brian McLaren, *More Ready than You Realize*, 27).

⁸“We live in a post-Christian age. It’s a confusing new environment where the rules of communication between Christians and unchurched members of our culture have changed radically. The messages and methods that the church used for decades are now misunderstood and perceived as ugly and negative by the world around us” (Steve Sjogren, et al, 27-28).

⁹“There are, however, specific human needs that arise in connection with particular historical situations, and as such, call for very specific cures or applications. . . . Thus, some degree of timeliness or contemporaneity is needed for the Christian message” (Millard Erickson, *Truth or Consequences: The*

only mentions the shape of the message, but also the method of communication.¹⁰ As we shall see, the age old question of “Christ and Culture” surfaces as the bottom line issue.

Much of what the postmodern ministry sources say is helpful and useful. However, when methodology of evangelism is changed, this change does not remain in a vacuum. For example, Billy Graham seems to have been incorrect in 1967 when he answered the following, “Do you still believe in the same fundamental doctrines that you did when you began preaching?” answered, ‘Yes, but methods change.’”¹¹ To his credit Graham continued to focus on the preaching of the Gospel. However, method and message are inseparably linked. For example, take the words of the contemporary “Father of the Servant Evangelism,” Steve Sjogren, in his recent *Irresistible Evangelism*:

Many Christians talk about developing an intimate *personal relationship* with God, but the message they present to not-yet-Christians focuses almost exclusively on explaining how the atoning death of Jesus satisfies the requirements of God’s justice. . . . From this point of view, the plan of salvation sounds much more like an impersonal legal arrangement than a loving relationship. Talking about doctrines such as justification by faith and atonement by the substitutionary death of Jesus is usually unnecessarily confusing.

Promise or Perils of Postmodernism [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001], 307). In an interesting paragraph Erickson seems to equate Harold Lindell’s view of inerrancy, as described in *Battle for the Bible*, with allowing modernism to frame the question (ibid., 310-11). This example provides insight to his view of biblical authority, which also relates to his views of method and message which we will analyze below. As far as inerrancy and modernism, it sounds like a reframing of the Rogers McKim proposal that posited inerrancy to be a Princeton development from Scottish Common Sense Realism (Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979]). Unfortunately for Rogers and McKim, Pope Leo XIII in his 1893 encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* used the words “incompatible with error,” “without error,” and of “those who maintain that an error is possible” relating to Holy Scripture, citing church fathers and decrees, such as the Council of Trent’s dictation theory (Leo XIII, “The Study of Holy Scripture: Encyclical Letter *Providentissimus Deus*, 18 November 1893 [Rome]; cited in *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII* [New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1903], 296-97). Has Rome in its long history fallen prey to Scottish Common Sense Realism?

¹⁰“We also learn from postmodernism the value of narrative as a means of delivering the message. . . . With all of narrative’s limitations, which we addressed in an earlier chapter, it is still a very useful communication device when properly employed and with proper qualifications. Here we must prepare to vary the style or the form of communication without altering the substance or the content of that communication” (Erickson, *Truth or Consequences*, 317).

¹¹O. Charles Horton, “An Analysis of Selected Published Sermons of Billy Graham” (Th.M. thesis, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1967), 96. Quote taken from my work on Billy Graham (Thomas P. Johnston, *Examining Billy Graham’s Theology of Evangelism* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003], 405).

. . . Relationship is the true heart of the matter. . . . Following Jesus is more than just a handy way to gain admittance into heaven or to avoid hell. It is *at least* as real and dynamic a relationship as marriage is.¹²

Here the relational dynamic of the servant evangelism methodology has trumped the centrality of the substitutionary atonement message; in the place of the substitutionary atonement, Sjogren promoted the reconciliation model of the atonement (see Table 1).

Therefore, what was at once deemed one of the five fundamentals of the faith, in the 1895 Niagara Bible Conference,¹³ was stated as “unnecessarily confusing.” Horace Bushnell expressed the same antipathy to the substitutionary atonement,¹⁴ as did James Denney.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the substitution did seem important to Luke as he penned Philip’s conversation with the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:32-35), as well as to Paul as he wrote of

¹²Steve Sjogren, et al., 149.

¹³“Le terme «fondamentaliste» se rattache directement au Congrès biblique américain qui s’est tenu à Niagara, dans l’État de New York, en 1895. Les exégètes protestants conservateurs y définirent «cinq points de fondamentalisme»: l’inerrance verbale de l’Écriture, la divinité du Christ, sa naissance virginale, la doctrine de l’expiation vicariaire et la résurrection corporelle lors de la seconde venue du Christ. . . . Bien que le fondamentalisme ait raison d’insister sur l’inspiration divine de la Bible, l’inerrance de la Parole de Dieu et les autres vérités bibliques incluses dans les cinq points fondamentaux, sa façon de présenter ces vérités s’enracine dans une idéologie qui n’est pas biblique, quoi qu’en disent ses représentants” (Commission Biblique Pontificale, *L’Interprétation de la Bible dans L’Eglise* [Montreal: Fides, 1994], 48).

¹⁴“For a good being is not simply one who gives bounties and favors, but one who is in the principle of love; and it is the very nature of love, universally, to insert itself into the miseries, and take upon its feeling the burden of others. Love does not consider the ill desert of the subject; he may be a cruel and relentless enemy. It does not consider the expense of toil, and sacrifice, and suffering the intervention may cost. It stops at nothing but the known impossibility of relief, or benefit; asks for nothing as inducement, but the opportunity of success. Love is a principle essentially vicarious in its own nature, identifying the subject with others, so as to suffer their adversaries, their pains, and taking on itself the burden of their evils” (Horace Bushnell in *The Vicarious Sacrifice Grounded in Principles of Universal Obligation* [Hicksville, NY: Regina Press, 1975], 41-42). Interestingly, Bushnell was said to have “devoted his life to constructive mediation between the older tradition and the demands of modernity” (Sydney E. Ahlstrom, “Introduction to the Reprinted Edition,” in *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, by Horace Bushnell, 3d).

¹⁵Denney defined sin as alienation, a relational term, rather than depravity, a moral and forensic term: “The need of reconciliation is given in the fact of alienation or estrangement. Man requires to be put right with God because, as a matter of fact, he is not right with him” (James Denney, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* [New York: George H. Doran, 1918], 187). In keeping with a relational view of sin, Denney posited a relational view of the atonement, the reconciliation model: “Man is somehow wrong with God, and the task of reconciliation is to put him right again. . . . The consciousness of being wrong with God—in other words the sense of sin—emerges in connection with some definite act, for which responsibility attaches to the actor” (ibid., 189). By the way, in this model of the atonement, Adam is not the Federal Head of mankind in terms of sin (i.e. total depravity), but the Natural Head (i.e. degradation, the outside locus of sin).

TABLE 1: COMPARING SUBSTITUTION AND RECONCILIATION MODELS OF THE ATONEMENT¹⁶

Model	Substitutionary (judicial)	Reconciliation (relational)
Sin	Total depravity; Children of Wrath	Degradation; Alienated from God
Cross	Christ, the payment for sin: “Behold the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world,” Jn 1:29	Christ, the reconciler: “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself,” 2 Cor 5:19
Salvation’s primary emphasis	Eternal life	Abundant life
Hell	Eternal conscious punishment	Separation from God

his ministry in Corinth (1 Corinthians 2:2). In fact, Sjogren’s discussion of the atonement is a step away from Walter Rauschenbusch’s assessment of the substitutionary atonement in his *Theology for the Social Gospel*:¹⁷

These traditional theological explanations of the death of Christ have less authority that we are accustomed to suppose. The fundamental terms and ideas—“satisfaction,” “substitution,” “imputation,” “merit”—are post-biblical ideas, and are alien from the spirit of the gospel.¹⁸

Perhaps without being aware of it, some promoters of postmodern evangelism may be approaching the same theological downgrade of which Spurgeon wrote one hundred years ago,¹⁹ which is made evident through downplaying the vertical dimension of sin.²⁰

¹⁶Several of my charts significantly expands on these differences, for example comparing fifteen views of the atonement from Substitutionary to *Christus Victor* (Thomas P Johnston, *Charts for a Theology of Evangelism*, 9th ed. [Liberty, MO: Evangelism Unlimited, 2004]).

¹⁷It must be noted that Rauschenbusch wrote at the end of this movement, ten years after Adolf Harnack’s and Gustav Hermann’s *Essays on the Social Gospel* (Adolf Harnack and Wilhelm Herrman, *Essays on the Social Gospel* [London: Williams & Norgate, 1907]), four years after John Marvin Dean’s *Evangelism and Social Service* (John Marvin Dean, *Evangelism and Social Service* (Philadelphia: Griffith & Rowland, 1913)), and two years after Harry Frederick Ward’s three books on Social Evangelism (Harry Frederick Ward, *Social Evangelism* [New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1915], *Poverty and Wealth, from the Viewpoint of the Kingdom of God* [New York, Methodist Book Concern, 1915], and *The Social Creed of the Churches* [New York: Abingdon, 1915]). For a history of the social gospel movement see Charles Howard Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel Movement in American Protestantism: 1865-1915* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1940).

¹⁸Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for Social Gospel* (New York: Macmillan, 1917; Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 242-43.

Tony Jones followed the anti-modernist pattern of Sjogren, however, expressing a biblical relativism. He was deconstructing modern methods of evangelism:

While Romans 10:8-10 can be cited to support this kind of say-the-sinner's-prayer evangelism, then what do you do with John 6:53-56 in which Jesus states that one must drink his blood to know him? Or with 1 Peter 3:21 which implies that baptism saves? These verses give credence to the Roman Catholic sacramental view of salvation. All this to say, *to become too parochial or narrow-minded in our understanding of salvation is anti-biblical.*²¹

Thus in promoting postmodern evangelism, Jones promoted relativism toward conversionism and antagonized his audience to decisional evangelism.

Because of the overarching importance of culture, we will begin this paper with a discussion of the same. Following this discussion, we will define Postmodernism and Postmodern evangelism. We will then survey aspects of postmodern evangelism, as described by its advocates. After discussing several reasons for choosing Daniel 4, we will compare OT and NT theologies with a focus on evangelism, and then we will note areas of commonality between Daniel 4 and postmodern evangelism. This survey will conclude with a discussion of Daniel 4, postmodern evangelism, and NT evangelism. We begin this inquiry by examining “Christ and Culture”.

CHRIST AND CULTURE

Robert Nash wrote, “A new postmodern world has been born . . . For this reason, a new kind of church must emerge in a postmodern world.”²² He then added urgency, “A

¹⁹“In another paper we propose to trace ‘the down grade’ course among other Protestants [non-Baptist] of this country—a sad piece of business, but one which needs be done” (Charles Spurgeon, “Preface,” *The Down Grade Controversy* (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1998), 11.

²⁰“One caution here: some evangelicals are taking on board the critique that postmodernism makes of evangelical Christianity, and in response are adopting communitarian language” (Mark E. Dever, “Communicating Sin in a Postmodern World,” in *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*, D. A. Carson, ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], 147).

²¹Jones, 122.

²²Robert N Nash, *An 8-Track Church in a CD World: The Church in a Postmodern World* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2001), 118.

new church must be born.”²³ Just as the greatest ecclesial sin for Blaise Pascal was breaking unity with the Roman Catholic Church (thus his antipathy to Calvinists),²⁴ so today the greatest ecclesial sin is cultural irrelevance. In fact, the need for cultural relevance is one of the greatest common denominators in much of postmodern literature. For this reason, we will begin our analysis with a discussion of Christ and culture.

A book that framed the question for a discussion of Christ and culture was H. Richard Niebuhr’s 1951 book, *Christ and Culture*.²⁵ Early in this book, Niebuhr admitted that his discussion of Christ and culture was also that of faith and reason.²⁶ Not an unimportant area of inquiry, the question of faith and reason touches every area of theological inquiry. Niebuhr limited his discussion to Christ and culture, indicating his dependence upon Ernst Troeltsch.²⁷ Whereas Troeltsch used three categories to frame the question of Christ and culture, Niebuhr used five approaches.

The five approaches of Niebuhr are found listed in Table 2. Niebuhr began with the two “extreme” positions, “Christ against Culture” as the legalistic literalist position, and “The Christ of Culture” of the moral influence persons such as Peter Abelard and Albrecht Ritsch. From these two extremes, Niebuhr then posited two less extreme positions, the “Christ and Culture in Paradox”, and “Christ above Culture”. Finally, after moving from the extreme and median positions, then Niebuhr framed his question as the

²³Ibid., 120.

²⁴Blaise Pascal, *Oeuvres Completes*, Louis Lafuma, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 483.

²⁵H Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).

²⁶“When Christianity deals with the question of reason and revelation, what is ultimately in question is the relation of the revelation of Christ to the reason which prevails in culture” (ibid., 11).

²⁷“I am most conscious of my debt to that theologian and historian who was occupied throughout his life with the problem of the church and culture—Ernst Troeltsch. . . . In the analysis of the five main types which I have substituted for Troeltsch’s three, I have received greatest help from Etienne Gilson’s *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, as well as fruitful suggestions from C. J. Jung’s *Psychological Types*” (ibid., xi-xii).

TABLE 2: CHARTING NIEBUHR’S POSITIONS ON *CHRIST AND CULTURE*

Niebuhr’s Five Views	[Framed out of question]	Niebuhr #1	Niebuhr #4	Niebuhr #5	Niebuhr #3	Niebuhr #2
Niebuhr’s Main Theme		“Now that we have recognized the importance of the role played by anticultural Christians in the reform of culture, we must immediately point out that they never achieved these results alone or directly, but only through the mediation of believers who gave a different answer to the fundamental question” (67)				
Ethical Types	[Culture against Christ]	Christ against Culture	Christ and Culture in Paradox	Christ the Redeemer of Culture	The Christ above Culture	The Christ of Culture
Issue	[World’s hatred and crucifixion of Christ; world’s hatred and persecution of Christians]	Question framed as Christian’s legalism and separation from the world	Duality and opposition between Christ and culture, hope of justification beyond history	Conversionist solution: Christ is the converter of man in his culture and society	Synthesis: Christ the fulfillment of cultural aspirations, the restorer of the institutions of true society	Jesus the hero of human culture history, the greatest human achievement
Niebuhr’s Proponents	[Calvin]	Early Christians; Clement; Tertullian; Tolstoy; Mennonites	Marcion; Luther	Augustine; F. D. Maurice	Thomas Aquinas	Abelard, Ritschl
Niebuhr’s Analysis		“Half-baked and muddle-headed men abound in the anticultural movement as well as elsewhere; doubtless hypocrisy flourishes here too” (65) “Doubtless the individualistic ideal of soul-regeneration is not an adequate key to the attitude of radical Christians; but neither is the hope of social reform” (67)	“Both Paul and Luther have been characterized as cultural conservatives. Much can be said for the ultimate effect of their work in promoting cultural reform; yet it seems to be true that they were deeply concerned to bring change into only one of the great cultural institutions...—the religious” (187-88). “It is at this point that the conversionist <i>motif</i> , otherwise similar to the dualists, emerges in distinction to it” (189)	“The conversion of mankind from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness was for Maurice the universal and present divine possibility. It was universal in the sense that it included all men; since all were members of the kingdom of Christ by their creation in the Word, by the actual spiritual constitution under which they lived” (225) “The time of the conflict is now. The time of Christ’s victory is now” (228)	“Thomas also answers the question about Christ and culture with a ‘both/and’; yet his Christ is far above culture, and he does not try to bridge the gulf that lies between them. . . . With the radical Christians, he has rejected the secular world. But he is a monk in the church which has become the guardian of culture, the fosterer of learning, the judge of the nations, the protector of the family, the governor of social religion” (129)	“Popular theology condenses the whole of Christian thought into the formula: The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man” (101) “How often the Fundamentalist attack on so-called liberalism—by which cultural Christianity is meant—is itself an expression of cultural loyalty, a number of Fundamentalist interests indicate” (102).

middle position, “Christ the Redeemer of Culture”, with Augustine its major proponent.²⁸

²⁸This median position follows Gustav Aulén’s *Christus Victor* theory of the atonement, that was supposed to be a median position between objective (substitutionary) and subjective (moral-influence). Herbert, the translator of Aulén’s work wrote in the preface: “In our day the great hope of Reunion has come; but the Reunion movement is confronted by the immense difficulty of reconciling the Catholic and the Protestant conceptions of faith and order. But Dr. Aulén’s interpretation of the history of the idea of the atonement throws real light on the situation. . . . Here, then, is a true hope of Reunion; not in the victory of ‘Catholic’ over ‘Protestant,’ or of ‘Protestant’ over ‘Catholic,’ but the return of both to the rock whence they were hewn” (A. G. Herbert, “Translator’s Preface,” in Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor*, xxxvi). Note

While Niebuhr's five views are interesting and engaging, they completely omit the most obvious view, "Culture against Christ." A cursory view of the NT shows us that Christ did not put culture on the cross, but visa versa. Paul was not persecuting culture at Lystra or Philippi, but rather the Lystrians stoned Paul and left him for dead, and the Philippians arrested Paul and Silas, beat them with rods and imprisoned them. It is sad that an academician of the caliber of Niebuhr could ignore the NT record of persecution and turn the tables on "Culture against Christ." Perhaps Niebuhr's question-framing emanated from his *a priori* view that the purpose for the Christian life was to transform culture, as well as his antipathy to Evangelicalism.²⁹ This goal of transforming culture has often been mistaken for the mission of the church.³⁰ Niebuhr's question-framing is not without major theological consequences. In fact, Niebuhr placed the onus of responsibility of the "Culture against Christ" attitude of the world on the literalistic, Marcionite, separatistic, individualistic, and conservative Christian (LMSIC Christian). If the LMSIC Christian really wants to impact culture (his view of Christianity's primary purpose), then he must cease from being so separatistic and "anticultural", and work to

that the *Christus Victor* position is the view of the atonement with which McLaren is comfortable: "The resurrection of Jesus, then, puts human life in a new eternal context, and the new context calls for a whole new way of living. This view, called the 'Christus Victor' theory of the atonement by theologians, is not exclusively Catholic" (Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004], 54).

²⁹Niebuhr, 67.

³⁰"I read in a missionary paper a little while ago that the foreign mission that was to accomplish results of permanent value must aim at the total reorganization of the whole social fabric. *This is a mischievous doctrine.* We learn nothing from human history, from the experience of the Christian Church, from the example of our Lord and His apostles to justify it. They did not aim directly at such an end. They were content to aim at implanting the life of Christ *in* the hearts of men, and were willing to leave the consequences to the care of God. It is a dangerous thing to charge ourselves openly before the world with the aim of reorganizing States and reconstructing society. How long could the missions live, in the Turkish Empire or the Native States of India, that openly proclaimed their aim to be the political reformation of the lands to which they went? It is misleading, also, as Dr. Behrends once declared, to confuse the ultimate issues with the immediate aims; and *it is not only misleading, it is fatal.* Some things can only be secured by those who do not seek them. Missions are powerful to transform the face of society, because they ignore the face of society and deal with it at its heart. *They yield such powerful political and social results because they do not concern themselves with them*" (Robert E. Speer, "The Supreme and Determining Aim," in *Ecumenical Missionary Conference: New York, 1900* [New York: American Tract Society, 1900], 74-75; emphasis mine).

influence culture. Interestingly, Wolfhart Pannenberg noted that a focus on cultural change leads to irrelevance.³¹ With Niebuhr's question-framing in mind, Christians and churches are taught to adapt to culture in order to have an impact on the culture.³²

Before attempting to engage postmodern culture, it is prerequisite to understand why and how culture needs to be engaged. What is the goal of engaging culture? Is it to transform culture? Is it to save individuals out of culture? Is it to relate to persons in culture so as to communicate the Gospel to them in a way that they will understand it and become convinced of it? This then brings us to the power unto salvation: is our relevance to culture the power of God unto salvation for those who believe (cf. Rom 1:16)? We will address some of these questions as we note approaches to engaging postmodern culture. The bottom line question is this: what place does knowledge of culture have in the *ordo salutis*? According to theologians, none.³³ According to practitioners, significantly. It seems to me that there is room for evangelism which is 100% biblical and 100% cultural model. This possibility was not discussed by Niebuhr.

Before introducing postmodern evangelism, let's seek to understand the "postmodern" mindset. Postmodernism is more than a lack of absolutes, it is a redefinition of reality as set against "modernism."

³¹"It has frequently been noted that the mainline and accommodating churches are in decline, while conservative churches continue to grow. Evangelicals and fundamentalists are not embarrassed to challenge the prevailing patterns of thought and behavior associated with secularity. This growth, however, does not come without paying a price. That price includes a loss of openness to the human situation in all of its maddening variety, and a quenching of the unprejudiced search for truth. *That said, the irony is that those churches that are dismissed as irrelevant by more "sophisticated" Christians often turn out to be most relevant to our secular societies*" (Wolfhart Pannenberg, "The Present and Future Church," *First Things*, November 1991, 48-51 [emphasis mine]).

³²Bob Briner's *Roaring Lambs* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993) is an example of Niebuhr's question-framing, in that Briner chastises Christians for not being in high profile cultural professions, when often Christian's are purposefully kept out of such positions of prominence.

³³Interestingly, in his description of various views of the *ordo salutis*, Demarest never addressed culture (Bruce Demarest, "The Order of Salvation," *The Cross and Salvation* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997], 36-44+). The inclusion of culture into the mix of salvation is the very reason that it becomes the trump card to all of the Bible, faith, and theology if one is not careful.

DEFINING POSTMODERN

Stanley Grenz explains that philosophical postmodernism using the example of Derrida and Foucault:

... The French [Jewish and Tunisian] Jacques Derrida calls for the abandonment of both ‘onto-theology’ (the attempt to set forth ontological descriptions of reality) and the ‘metaphysics of presence’ (the idea that something transcendent is present in reality). Because nothing transcendent inheres in reality, he argues, all that emerges in the knowing process is the perspective of the self who interprets reality.³⁴

Grenz admits that “modernity has been under attack at least since Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900).” Yet his definition of postmodernism sounds strangely like a reworking of Immanuel Kant’s skepticism. Grenz, however, related Kant with modern reasoning.³⁵

In defining postmodernism, one of the foci is the deconstruction of Derrida. Derrida critiqued Heidegger for having an ontological starting point. Odell-Scott wrote that Derrida disagreed with Heidegger and posited deconstruction as an alternative:

For Derrida, is not the means by which to unearth the origins from which thinking begins or to which thinking could return. Instead, Derrida judges that deconstruction is an event provisionally described as reading, writing, and thinking that undoes, decomposes, unsettles the established hierarchies of Western thought.³⁶

In this framework, deconstruction approaches the Christian metanarrative with several subjectivities: the community originating the narrative and the community interpreting the narrative. As there is no absolute or origin upon which to base, writings such as the Bible are influenced by “social, linguistic, political, and economic factors.”³⁷ In this context, no text has absolute authority. All texts are a part of their historical *milieu*. Is this not similar to historical criticism of the Bible?

³⁴Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer in Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 6.

³⁵“His philosophy sets forth the self coming to know—and to harness—the universal” (Ibid., 80).

³⁶David W. Odell-Scott, “Deconstruction” in *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation*, A. K. M. Adam, ed. (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000), 55-56.

³⁷Ibid., 57.

Erickson's approach to postmodernism emphasized the last one thousand years as setting the stage for postmodernism. He defined postmodern in three ways: Jean-Francois Lyotard's "crisis of narratives" (hermeneutical deconstruction),³⁸ Alasdair MacIntyre's "genealogist approach" (versus the encyclopaedist approach of modernism),³⁹ and Nancey Murphy's and James W. McClendon Jr.'s "three contexts" (art and architecture, deconstructionist literary criticism, and American theology).⁴⁰ These three approaches to defining postmodern may be seen as spin-offs of Derrida's deconstruction of Heidegger. Therefore, generally speaking, postmodernism is defined as an antithetical reaction to the presupposed existence of an absolute [Christian] metanarrative.

Before being engulfed in this culture of skepticism, we will address the "newness" of postmodernism. While certain postmodern ideas seem to be new, the terms "old" and "new" may not always have the weight often ascribed to them.

FOUR CYCLICAL PATTERNS

Solomon could not have written it more clearly—"There is nothing new under the sun"! Here is the context of this statement:

That which has been is that which will be, And that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one might say, "See this, it is new"? Already it has existed for ages Which were before us. There is no remembrance of earlier things; And also of the later things which will occur, There will be for them no remembrance Among those who will come later *still*. I, the Preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. *It* is a grievous task *which* God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with.⁴¹

When approached at face value, Solomon wrote that there would was a cyclical approach to everything "that has been done" under the sun. It behooves us then to consider the

³⁸Erickson, 15-16.

³⁹Ibid., 24-25.

⁴⁰Ibid., 27.

⁴¹Ecclesiastes 1:9-13 (*New American Standard Bible*, Updated Edition, 1995).

circular nature of postmodern thought. In analyzing various approaches to postmodernism, four areas of circularity appear: philosophical cycles, sociological cycles, developmental cycles, and ecclesiological cycles.

First, is not the postmodern deconstruction of Derrida a reinterpretation of the skepticism of Pyrrhonic logic (radical skepticism) which coalesces in every generation under some “new” form of logic? Pierre Bayle explained that the essence of Pyrrhonic logic was “the incomprehensibility of all things”:

Ses sentimens [Pyrrhon] ne diferoient guere des opinions d’Arcesials; car il s’en faloit bien peu qu’aussi bien que lui n’enseignât l’incomprehensibilité de toutes choses. Il trouvoit par tout & des raisons d’affirmer, & des raisons de nier : & c’est pour cela qu’il retenoit son consentement après avoir bien examiné le pour & le contre, & qu’il reduisoit tous ses arrest à un *non liquet, soit pour amplement enquis*. Il cherchoit donc toute sa vie la verité, mais il ne se menageoit toûjours des ressources pour ne tomber pas d’accord qu’il l’eût trouvée.⁴²

It would seem that the deism and cynicism of Voltaire was not new to French culture.⁴³

The transcendentalism of Kant seems to fall in the same vein.⁴⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre’s *La Nausée* led to the development of existentialist philosophy in France approximately one generation prior to postmodern thought. Sartre with his intense antipathy to existence

⁴²Pierre Bayle, “Pyrrhon,” in *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*, 3rd ed. (Rotterdam: 1715), 3:265-66. Bayle added, “C’est assurer nettement que selon Pyrrhon la nature des choses étoit incomprehensible : or c’étoit le dogme d’Arcesilas. Néanmoins j’ai mieux aimé laisser entre eux quelque difference, parce que, l’esprit des Pyrrhoniens ne suppose pas formellement l’incomprehensibilité. On les a nommez Sceptiques, Zetétiques, Ephectiques, Aporetiques, c’est-à-dire *examineur, inquisiteurs, suspendans, doutans*” (ibid., 3:266). In a side note Bayle explained the theological ramifications of his skepticism: “several persons were shocked to see the mystery of the Trinity and that of the incarnation put in line with the dogma of the real presence and that of Transubstantiation” (ibid., 3:267. Translation mine).

⁴³“As René Pomeau rightly notes, the anti-Christian revolt of Voltaire the deist is an anti-Jansenist rebellion in its first phase, against belief in a vigorously cruel God and a life of ascetic habits. . . . There is no reason to doubt the anonymous denunciator of Voltaire, who when the latter had been conducted to the Bastille once again in 1726, expressed the wish that he might have been imprisoned there long before, as he had been preaching deism openly for more than a decade, declaring himself an enemy of Christ and maintaining that the Old Testament was full of myths (Haydn Mason, *Voltaire* [Baltimore: Johns-Hopkins, 1981], 3-4).

⁴⁴“It will be remembered that, according to Kant, pure reason, when it tries to extend the application of such categories as cause and effect beyond experience, invariably becomes involved in insoluble contradictions.” (Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1956), 74).

wrote, “C’est de l’existence que j’ai peur.”⁴⁵ Later Sartre wrote of the kind of book his protagonist character would write, “Une histoire, par exemple, comme il ne peut arriver, une aventure. Il faudra qu’elle soit belle et dure comme de l’acier et qu’elle fasse honte au gens de leur existence.”⁴⁶ The entirety of human history, thought, and life is called into question by Sartre. Does not this parallel Derrida’s deconstruction of philosophical thought? In fact, there seems to be a constant flow in human philosophy away from submission to the law of God written on the heart of man (cf. Rom 2:14-15). In this light, human philosophy is the history of man’s constant fight against the knowledge of God (cf. Psa 2:1-3; 2 Cor 10:5). There is a cyclical nature to knowledge, and it would seem that postmodernism is another turn in this cycle of human philosophy.

Second, in reading about the newness of the postmodern mindset, and in using culture as grounds for attacking an evangelist, one is reminded of antagonists to the early Billy Graham. Several theologians considered Graham’s message to be irrelevant to cultural issues. For example, Reinhold Niebuhr, a religious sociologist, wrote of Graham’s irrelevance to the needs of “atomic man”:

There are no perfectionistic solutions for the problems of an atomic age—or indeed of any age in which men have accepted responsibility for the justice and stability of their communities and civilizations. . . .⁴⁷

And again:

There is more hope that Graham himself will see the weaknesses of a traditional evangelical perfectionism in an atomic age than his clerical and lay sponsors, with their enthusiasm for any kind of revival, will see it.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Sartre’s *La Nausée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), 223.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 247.

⁴⁷Reinhold Niebuhr, “Literalism, Individualism and Billy Graham,” *Christian Century*, 23 May 1956.

⁴⁸Reinhold Niebuhr, “Proposal to Billy Graham,” *Christian Century*, 9 August 1956, 922.

By the time of “revolutionary man” in the late 1960s Graham’s message had moderated a bit,⁴⁹ and his book, *The Jesus Generation*, focused on reaching that generation.⁵⁰

Sociologists contribute to a cyclical approach to man, as they continuously uncover a new man, and with it a new way of thinking: hence “industrial man,” “atomic man,” “revolutionary man,” “cosmic man,” “Gen X,” and now “Postmodern man.” Every five to ten years another term is used to describe the new generation. Perhaps these definitions are the attempts of sociologists to define “Patterns of Culture.”⁵¹ And with each sociological cycle, there is posited the need for a “new” approach to the church and its mission (ecclesiology) and evangelism (the proclamation of the Gospel). An old French saying deconstructs the appearance of newness: *Plus ça change, plus c’est Pareille* (the more it changes, the more it stays the same).⁵²

Third, some aspects of postmodernism, especially as applied to the youth culture, may be nothing more than adolescent *angst*, as identified and labeled by those in the modern outlook of adulthood. If this is the case, it further points to my cyclical hypothesis. For example, Erik Erikson posited that the adolescent phase was one of “Identity versus Role Confusion.”⁵³ He explained that “adolescent have to refight many

⁴⁹See Thomas P. Johnston, *Examining Billy Graham’s Theology of Evangelism*, Chapter 4, “Message,” 173-308 and Chapter 6, “Conclusion,” 403-418.

⁵⁰Billy Graham, *The Jesus Generation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971; Minneapolis: World Wide, 1971).

⁵¹“In this aspect, it is essential that a cultural system be a mode of *organizing* the components of a system of action with reference to the axis of the higher-order components” (Talcott Parsons, “Introduction,” *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory*, edited by Talcott Parsons, Edward Shils, Kasper D. Naegle, and Jesse R. Pitts [New York: The Free Press, 1961], 980).

⁵²Isn’t it fascinating that this quest for something new in Athens allowed the Apostle Paul to share the Gospel with them: “Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new” (Acts 17:21).

⁵³Erik Erikson, “Eight Stages of Man (1963),” in *A Reader in Christian Education: Foundations and Basic Perspectives*, Eugene S. Gibbs, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 26.

of the battles of earlier years,” again pointing to a cycle in the gaining of truth.⁵⁴

Lawrence Kohlberg, focusing on moral development, felt that many teens move from the “preconventional” stage, through the “conventional stage,” and into the “postconventional stage” of adulthood by “principled thinking.” The crisis of every generation working through the “conventional stage” and into the “principled thinking” stage seems to be a focus in postmodernism. The “principled thinking” stage is when an individual develops or accepts his own metanarrative:

Contrary to earlier assumptions it appears that many adolescents (and adults) may not advance beyond this level—although research results are conflicting. Some, however, do advance to what Lawrence Kohlberg calls postconventional or principled thinking. At this level, particular societal arrangements are seen as deriving from a broader moral perspective, which the rational, moral individual has to develop for herself or himself; Kohlberg calls it a “prior to society” perspective.⁵⁵

Interestingly, the adolescent *angst* seems to be defined as an adolescent accepting the metanarrative of his parents or his peers or of developing his own [individualistic] metanarrative.⁵⁶ When the teen rejects the “modern” outlook of his parents, he replaces it with an anti-modern approach to life. Could this reaction be considered irrational and postmodern? The timeframe, in which this takes place for each generation [community], as well as outward pressures such as war or depression, provides each generation with its own cultural DNA. Hence, developmental psychology provides another cyclical pattern for anti-modern thought.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵A Colby, L. Kohlberg, L. Gibbs, and M. Lieberman, *A Longitudinal Study of Moral Development* (Cambridge: Center for Moral Education, 1980), 81; from John Janeway Conger and Anne Petersen, *Adolescence and Youth Psychological Development in a Changing World*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 559.

⁵⁶“The case of adolescence is of particular interest, because it is in the limelight of our civilization and because we have plentiful information from other cultures. . . . It is in our tradition a physiological state as definitely characterized by domestic explosions and rebellion as typhoid is marked by fever. There is no question as to the facts. They are common in America. The question is rather of their inevitability” (Ruth Benedict, “On the Patterns of Culture,” in *Theories of Society*, 1048).

A fourth cyclical pattern is that of sociology cycle of a group, church, or denomination. Each of us is caught in this sociological pattern, and it is reflected in our theology, our church affiliation, and our approach to evangelism. David Moberg explained the sociological phases of church life in his *The Church as a Social Institution*. He explained five phases that all churches go through or will go through: incipient, formalizing, maximum efficiency, institutional, and disintegration.⁵⁷ Each of these phases has a unique approach to ecclesiology, culture, evangelism, and theology. As theologians and practitioners advance through the sociological phases, their theology adapts to the cultural pressures of the phase. With declension, the church or social group then looks back on the “good old days.”⁵⁸ It is the contention of this author, that some of those who write on postmodern evangelism no longer have the incipient theology of Evangelicalism as characterized by the five fundamentals of the 1895 Niagara Bible Conference,⁵⁹ but have moved away from the substitutionary atonement⁶⁰ and inerrancy.⁶¹

SPIRITUAL CONFLICT AGAINST THE WRITTEN LAW OF GOD

Philosophies are not morally neutral. They are based either on the revelation of God in nature and/or in the Bible, or they are fighting that revelation of God in nature and/or in the Bible. It is a matter of framing the question. If God is framed out of the

⁵⁷David Moberg, “The Life Cycle of the Church,” in *The Church as a Social Institution*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 118-24.

⁵⁸“Do not say, ‘Why is it that the former days were better than these?’ For it is not from wisdom that you ask about this” (Eccl 7:10).

⁵⁹Commission biblique pontificale, *L’interprétation de la Bible dans l’Église*, 48.

⁶⁰Therefore both Sjogren and McLaren disaffirm the substitutionary model as adequate (Sjogren, 149; McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 49). McLaren prefers the “Christus Victor theory of the atonement” because “it celebrates that Jesus is risen and alive, intersecting with our lives on earth, and waiting for us beyond this life” (McLaren, 54).

⁶¹“I try to explain that the problem isn’t the Bible, but our modern assumptions about the Bible and our modern interpretive approaches to it. I try to explain that there is a better way to understand and apply the Bible, a largely new and unexplored way that can be summarized like this: *We need to reclaim the Bible as narrative*” (McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 166).

question for the deistic mind, how can his worldview are utilized as a foundation upon which to build the Gospel? The same is true of any philosophy or world religion not based on the Bible. It seems erroneous to build an ecclesiology to reach persons of a given worldview by overlooking the teaching of the book which gives us our only divine insight. The only way around that is to give a level of divinity to the field of sociology, which some have done!⁶²

In actuality, contra Niebuhr, the world is antagonistic to the things of God. The spiritual battle is made clear in numerous texts (e.g. Psa 2:1-3; 2 Cor 10:3-5; Eph 6:10-20). Because the law of God is written on the hearts of men (Rom 2:14-15), men rebel against that law by trying to negate it (cf. Rom 3:19-20; 2 Cor 10:5). Nevertheless, the law of God stands and will not be altered!

Now, let's look at some changes that are recommended by many contemporary authors regarding how best to reach this current generation. By the way, the titles for this current generation are many: Gen-X, postmodern, post-Christian, and seekers.

EVANGELIZING POSTMODERNS

Because of the amount of material and the variety of opinion as to how best to reach postmoderns, I have placed salient aspect to reaching postmoderns in chart format. This chart will then be compared to similar charts put forth by McRaney in 2003 and

⁶²“Natural church development is made up of principles God has created and revealed to us. This theme is woven through this whole book. It does not mean, however, that this book claims ‘divine authorship.’ That claim would be absurd. No, the *terminology* we have chosen to describe these principles is less than perfect. The *research techniques* we used to empirically identify the principles are flawed—like any scientific method. And the *materials* we have developed can be improved. But all of this does not change one basic fact: the *principles* that we have gropingly tried to search out and blunderingly tried to communicate find their source in God” (Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: ChurchSmart, 1998), 126-27).

TABLE 3: COMPARING POSTMODERN AND MODERN METHODS OF EVANGELISM

	“Postmodern”	Vs.	“Modern”
Preparation	Worldview ⁶³	Vs.	General revelation
	Service ⁶⁴	Vs.	Irrelevant/Inauthentic
	Relationship ⁶⁵	Vs.	Stranger-to-stranger
	Culturally Relevant ⁶⁶	Vs.	Eternal orientation
	Prolonged time ⁶⁷	Vs.	Instantaneous
Method	Incarnational ⁶⁸	Vs.	Proclamational
	Dialogue ⁶⁹	Vs.	Us/them mentality
	Narrative ⁷⁰	Vs.	Outline
	Community ⁷¹	Vs.	Individual
	Worship ⁷²	Vs.	Abstract
Message	Storying ⁷³	Vs.	Biblical propositional statements
	Here and Now ⁷⁴	Vs.	Eternal Life
	Relational ⁷⁵	Vs.	Judicial
	Love (emotional) ⁷⁶	Vs.	Gospel
Decision	Converted to community ⁷⁷	Vs.	Converted to Christ
	Converted to the Christ of community ⁷⁸	Vs.	Converted to the Christ of the cross
Duration	Process ⁷⁹	Vs.	Punctiliar

⁶³Mark Mittelberg, *Building a Contagious Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 43.

⁶⁴Ardith Fernando, “The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ,” in *Telling the Truth*, 125-26; Steve Sjogren, et al., *Irresistible Evangelism*, 90.

⁶⁵Ardith Fernando, “The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ,” in *Telling the Truth*, 124; Jones, 122; and McLaren, 55, 58, 61, 67, 135-137.

⁶⁶“Where does one go to find common ground? I refer to the moral argument, which argues for God from morality” (Ravi Zacharias, “The Touch of Truth,” in *Telling the Truth*, 33, 34).

⁶⁷Mittelberg, 59. Webber, 67.

⁶⁸“We need to incarnate the truth” Erickson, *Truth or Consequences*, 315.

⁶⁹Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 99; Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 78; Nash, 68-69; Sjogren, 139.

⁷⁰Kevin Graham Ford, *Jesus for a New Generation* (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 218-39; and McLaren, *More Ready than You Realize*, 135.

⁷¹Erickson, 289-305; Jones, 103-09; Jimmy Long, “Generating Hope: A Strategy for Reaching the Postmodern Generation” in *Telling the Truth*, 334; Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, 112-18; Webber, 61-63.

⁷²Fernando, 136; Long, “Generating Hope,” 334; Nash, 69-72; Sweet, 43-45, 72-73.

⁷³Bauckham, 90-98; Erickson, 317-19; Leighton Ford, *The Power of Story: Recovering the Oldest, Most Natural Way to Reach People for Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 14, 50, 52; Jones, 27; McLaren, 135; Alvin Reid, *Radically Unchurched* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 128-41; Sweet, 123-25.

⁷⁴Grenz, 163-65; Nash, 58-63.

⁷⁵Sjogren, 149.

⁷⁶Nash, 72, 119; Sweet, 31.

⁷⁷Long, 334; Webber, 55-69.

⁷⁸Long, 334.

⁷⁹McLaren, 137-40; Webber, 13.

Delos Miles in 1981. The reason for comparing it to a 1981 chart is to show the similarities between the methods posited 23 years ago with those being encouraged today. This similarity should affirm my cyclical discussion above.

Table 3, “Comparing Postmodern and Modern Methods of Evangelism,” provides five categories in reaching postmoderns: Preparation, Method, Message, Decision, and Duration. The Modern column considers stated or unstated negations of the postmodern column. Perhaps the most accepted approach to postmodern evangelism is narrative. In fact, the narrative approach has many angles and facets. Historically, Gabriel Fackre posited the need for the use of story for evangelism in 1973⁸⁰ and for theology in 1978.⁸¹ Leighton Ford also argued for storying in 1977,⁸² and then again in 1994.⁸³ The Pontifical Commission on Biblical Interpretation discussed the “Analyse narrative” (narrative analysis), giving it a positive evaluation as a method of biblical interpretation.⁸⁴ Some church historians are reinterpreting church history as narrative.⁸⁵ Similarly, theologians

⁸⁰“The Decade [1970s] is full of new challenges. One of them is to learn a new love—to love to *do and tell the story*” (from Gabriel Fackre, *Do and Tell: Engagement Evangelism in the '70s* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973], 15). “If we do, it will be a great time to be alive and in mission. For it will mean that the church-centered and the world-centered will have moved beyond their present impasse to find each other at the rendezvous point out ahead—a place where they have learned together to *tell* and *celebrate the Tale*, and to *do and be it*” (ibid., 29).

⁸¹Gabriel Fackre, *The Christian Story: A Narrative Interpretation of Basic Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978, 984, 1996).

⁸²“God knew what He was doing when He told the most significant things about Himself, not in proverbs, nor in sonnets, nor in chronological lists, nor in theological propositions, but in a story” (David Hubbard, unpublished paper, in Leighton Ford, *Good News Is for Sharing: A Guide to Making Friends for God* [Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1977], 130).

⁸³“After considerable study, prayer, and contemplation, I have come to the conclusion that narrative evangelism is the new paradigm for evangelism in the postmodern age. It is simple. It is biblical. It is practical. And it is endlessly adaptable” (Leighton Ford, *The Power of Story: Recovering the Oldest, Most Natural Way to Reach People for Christ* [Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994], 52).

⁸⁴“Pour l’exégèse de la Bible, l’analyse narrative présente une utilité évidente, car elle correspond à la nature narrative d’un très grand nombre de textes bibliques.” (Commission biblique pontificale, *L’interprétation de la Bible dans l’Église* [Montreal: Fides, 1994], 29).

⁸⁵“Samuel Byrskog employs models from the interdisciplinary field of oral history as presented by Paul Thompson, coupled with insights from cultural anthropology, in order to examine the interaction between the present and past as the gospel tradition evolved” (Publisher Review for Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History – History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Oral History* [Boston: Brill, 2002]).

are reinterpreting theology along the lines of narrative.⁸⁶ Paradoxically, while the narrative methodology is promoted as the primary method of communication with postmoderns, it brings them a competing Christian story to add to the mix of metanarratives. Also, few promoters of storying explain that Christ told parables *to hide the truth*, not to reveal it (cf. Matt 13:10-17; Mark 4:11-12; Luke 8:9-10). These facts should provide some consternation to the deluge of emphasis on the narrative.

However, some of the more troubling details are not noted in Table 3. These include the reappraisal of the cross under the guise of postmodernism by Richard Bauckham. He reinterpreted the cross in a liberation theology sense, as a metaphor of God's concern for the poor and downtrodden:

The claim that God is to be encountered and salvation found in a crucified man—a man stripped of all status and honour, dehumanized, the lowest of the low—is the offense of the cross. This is the real scandal of particularity—not just that God's universal purpose pivots on one particular human being, but much worse, that God's universal purpose pivots on *this* particular human being the crucified one. . . .

So God's way to his universal kingdom is through identification with the least.⁸⁷

He continued on this theme later in his text on “witness in a postmodern world”:

Here, in the crucified Christ, is God's self-identification as one human being identified with all human beings, the particular which is also universally salvific, and that self-identification is not with humanity in its self-aggrandizement, but with humanity in its degradation, humanity victimized by the will to power.⁸⁸

⁸⁶“The Master Christian narrative is no more: every narrative of control confronts us with the uncontrollable. The unassailable other forces us time and again to the limits of every narrative of domination” (Lieven Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition: An Essay on Christian Faith in a Postmodern Context*, “Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs,” 30 [Louvain: Peeters, 2003], 149. Of world religions, Boeve wrote: “The Christian tradition is of extreme importance because it constitutes *our narrative about God and humanity*. At the same time, however, the importance of the tradition we have inherited should not be absolutised. We speak of the *relative* importance of tradition because it constitutes *our narrative about God and humanity*. It relates to our endeavor—necessary particular and contextual—to express the Inexpressible” (ibid., 177).

⁸⁷Bauckham, 52.

⁸⁸Bauckham, 102.

TABLE 4: MCRANEY’S “EVANGELISTIC
COMPARISON OF TWO CULTURES”⁸⁹

#	Modernity	Postmodernity
1	Heaven or hell	Significance, meaning, purpose
2	The Bible	Life issues
3	Our agenda	Their situation
4	Universal truths (death, taxes)	Personal examples
5	“Nice to meet you”	“Because we are friends, I . . .”
6	Confrontational	Relational
7	Church or religious topics/experiences	Spiritual topics and experiences
8	“How do you stand with God?”	“Describe your spiritual journey”
9	Jesus	God
10	Giving information	Asking inquiring questions
11	Having the right words	Living the right way
12	John 3:16; Romans 3:23	Genesis 1:1; Jeremiah 28:11 [sic]
13	Gospel facts	Gospel’s impact and testimony

Bauckham’s treatment of the cross reminds this author of the writings of Rauschenbusch that sounded a similar approach, as mentioned above. This reminds the reader that postmodernism has been used as a guise to promote a variety of theological views.

Will McRaney included a helpful table in his *The Art of Personal Evangelism*, which I have included as Table 4. McRaney’s thirteen points are strikingly similar to those of Table 3. While McRaney’s book has many helpful ideas,⁹⁰ this Table portrays some of the danger in allowing culture to frame the question:

- The “Relational” versus the “Confrontational” in lines 6 and 11 are to be expected, as we live after the 1979-1981 friendship/lifestyle evangelism deluge (which is noted in Chart 4)
- “God” as the message rather than “Jesus” of line 9 is disconcerting, especially in light of Luke 24:46-47; Acts 4:12; Rom 1:16-17; 1 Cor 1:17-2:2; 15:1-5

⁸⁹Will McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 127-28.

⁹⁰For example his section called “General Tips” is excellent (ibid., 175-76).

- Line 1, 2, 4, 12, and 13 show a *penchant* for the “here and now” Reconciliation Model of the atonement rather than the “eternal life” Substitutionary Model of the atonement historically considered Evangelical⁹¹
- Line 10 sounds Socratic.

It is clear that the methodology change of postmodern evangelism has influenced not only the method of evangelism, but also the message of the Gospel.

Alvin Reid’s *Radically Unchurched*, however, has addressed the problem of changing methodology and message in his chapter “Add without Subtracting.”⁹² In this excellent chapter, Reid affirms the need to lay a sound doctrinal foundation, while relating to culture. His five guiding principles for reaching the radically unchurched are excellent: (1) Begin with the Gospel, not the needs of the radically unchurched; (2) Remain intentional in personal evangelism; (3) Give specific attention to reaching the younger generation of radically unchurched people; (4) Focus on divine authority, not human ingenuity; and (5) Raise the bar for Christian living.⁹³ In addition to this helpful caution, Reid also mentioned the danger of an overemphasis on the narrative method.⁹⁴

Now that postmodern approaches to evangelism have been noted, let’s compare these with Delos Miles’ 1981 chart on methods of evangelism. Table 5 shows Miles’ complete chart, including his footnotes. The categories are clear from the chart, and the dates are clear from the footnotes. Notice that both tables reflect the same approach to

⁹¹See my discussion of the history of the atonement, particularly in the late 19th Century in my paper, “Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life* (2003) and Erasmus’ *Enchiridion* (1503): Comparing Approaches to Apologetic Evangelism” to be published this fall (2004) in the *Trinity Journal*.

⁹²Reid, 109-27.

⁹³Ibid., 125-27.

⁹⁴“Some have gone too far with narrative evangelism, elevating stories of people above *the* story of the gospel. We can, however, integrate the narrative to illustrate and explain the Gospel” (ibid., 138).

TABLE 5: DELOS MILES’ “PERSONAL EVANGELISM” CHART⁹⁵

(Intentionality)		
<i>Deductive</i>	Vs	<i>Inductive</i>
Receptivity (high)	Vs.	Receptivity (low)
Monological (telling)	Vs.	Dialogical (listening)
Short-term Gains	Vs.	Long Term Gains
Canned	Vs.	Spontaneous
Instant	Vs.	Incarnational
Religious Persons	Vs.	Secular Persons
Proclamational	Vs.	Affirmation (Petersen) ⁹⁶
Propositional	Vs.	Point-of-Need (Hunter) ⁹⁷
Stereotyped	Vs.	Service (Armstrong) ⁹⁸
Contact	Vs.	Conversational (Pippert) ⁹⁹
Functional	Vs.	Friendship (McPhee) ¹⁰⁰
Rational	Vs.	Relational (McDill) ¹⁰¹
Traditional	Vs.	Target-Group (Neighbour) ¹⁰²
Individual	Vs.	Household (Green, <i>et al</i>) ¹⁰³
Lips	Vs.	Life-style (Aldrich) ¹⁰⁴

⁹⁵From Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 254. The footnotes in the chart are from Miles’ chart.

⁹⁶Jim Petersen, *Evangelism as a Lifestyle* (Colorado Springs, NavPress, 1980). [Five years later Petersen wrote *Evangelism for Our Generation* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1985). The two books were combined to form *Living Proof* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1989).]

⁹⁷George G. Hunter, III, *The Contagious Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 35-39. These are not Hunter’s actual terms. He prefers the terms *deductive* and *inductive*, but his new inductive-grace model and inductive-mission model boils down to a point-of-need approach.

⁹⁸Richard Stoll Armstrong, *Service Evangelism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), especially Chapter 4. Armstrong bases his service evangelism on the model of Jesus Christ, the Suffering Servant. His is also very much a point-of-need approach.

⁹⁹Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 127-151, 173f.

¹⁰⁰Arthur G. McPhee, *Friendship Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).

¹⁰¹Wayne McDill, *Making Friends for Christ* (Nashville: Broadman, 1979). McDill prefers the term *relational evangelism*.

¹⁰²Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr., and Cal Thomas, *Target-Group Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1975).

¹⁰³Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 207-229. Green uses the term *household evangelism*. See also: Thomas O. Wolf, “Oikos Evangelism: Key to the Future,” Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr., compiler, *Future Church* (Nashville: Broadman, 1980), 153-176; Ron Johnson, Joseph W. Hinkle, and Charles M. Lowry, *Oikos: A Practical Approach to Family Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1982).

¹⁰⁴Joseph C. Aldrich, *Life-Style Evangelism* (Portland: Multnomah, 1981); See also W. Oscar Thompson, Jr., *Concentric Circles of Concern* (Nashville: Broadman, 1981); C. B. Hogue, *Love Leaves No Choice* (Waco, TX: Word, 1976).

evangelism.¹⁰⁵ I think that the reader will agree that Solomon's dictum seems appropriate here: "So there is nothing new under the sun!" Miles in his *Introduction to Evangelism* included many of the methodologies contemporaneous to his time of writing. He wrote before postmodernism became a popular notion. Why do his methods seem to match the postmodern methods so well?

The impact of lifestyle evangelism on theology and the growth of the church will be studied in the future, as will the impact of postmodern evangelism. Our duty today is to assure that our theology of evangelism is biblical and theologically sound. We cannot afford to be "tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming" (Eph 4:14).

WHY DANIEL 4?

Daniel 4 was chosen as a biblical text for this paper for several reasons. First, Daniel 4 was chosen as a focus for this paper because of parallel to postmodern evangelism methodology, especially storying. As far as postmodern evangelism methodology Daniel 4: (1) uses a story format; (2) discusses God and not Christ; (3) has a here-and-now emphasis, viewing sin as pride and humility for the restoration of prosperity; (4) emphasizes community element (being driven from community and returning to community); and (5) involves an extended period of time, culminating in a climactic repentance. In short, because it contains many of the issues found in Tables 3 and 4, Daniel 4 provides a biblical parallel for postmodern evangelism.

¹⁰⁵By the way, Sjogren also has a similar table (Sjogren, 55).

Second, Daniel 4 raises the question of conversion theology. Was Nebuchadnezzar a follower of Yahweh after his doxology in Daniel 4:34-37, or was he the equivalent of a good Muslim today? Calvin in his commentary on Daniel wrote:

Since humbling is twofold, Nebuchadnezzar wishes here to express the former kind, because God prostrates and throws down the proud. This is one kind of humiliation; but it becomes profitless unless God afterwards governs us by a spirit of submission. Hence Nebuchadnezzar does not here embrace the grace of God, which was worthy of no common praise and exaltation; and in this edict he does not describe what is required of a pious man long trained in God's school; yet he shews how he had profited under God's rod, by attributing to him the height of power. Besides this he adds the praise of justice and rectitude, while he confesses himself guilty, and bears witness to the justice of the punishment which had been divinely inflicted on him.¹⁰⁶

C. F. Keil follows Calvin and assessed that Nebuchadnezzar “was not brought to true heart-repentance.”¹⁰⁷ In this context, Archer discussed God's dealing with “unconverted mankind.”¹⁰⁸ Conversely, Young, after giving an indication of other Christians on the issue, took the position that Nebuchadnezzar had saving faith.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Montgomery

¹⁰⁶John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, trans. by Thomas Myers (1852; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 304.

¹⁰⁷“Nebuchadnezzar thus recognized the humiliation which he had experienced as a righteous punishment for his pride, without, however, being mindful of the divine grace which had been shown in mercy toward him; whence Calvin has drawn the conclusion that he was not brought to true heart-repentance” (C. F. Keil, “The Book of Daniel,” in *Commentary on the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986], 162).

¹⁰⁸“Now that he had, at least in some basic form, begin to fear the Lord, Nebuchadnezzar had found the clue to wisdom—an inestimable benefit of his seven-year chastisement. . . . Therefore, each episode recorded in the first six chapters concludes with a triumphant demonstration of God's sovereignty and faithfulness and his ability to crush the pride of unconverted mankind” (Gleason L. Archer, Jr., “Daniel,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Frank E. Gaebelin, ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985], 67-68).

¹⁰⁹“The climax of the edict is reached in the public confession. It has been debated among Christians interpreters with Neb. was truly converted. Calvin denied the conversion, and in this has been followed by H, Pusey, and Keil. The matter is difficult to determine and perhaps cannot be determined. Nevertheless, there are certain considerations which would lead to the conclusion that the king did, after all, experience in his heart the regenerating grace of God. (1) There is a discernible progress in his knowledge of God. Cf. 2:47 with 3:28 and finally 4:34, 35. (2) The king acknowledges the utter sovereignty of God with respect to his own experience (4:37b). (3) The king utters true statements concerning the omnipotence of the true God (4:34, 35)/ (4) The king would worship this God, whom he identifies as King of heaven (4:37a). These reasons lead me to believe that, although the faith of Neb. may indeed have been weak and his knowledge meager, yet his faith was indeed saving faith, and his knowledge true” (Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949], 113-114).

stated conversion as if it were a fact.¹¹⁰ Jerome saw in this passage good works for the forgiveness of sins and an indulgence promised to Nebuchadnezzar by Daniel.¹¹¹ Interestingly, Nebuchadnezzar's conversion and doxology seems to parallel the teachings of the Koran.¹¹² Thus Daniel 4 is a seedbed of contradiction in conversion theology.

Third, Daniel 4 brings with it the problem of the comparison of the two Testaments. How should the two Testaments be reconciled, as to their approach to salvation, conversion, and proclamation of the Gospel? If the words of Jesus in Luke 24:44-49 are used as a hermeneutical grid,¹¹³ then not only do we hope to find the person of Christ in the OT, but also his work on the cross (i.e. the Gospel) and the proclamation of repentance (i.e. the preaching or evangelism). While conservative OT studies address the deity of Christ in the OT and perhaps aspects of the Gospel or the atonement, few discuss a theology of conversion from the OT, and even less proclamation or evangelism. Because the title of this paper brings together an OT passage and NT evangelism, we will begin our discussion at the point of comparative hermeneutics.

¹¹⁰“Mar. [Marti] would delete the repetition, which however serves to indicate the two results of conversion, there in the spiritual, here in the temporal field of restoration to even greater glory” (James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927], 245).

¹¹¹“*It may be that God will forgive thy sins.*’ In view of the fact that the blessed Daniel, foreknowing the future as he did, had doubts concerning God’s decision, it is very rash on the part of those who boldly promise pardon to sinners. And yet it should be recognized that indulgence was promised to Nebuchadnezzar in return, as long as he wrought good works” (*Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel*, trans. by Gleason L. Archer, Jr. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958], 52).

¹¹²“If the People of the Book [Jews] accept the true faith and keep from evil, We will pardon them their sins and admit them to the gardens of delight” (*The Koran with Parallel Arabic Text*, Trans. by N. J. Dawood [London: Penguin, 2000], 118 [5:65]).

¹¹³“Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high’” (Luke 24:44-49).

HERMENEUTICAL COMPARISON OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

To say that the comparison of the Old and New Testaments constitutes a major source of hermeneutical quandary is an understatement. Major theological positions are often differentiated on this one issue (hence Dispensational theology versus Covenant theology). In fact, it is easy to spin off into philosophical theology when comparing the two Testaments of the Bible.

Tables 6A and B draw broad strokes of theological and practical comparatives between the two Testaments. This author believes in plenary inspiration, verbal inspiration, and the coherence of Scripture. Therefore, if there seems to be a discrepancy in interpretation, it is *not* due to a fault in the Bible, rather it is due to misunderstanding on the part of the interpreter.¹¹⁴ With that said, all the grand theological doctrines are delineated in both Testaments. Some doctrines, however, are revealed progressively, and receive a more complete treatment in the NT. In the major doctrines of theology there is continuity, as noted in the lower row of Table 6A. The major differences appear in the main theme of the Pentateuch, which interestingly enough impacts the NT in the doctrine of the atonement.

Table 6B deals with areas normally considered part of practical theology: evangelism, ecclesiology, and ministry. It is in these areas that there is a greater lack of continuity between the Old and New Testaments. God doing a new thing was prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-34), thus it comes as no surprise that there is some discontinuity (cf. Heb 8:13). In fact, some things are taught very clearly in the NT, which are hidden

¹¹⁴“Who can discern *his* errors? Acquit me of hidden *faults*. Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous *sins*; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression” (Psalm 19:12-13).

TABLE 6A: COMPARISON OF OT AND NT THEOLOGY:
THEOLOGICAL CONCERNS¹¹⁵

GENERAL ANALYSIS	GENERAL THEOLOGY							PENTATEUCH'S PRIMARY THEMES ²					OTHER THEMES ³			
	ISSUE	God	Man	Person of Christ	Biblical Revelation	Revelation of Christ	Moral code and definition of sin	Intense Individualism	Covenant Relationship	Land	Promise and fulfillment	Sin and Sacrifice	Oppression and Deliverance	Redemptive Purchase	Rule of God	
#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Continuity	Trinitarian monotheism	Man as the highest created being, created in the image of God	Messiah was prophesied to be the Mighty God and Everlasting Father	God's written word as the inerrant record of God's revelation	Hidden and mysterious, 1 Peter 1:15-17; Revealed by prophets or angels, Heb 1:2	Ten Commandments and other moral admonitions, and total depravity	If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, Prov 9:12	Relationship with God (1) through heredity, and/or (2) through the Law	Election of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and people of Israel	Rulership and/or inheritance of physical land	In this life	In the life to come	Fall of man and Temple sacrifices	Exodus event as a type of salvation	Purchase of a slave; redemption of a kinsman, hence "kinsman redeemer"	God's sovereignty over history and society
Continuity	Trinitarian monotheism	Man as the highest created being, created in the image of God	Christ was God became flesh and dwelt among us, God's exact representation	God's Word as fully authoritative and inerrant	Christ revealed, Mark 12:1-11; Heb. 1:1-3; revealed through the Son	Ten Commandments and other moral admonitions, and total depravity	Each one will bear his own load, Gal 6:5	Relationship with God through Christ's life, death, and resurrection	Election of true Christians	Church as visible sign of kingdom and Christ as King	In this life; kingdom of God here and now	In the life to come	Sin of man and blood of Christ	Deliverance from bondage motifs, e.g. demon exorcism	Ransom theory of the atonement emphasis	Kingdom of God motif, especially in Matthew
Continuity	Trinitarian monotheism	Man as the highest created being, created in the image of God	Christ was God became flesh and dwelt among us, God's exact representation	God's Word as fully authoritative and inerrant	Christ revealed, Mark 12:1-11; Heb. 1:1-3; revealed through the Son	Ten Commandments and other moral admonitions, and total depravity	Each one will bear his own load, Gal 6:5	Relationship with God through Christ's life, death, and resurrection	Election of true Christians	Church as visible sign of kingdom and Christ as King	In this life; kingdom of God here and now	In the life to come	Sin of man and blood of Christ	Deliverance from bondage motifs, e.g. demon exorcism	Ransom theory of the atonement emphasis	Kingdom of God motif, especially in Matthew

*The continuity of some of these themes or views of the atonement may be due to the presupposition of the authors who use Old Testament images to show that Christ's atonement goes beyond "mere" substitution.

truths of the OT: (1) the place of Christ in revealing the New Covenant (cf. Luke 10:23-24; Heb 2:1-4; 1 Pet 1:10-12); (2) the mediatory role of Jesus both as God-man and as the

¹¹⁵Chart 5 and 6 are taken from my *Charts for a Theology of Evangelism* (Liberty, MO: Evangelism Unlimited, 2004). The Table of Contents of this book of charts and an opportunity to order the book is found at www.evangelismunlimited.org.

Lamb of God; (3) the substitutionary atonement; (4) justification by faith alone apart from works; (5) imputed righteousness; (6) instantaneous conversion (being “born again”); (7) eternal life; and (8) assurance of salvation. Yes, all of these doctrines are taught in seminal form in the OT, yet without the clarity of NT teachings. Interestingly enough, all of the above doctrines are vitally important for NT evangelism.

Other new elements in the NT are: (1) the Gospel of Jesus Christ; (2) the coming of the Holy Spirit on all believers, as prophesied by Joel; (3) the need for proclamation of the Gospel; (4) the Great Commission given to the church; (5) and, the emphasis on demonic affliction and exorcism.¹¹⁶ Similarly, some aspects of the OT are clearly eliminated in the NT: (1) the OT emphasis on rituals, sacrifices, vestments, architecture, and special days; (2) the focus on an earthly Temple; (3) the Levitical priesthood; and (4) the emphasis on physical descent from Abraham. All of these changes have a huge impact upon the mission of the church in the world. It must be noted that *some* theologians, practitioners, and denominations are less inclined to acknowledge these changes, as they appreciate OT theology because of its emphasis on (1) community, (2) ritual, (3) the priesthood, (4) good works, (5) gradual conversion, and (6) the benefits of salvation in this life. These issues provide a measure of emotion to a discussion of the differences between the two Testaments.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶Is not also the NT conception of love new as stated by Jesus (John 13:34)?

¹¹⁷H. Richard Niebuhr called Luther a dualist with Marcionite tendencies (Niebuhr, 169-71). Luther himself, in his Preface to the New Testament, distinguished between the Old and New Testaments: “The purpose of this classification [Old and New Testaments] is to make the New Testament similar to the Old (though I myself fail to see the similarity). Rather we must be clear and definite in our minds, on the one hand, that the Old Testament is a volume containing God’s laws and commandments. . . . On the other hand, the New Testament is a volume containing God’s promised evangel, as well as records of those who believed or disbelieved it (Martin Luther, “Preface,” in *Martin Luther*, John Dillenberger, ed. [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961], 14). Luther spoke of Jerome: “Therefore beware lest you make Christ into a Moses, and the gospel into a law or doctrine as has been done before now, including some of Jerome’s prefaces” (ibid., 17).

TABLE 6B: COMPARISON OF OT AND NT THEOLOGY:
PRACTICAL AREAS

GENERAL ANALYSIS	NEW TESTAMENT	OLD TESTAMENT	#	ISSUE	EVANGELISM ISSUES					ECCLESIOLOGY							MINISTRY											
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Discontinuity	Old becoming obsolete, Heb 8:13; New Covenant in Christ's blood, 1 Cor 11:25	Prophecies that God will do a new thing, Isa 43:19; Jer 31:31; Ezek 11:19; 36:26	1	A New Thing																								
Discontinuity	Grace is revealed, John 1:17	Grace is hidden, Genesis 6:8; 15:6, Habakkuk 2:4	2	Grace Alone																								
Discontinuity	By Grace, through faith, Romans 3-4; Galatians; Titus	By Works, Lev 18:5; e.g. "and he shall be forgiven," Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; etc.	3	Justification by Faith																								
Discontinuity	Imputed righteousness	Earned righteousness (excluding, Gen 15:6; Ps 24:5; 36:10; Isa 53)	4	Imputed Righteousness																								
Discontinuity	Revealed by the Son (cf. 1 Cor 2:2)	Revealed by Angels (cf. Heb 2:2-4)	5	Gospel																								
Discontinuity	Instantaneous conversion, e.g. John 3:3, "you must be born again"	Gradual ritualistic conversion (excluding Gen 15:6 and Hab 2:4)	6	Instantaneous Conversion																								
Discontinuity	Christ is stumbling block (Matt 11:6; 1 Pet 2:7-8), especially to Jews (1 Cor 1:23)	Law is wise (Deut. 4:6)	7	Stumbling Block																								
Discontinuity	Based on blood of Christ	Based on grace of God	8	Assurance																								
Discontinuity	Eternal Life (41 times)	Life = (1) long life; (2) life in this world	9	Eternal Life																								
Discontinuity	Every Christian receives the Holy Spirit on conversion, Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17-21	Anointing of the Holy Spirit for specific tasks and/or in specific instances	10	Spirit-Filled																								
Discontinuity	Gentiles grafted in	People of Israel	11	Called People																								
Discontinuity	Centrifugal—Go into all the world	Centripetal—Come to Jerusalem	12	Primary Focus																								
Discontinuity	Christ alone as intermediary	Priests as intermediaries	13	Mediation																								
Discontinuity	Apostle's teaching, fellowship, prayer, and the breaking of bread	Architecture, vestments, rituals, sacrifices, special days, and holidays	14	Worship																								
Discontinuity	Preaching of the Word	Sacrifices (e.g. Day of Atonement)	15	Primary focus of Worship																								
Discontinuity	Baptism as initiatory rite	Circumcision as initiatory rite	16	Ordinances																								
Discontinuity	The Lord's Supper	Sacrifices	17	Ordinances																								
Discontinuity	Evangelists, pastors, and teachers	Prophets, priests, and kings	18	Leaders																								
Discontinuity	Reaching the world with the Gospel	Israelite community	19	Focus of Community																								
Discontinuity	All Christians commanded to proclaim the Gospel	Prophets raised up from among people	20	Prophet																								
Discontinuity	Christ is High Priest, priesthood of all believers	Priests chosen by God, and born to minister	21	Priest																								
Discontinuity	Jesus as King of kings	Kings chosen among men	22	King																								
Discontinuity	Gospel is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles	Law is wise (Deut. 4:6)	23	Message																								
Continuity	Persecution due to Christ	Persecution due to God's Word	24	Persecution																								
Discontinuity	Major emphasis on the casting out of demons in the Gospels	Minor emphasis on demonic	25	Demonic Element																								
Continuity	OT examples provide instruction to NT Christians, 1 Cor 10:11	OT events provide a divine example to NT Christians, 1 Cor 10:11	26	General Example																								

Table 7 compares Daniel 4 with some NT counterparts in the area of the evangelism. Interestingly, Daniel 4 provides a salvific encounter between the prophet of God and Nebuchadnezzar for reconciliation model-oriented commentators.¹¹⁸ Perhaps

¹¹⁸Young's makes worship a sign of Nebuchadnezzar's saving faith (Young, 114).

TABLE 7: A COMPARISON OF OT AND NT TEXTS FOR EVANGELISTIC METHODOLOGY

Principle	Old Testament		New Testament Equivalency		Historical/Theological/ Ecclesiological Assessment
	Concept	Scripture	Concept	Scripture	
Primary Message	Look at snake to be healed	Num. 21:8-9	Look at cross to be saved	John 3	1 Corinthians 1:17-18; 2:2; and 15:1-8 makes the substitutionary atonement the essential message of the church. C. H. Dodd in his <i>The Apostolic Preaching and its Development</i> (1936) masterfully framed the question to include much more than Christ crucified! It marked a movement away from the five fundamentals of the 1895 Niagara Bible Conference
	Story: Nebuchadnezzar shares his story	Daniel 4	Sometimes Gospel in the form of a testimony	Mark 5:19-20; John 4	
	Rahab recognized God's sovereignty	Joshua 2:11	God's sovereignty as introduction to the Gospel	Acts 14 and 17	
	Daniel interprets the dream	Daniel 4	Sometimes the presentation involves the spiritual gifts	Acts 13:9-12	
	Transcendence of God and His earthly rule	Daniel 4	God's sovereignty as introduction to the Gospel	Acts 14 and 17	
	Humility prior to exaltation	Daniel 4	Contrite heart justified	Luke 18:13-14	
	God's judgment	Jonah 3			
The just shall live by faith	Hab 2:4	The just shall live by faith	Rom 1:17		
Definition of sin	Pride versus humility	Daniel 4:27	Is sin in the NT defined as rebellion against the written laws of God, as in Leviticus 4:1-3, 27-28? Yes!	1 John 3:4	Jesus also affirms the 10 Commandments (Matt 5), see expansion in Mark 7:21-23; For substitution as central, Acts 2:38; 5:30-31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18, 20
	Showing mercy to the poor				
	Wicked way	Jonah 3:8			
	Violence				
	Rebellion against the written word of God	Leviticus 4	Is sin/substitution the central issue in the NT? Yes!	John 5:14; 8:11; 9:41	
Ten Commandments	Exodus 20				
Call for decision	Repent of his sin and social injustice	Daniel 4	Persuaded to become Christian; Called to repent and be baptized; Called to repent and believe	Acts 26:28 Acts 2:38 Mark 1:14-15	
	"Let My people go"	Exodus			
	He who believes in it will not be disturbed	Isa 28:16			
Response	None: Pharaoh, hardness of heart	Exodus	Belief	John 9:38	
	None at first: Nebuchadnezzar, until the dream had come true	Daniel 4	God opened her heart to respond to those things spoken by Paul	Acts 16:14	
	Looked at snake, "they lived"	Num 21:9	The Son of Man will be lifted up	John 3:14-15	
	Abraham believed	Gen 15:6	Justification by faith	Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6	
Point of decision	Time of humility	Daniel 4	Immediate (1) imputed righteousness is a point-in-time occurrence, (2) as is being "born again" (cf. NT examples)	Luke 23:39-43; John 9:35-38; Acts 2:38;	
Affirmation of decision	Testimony	Job 33; Daniel 4	Told town	John 4:39-40	
			Told Hometown	Mark 5:19-20	
Saving faith?	Nebuchadnezzar: probably not saving faith, as (1) idolatry not ended; (2) did he come by obedience of Law	Daniel 4; cf. Jonah 3:10	Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ	Acts 20:21	Through verbal confession, Rom 10:9-10, 13
	Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord	Gen 6:8			
	Then he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness	Gen 15:6	Belief in Christ	John 9:35-38	
	But the righteous will live by his faith	Hab 2:4			

most interesting for our discussion are three sections of Table 7: the message, the definition of sin, and the response. It is in the area of the message that there remains a

significant gulf between the OT and NT.

Therefore, while Daniel 4 seems to be an example of postmodern evangelism, the concern now relates to how evangelism (and conversion) is defined. For this paper, I propose Luke 24:46-47 as the simplest verses for a definition of evangelism:

And He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

In these verses we find: (1) The Gospel (“the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead the third day,” cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1-8); (2) The *kerygma* (“repentance for the forgiveness of sins . . . in His name”); (3) The method (“would be proclaimed”); and (4) The universal mandate (“to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem”). This definition coincides with the 54 uses of the verb *εὐαγγελίζω* in the NT, with the five evangelistic contexts of evangelism in the NT (person, method, dynamic, result, and process),¹¹⁹ and with the work of an evangelist as found in Acts 8 (cf. 2 Tim 4:5 and Acts 21:8).

As compared with the Luke 24 definition of evangelism, Daniel 4 contains two of the four parts of a definition of evangelism. It includes (1) proclamation of (2) repentance for continued prosperity (Daniel 4:27). Yet Daniel 4 does not include the heart of the Christian message, the grace of God as revealed in the [hope of the] cross. If OT theology requires the believer to follow the laws of God for “life” (cf. Lev. 18:5), then by this measure, we have no proof that Nebuchadnezzar ever followed God’s laws by faith.¹²⁰ This brings us back to the difference of opinion as to Nebuchadnezzar’s conversion.

¹¹⁹Thomas P. Johnston, “‘Do the Work of an Evangelist!’ Basic New Testament Evangelism” (Class notes, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 54-62.

¹²⁰If OT theology requires a broken heart that looks to God in faith (cf. Psalms 51:17), we have no proof that Nebuchadnezzar had a broken heart for sin.

TABLE 8: DANIEL 4 AND SALVATION

Models of Salvation		Substitutionary model	Reconciliation model	Sacramental model	Postmodern model
Sample Proponents		Calvin, Keil, and Archer	Montgomery and Young	Jerome	n/a
Definition of Sin	General	Depraved nature	Separation from God	Pride is the first Cardinal Sin	Sin as lack of relationship
	Daniel 4	[mentions sin and iniquity]	Pride leads to separation	Pride versus humility	Pride hinders relationship
Message of Salvation	General	Christ bearing penalty of sin on the cross	God has made a way to be reconciled to God	God has given the Church the means of grace	God's story has been finalized and fulfilled in Christ
	Daniel 4	God can forgive, but no means of substitution	Daniel admonishes repentance from pride	Daniel promises indulgence for sin	God may forgive the humble heart
Definition of Conversion	General	Repentance and belief	Returning to a relationship	Adherence to the sacraments as they are understood	Acknowledgement of God's right to rule as King
	Daniel 4	Includes repentance, but no sign of obedience of Torah or an understanding of the grace of God	Includes repentance, and worship of God's sovereignty	Includes indulgence from Daniel, humility, worship, and good works	Humbling himself before God and acknowledging His right to rule as King

Table 8 seeks to illuminate some salient points from Daniel 4. I have placed in Table 8 four “models” of salvation with their proponents as discussed above: substitutionary atonement, reconciliation model, sacramental model, and postmodern model. The conversion of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 is *not* held by those who to the substitutionary model of the atonement. Rather, Nebuchadnezzar *is* converted for those who hold to the reconciliation, sacramental, or postmodern models of the atonement. There is quite a divergence due to the presupposed models of the atonement.

While Daniel 4 may be a good model for postmodern evangelism, it is not for NT evangelism, as described in Luke 24. Daniel does not provide a good model for evangelism, as it does not take into consideration the grace necessary for the

substitutionary atonement: justification by grace through faith alone and apart from works, and through imputed righteousness.

What can be said about postmodern evangelism and Daniel 4? It would seem that postmodern evangelism is the outcome of another cultural cycle. Its emphases are not new, and future emanations of cultural forms of evangelism are to be expected. The consideration of an OT passage such as Daniel 4 points out that some OT emphases tend to lean away from NT theology and evangelism. Similarly many passages in the OT may lean away from Luke 24 evangelism and towards a relational model of salvation and the atonement. The OT must be interpreted through the substitutionary atonement as revealed in the NT. Also, the theological compromises of some advocates of postmodern evangelism suggest that they have moved down the sociological cycle away from their incipient revivalist theology of conversion. This pattern seems to be a part of the cyclical nature of knowledge, as per Solomon's warning. Thus a discussion of Daniel 4 and postmodern evangelism has proven fruitful in opening many issues related to a theology of evangelism.