



*Understanding Postmodernism:
A Christian Perspective*
Available December 5, 2017
\$26, 304 pages, paperback
978-0-8308-5193-5

“To my knowledge, this is the most comprehensive and analytically refined exposition and critique of postmodernism.”

—Douglas Groothuis,
Denver Seminary, author of
Truth Decay

“Painstakingly documented and carefully reasoned, this volume provides the critique that this generation sorely needs.”

—Gary R. Habermas,
Liberty University and
Baptist Theological
Seminary

INTERVARSITY PRESS
Visit ivpress.com/media



Helping Christians Understand Our Postmodern Context

What should readers expect to find within the pages of your book?

Stewart E. Kelly and James K. Dew Jr.: Our desire is to provide others with a lucid, fair-minded, and biblically grounded critique of the postmodern view. In this book we will attempt to give both an overview of modernism and then seek to define postmodernism in a manner that does justice to its breadth and variety. We intend to aid the reader in understanding postmodernism, and we hope to thoroughly and fairly evaluate postmodernism from a Christian perspective.

To do so, we will focus on the major themes of postmodernism and weave in some of the key thinkers along the way. We believe this topical approach makes the understanding of postmodernism an easier task than an approach that focuses on leading postmodern thinkers. We cover a lot of ground, make a number of substantive (and controversial) claims, and seek to understand and evaluate the family of views known as postmodernism from a perspective grounded in the truths of the Scriptures and the historic Christian faith. We devote a full chapter to each of the ten main strands of postmodernism, and even in this we are being selective and not dealing with many worthwhile issues.

How do you approach defining postmodernism?

Kelly and Dew: A number of definitions have been suggested, and there are even some thinkers who aren't sure it can be carefully defined. It should also be noted that a number of books and articles on postmodernism never get around to giving a definition of it, perhaps because they think it is obvious or because they themselves are not sure exactly what it is.

In this book we understand postmodernism both as a worldview that includes a number of beliefs about the nature of knowledge and reality and as the worldview that follows Enlightenment modernism. In the first sense, postmodernism can be understood philosophically, while in the latter sense it is better understood historically — as a particular worldview that follows another particular worldview.

Your book is geared toward evangelical Christians. What are the key takeaways from your book for this audience?

Kelly: The postmodern worldview is often misrepresented in evangelical circles. There are two common extremes that are often presented: 1) an uncritical acceptance of postmodernism; and 2) the caricature of all postmoderns as relativists. But postmodernism is a complicated and diverse movement, one that challenges evangelical Christians to carefully rethink their beliefs and traditions. Evangelical Christianity traditionally has been committed

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW CONTACT THE INTERVARSITY PRESS PUBLICITY TEAM:

Alisse Wissman, print publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com
Krista Clayton, broadcast and online publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com
ivpress.com/academic



“In an age in which professing Christians are increasingly embracing postmodern assumptions, this book is a proper corrective in its overview and assessment of the key themes of postmodernism as well as a defense of a gospel-centered understanding of truth.”

— Paul Copan, Palm Beach Atlantic University

to the objectivity of truth, the stability of language, the idea that the Christian metanarrative is far from oppressive, and to a degree, trust in the deliverances of human reason. We seek to carefully understand and respond to the various challenges presented by postmodernism, and to determine whether some Christian beliefs need to be modified or rejected in light of these challenges.

What is the danger of Christians misunderstanding what postmodern thinking is really about?

Kelly: I have a sense that some in evangelical circles (and elsewhere) are working with an incomplete view of the postmodern time period in which we presently find ourselves. Such an incomplete view causes errors in our discernment (1 Thess 5:21-22) and thus in our ability to effectively share the gospel as we interact daily with both unbelievers and believers around us. Related to this, I believe that some evangelicals (teachers and lay people) are throwing out the baby with the bathwater as they see the postmodern view as all bad and in complete opposition to a biblical worldview.

What motivated you, as a Christian and a professor, to want to write this book about postmodernism?

Kelly: My special philosophical interest has always been in the area of philosophy of religion. However, as a one person “department” at a small state university for the past thirty-one years, it has been important to be broadly read, able to teach outside my area of specialization, and become adept at interacting with the secular world. I have grown increasingly convinced that if we as Christians want to win the ear of non-Christians, we must be well informed about history, social issues, the basis and defense of our own beliefs, *and* the beliefs and values of the non-believing world around us. Our knowledge must have breadth and depth and be managed by careful, analytical thought. Our knowledge and thoughts must honor God by communicating truth (all of which is his) in a respectful, well informed and accessible manner. Furthermore, a little humor almost always helps.

As always, the focus of my future scholarly work will be to continue to examine important philosophical and theological issues and present an explanation and evaluation of these to both academic and lay circles in a clear, well-reasoned, accessible format.