

**Danville News Column**  
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**Friday, January 8, 2010**  
**“Post-modernity: Whether You Like It Or Not”**  
**Word Count: 750**

Flux and change. Our globe is a spinning top.

Earth rotates at a speed of 1,000 miles per hour. A bullet shot from an AK47 travels 1,600 miles per hour. Right now you are traveling  $\frac{3}{4}$  the speed of a bullet. The cruise speed of a Boeing 747 is a measly 650 miles per hour. Add to this rotation our revolution around the sun. 67,000 miles per hour. Is anyone dizzy?

My world is changing fast enough to give me motion sickness. Like the time my brothers and I jumped into the Mad Hatter Tea Cup at Disneyland. They spun the wheel with vengeance, making sure little brother threw up. He did. Filled up that Tea Cup.

What year is it? Is it really 2010?

Ponder how different our world has become, given the whirling dervish of contemporary culture.

Between Kenya, Ghana, Cameroon, there are more Presbyterians there by over a million than in the USA. The face of Presbyterianism isn't Scottish; it is African, Asian. Zambia is sending missionaries to us.

357 planets have been discovered beyond our solar system. With more to come. Every continental inch of our planet has been explored. After two million years, National Geographic announced recently, the age of the 'hunter-gatherer' has ended.

A white baby born this morning will be the minority race in this country in a matter of decades. Already this is the case in Florida, California, Texas.

It might help to remember that today's Senior Highs were born when Clinton became president, Sears cancelled printing its catalogue, pocket size telephones became commonplace, the computer game Doom was able to be downloaded through the internet. These children have witnessed the last gasp of the USA as uni-laterally dominating the world's economy, military, geo-politics.

Our kids have inherited a different world. They support Obama as our first post-modern president. Theirs is a global world-view. They don't think in terms of national boundaries. It's nothing to fly to Madrid, Argentina, Romania. "Hey, mom," daughter would cell phone. "I'm in Budapest now."

Neither do they see race. Nor view homosexuality as deviant. "What's the big deal?" my daughters ask. "What's it to you?"

Remember the day when mixed-race couples were shunned, a scandal? Wind the clock farther back and it was how parents forbade Roman Catholics and Protestants to marry. Now, refreshingly, the attitude is that there is only one race. Our Googling, iPhoning, Facebooking youth are pan-racial, pan-national, pan-denominational, pan-religious.

One preacher wrote: “the first Reformation was about freeing the church. The new reformation is about freeing God's people from the church.” That’s interesting.

Visiting my parents last November, we drove past the Pentecostal Church. It was letting out from worship. They had police officers directing traffic. Mom scoffed. All that contemporary music and boisterous praying. Mom was venting decades of investing herself in our family Presbyterian Church which once upon a time boasted three services and 1200 members. Now my home church has dwindled to one service. Maybe a hundred attend. Her world is dying. It scares her to accept the new world that already has arrived.

How many here have heard older neighbors reject physicians simply because their names hint of Muslim background?

No wonder there are pockets of apprehension and backlash, folks bracing themselves inside this spinning Tea Cup. Religion author Phyllis Tickle describes them as “resistors.” Defenders of dogma. Forward to the 17<sup>th</sup> century!

Others simply want to tie a Biblical, spiritual, moral tail to this high-flying post-modern kite and keep the string intact, lest it get buffeted by the wind and careen to the ground or spiral wildly away into the sky.

Once upon a recent time there would have been no way we would have allowed divorced persons to be ordained as Elders or Deacons or surely as pastors. We are richer for their ministry. Of course, even longer ago, women were forbidden to serve.

I join those who suggest we are seeing emerge a new and more vibrant form of Christianity: less institutional, more dynamic, less dogmatic, more a quest full of surprises. Do we resist it, or join the shaping of it? Can we doctor what is harmful while embracing what in this culture is good?

Christians want Christ’s church to transform culture. It always has. Way more than we may realize. We directly produced many of these good, generous, gracious, and global attitudes our children honor. Equally true is how my Jesus is at work reforming the church through our culture. He always has.