

WHERE WILL THE CHURCH BE IN FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW ?

In a message to young people, Fulbright scholar, international symphony conductor, author, lecturer, recording artist, composer and soloist [Thomas Hohstadt](#) answers the [Ginkworld.net](#) famous "7 questions."

1. How do you define postmodern culture?

Hohstadt: Postmodernism is simply a rejection of the modern period, a refusal of old ways of thinking, a loss of confidence in the proof of truth. Postmodernism is a negative—though, perhaps, necessary—"death of civilization." So I prefer to celebrate the positive future that now replaces the "deconstruction" of postmodernism. You may call it POST-postmodernism, if you want.

How do you define and practice evangelism in a postmodern culture?

Hohstadt: The evangelism of the POST-postmodern future will be more:

- organic (part of life itself) and less institutional or programmed,
- personal and less doctrinal,
- grace-filled and less sin-dominated,
- a triumph of the Spirit and less a triumph of man,
- motivated by joy and less by fear,
- a community dynamic and less individualistic,
- motivated by the heart and less by propositions or formulas,
- validated by experience and less by knowledge,
- open to multiple points of entry, less restricted to certain times and places,
- helpful to multiple stages of growth and less a one-time event,
- art and less rhetoric,
- listening and less talking,
- modeling and less teaching,
- cross-cultural and less cultural.

As a futurist, where do you see the church in 50 years?

Hohstadt: A time traveler would not recognize the Church 50 years from now as the "church." First, we will see reality in a different way, we will prove "truth" in a different way. We will simply think differently. Science, technology, creativity, and spiritual experience will become so blended that they will appear as one. For example, faith, meditation, prophecy, quantum theory, chaos theory, creativity, art, and virtual reality will become virtual synonyms.

In the same way, language will also change. Metaphor, multiple, and mosaic thinking will replace the linear logic of today. Within this new language, communion with God will prove miraculously profound, involving the intuitive senses and feelings far more than the reasoning intellect. For these reasons, something similar to the "Gifts of the Spirit" will pervade worship and every worshiper will participate.

Though the Church will remain "in the world, but not of the world," the line between secular and sacred will blur. For worship will happen anytime, anyplace, anywhere, and with anybody. It will also be global and trans-cultural.

Since language is key to human communication, what do you see as three main blocks between a modern and postmodern culture?

Hohstadt: Those who have both feet in the modern world find it almost impossible to communicate with postmodernists. Just consider:

- Postmodernists have destroyed Universal Truth, the most precious possession of the modern world.
- Postmodernists have destroyed the validity of modern language, the objectivity of its science and logic.
- Postmodernists have destroyed the vision of the modern world and have offered little hope for a new vision.

For these reasons, we must look beyond the "deconstruction" of postmodernism to the new and hopeful POST-postmodernism that is now coming into being. If we look closely, we will discover that the new world is not totally postmodern. And it never will be.

What do you see as the three main qualities of a postmodern leader?

Hohstadt: In the POST-postmodern world, a spiritual leader will be:

- A mentor and less a manipulator
- A servant and less the one being served
- A poet and a prophet and less a CEO

What do you see as the future of tech and its role in the church?

Hohstadt: The church must get past its naive adolescence with technology. Technology in today's church reminds me of the early days of the movie industry. We will recognize a mature art form (or worship form) when technology is not merely "added on" but intrinsic and prophetic. In the meantime, let us remember that "turning a knob" or "pushing a button" does not automatically manifest God's presence.

Given all your vast knowledge and experience, what two things would you like to pass on to this generation?

Hohstadt: Please don't make the same mistake the Boomers made. They turned their culture into a self-image religion. Every moment in every event should risk the power of prophetic metaphor. But this has nothing to do with doing new things or doing old things. It has everything to do with participating in a live or dead metaphor. After all, something new can become an overnight cliché just as easily as something old.

Finally, see yourselves as guides into the future. Take an old person by the hand and walk them gently and faithfully into this new world. They need you, and you need them.

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