

THE CENTER FOR A POST MODERN WORLD

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS, PURPOSES AND PROGRAMS'

The Center for a Post-Modern World is an organization of people who are convinced that our modern world, for all its achievements, is leading us to self-destruction, and that an accelerated transition from our modern toward a post-modern world is necessary if we are to thrive or even survive. This is a brief statement of the Center's beliefs, purposes and programs, and of the ways in which the Center seeks to serve the world and its members.

BASIC BELIEFS

The Modern world is a mixture of positive and negative features. The modern world has made spectacular achievements in science and technology, and in forms of production and social organization. At the same time, its worldview has created severe spiritual problems for individuals, and its social and global order has become increasingly damaging to human community and the ecosphere.

The negative features of the modern world now threaten to destroy its positive features and everything else. Because of increasing resource depletion and ecological deterioration, the increasing gap between the rich and poor, and increasing militarism augmented with nuclearism, the modern world has brought us to the brink of destruction.

We cannot overcome the horrors and threats of modernity by returning to a pre-modern world and worldview. The achievements of modern science and technology show that there is much truth in the modern worldview; it cannot be simply rejected. Likewise, a return to a pre-modern form of society and global order is neither desirable nor possible.

The only solution is to advance to a post-modern worldview and a post-modern world order. A post-modern worldview retains what is true in the modern while combining it with the truths of pre-modern worldviews which had been rejected as "superstition" by modernity's one-eyed vision. A post-modern world order will incorporate the implications of this new worldview and its spirituality for economics, education, ecology, agriculture, security and other questions of public policy.

WHAT IS THE POST-MODERN WORLDVIEW?

While the modern worldview is still dominant in intellectual circles and in public policy, a less visible post-modern worldview has been developing in our century through the work of certain scientists, philosophers, and artists. It can be described as:

Post Mechanistic: In the post-modern worldview, the world is regarded more as an organism than as a machine. The fundamental kind of casual interaction is not external, coercive force, but internal, ecological influence.

Post-Materialistic and Post-Dualistic: Post-modern consciousness feels at home in the cosmos, akin with other creatures. This consciousness no longer has to choose between seeing itself as simply one more wheel in a deterministic process, or as an alien “ghost in the machine,” totally different from the rest of the world.

Post-Individualistic: Individuals, from electrons to humans, are not self-enclosed substances. They are ecological individuals who create themselves out of their relations, and who live in multiple webs of interdependence. One’s welfare can therefore not be realized apart from the welfare of the community, and finally the community of communities, to which one belongs.

Post-Androcentric: Maleness is no more fundamental in the nature of things and is no closer to divinity than femaleness. The post-modern worldview overcomes the masculinist bias which character most pre-modern thought, and which modern thought reaffirmed and even, in some respects, intensified.

WHAT WILL A POST-MODERN WORLD BE LIKE?

While the post-modern worldview has already been considerably developed, the imaginative construction of a post-modern world is in its infancy. However, a few of the directions it is beginning to take can be seen. It is to be:

Post-Anthropocentric: Having overcome the modern sense of separateness from nature, post-modern persons will no longer consider nature a realm that exists only for their benefit, and will find joy not in controlling and exploiting it, but in living in harmony with it.

Post-Competitive: Post-modern persons see their relations to each other in primarily cooperative terms, no longer viewing the world mechanistically, themselves individualistically, and the most important type of causal influence as coercive.

Post-Militaristic: One feature of the post-competitive world will be the emergence of a world beyond war, in which the development of the art of peaceful conflict resolution and new structures render military solutions to conflict obsolete.

Post-Eurocentric: The ideas, values, and practices of the European tradition will no longer be assumed to be superior to those of other traditions, and will, in any case, no longer be forcibly imposed upon others. Special attention will be given instead to the wisdom present in other cultures and traditions.

Post-Scientific: While natural science will still be regarded as an extremely important method for attaining valuable truth, it will no longer be held up as the One True Method. Moral, religious, and aesthetic intuitions will be regarded as possible sources of important truths, which must be given a central role in questions both of worldview and of public policy.

Post-Disciplinary: It will no longer be assumed that the best way to study a problem, especially with an eye to coming up with a solution, is to do so in terms of one of the disciplines, sub-disciplines, or sub-sub-disciplines which have been developed in the modern period. A new approach to knowledge will be developed in line with the post-modern vision of the ecological interdependence of all things-and of the importance of values other than those of the modern engineer and economist.

Post-Nationalistic: Not only individualism in the ordinary sense, but the individualism of nationalism will be transcended in a planetary of “terrain” consciousness, in which the welfare of the earth as a whole is the first consideration in determining public policy.

PURPOSES AND PROGRAMS

The main purposes of the Center are:

To deepen, extend, and articulate the post-modern worldview, and to spread the news of its emerging existence and its greater adequacy.

To encourage creative thinking about what the post-modern world should be like and how the transition from our present reality to this post-modern world can be made with a minimum of pain and dislocation.

To encourage reflection about and practice in ways to become post-modern persons.

Our programs support this purposes through many activities – lectures, conferences, workshops, social events, dialogue groups, and through other creative initiatives suggested by members. We have a lending library, with books, articles and tapes available. We have begun an author-in-residence program. We are publishing a series of books on post-modern thought, and have plans for a series of films. One of our major projects is to gather a number of post-modern thinkers from divers backgrounds who will work together for several years to produce an epoch-making statement of the post-modern vision.

BECOMING POST-MODERN PERSONS

A post-modern person is one who already seeks to live out of the post-modern vision even before the new structures to support this mode of being have fully emerged. The Center hopes to help its members and others to:

Become de-conditioned from the false assumptions and destructive habits encouraged by modernity.

Re-vision our relationship to our body, to nature, to society, to institutions, to the planet, and to the universe as a whole – and this in ecological, cooperative and post-patriarchal terms.

Re-unite the intellect and feelings – the cognitive, aesthetic, religious, and moral dimensions of experience, which have been torn asunder by modernity.