

Living in a  
Post-Truth Culture

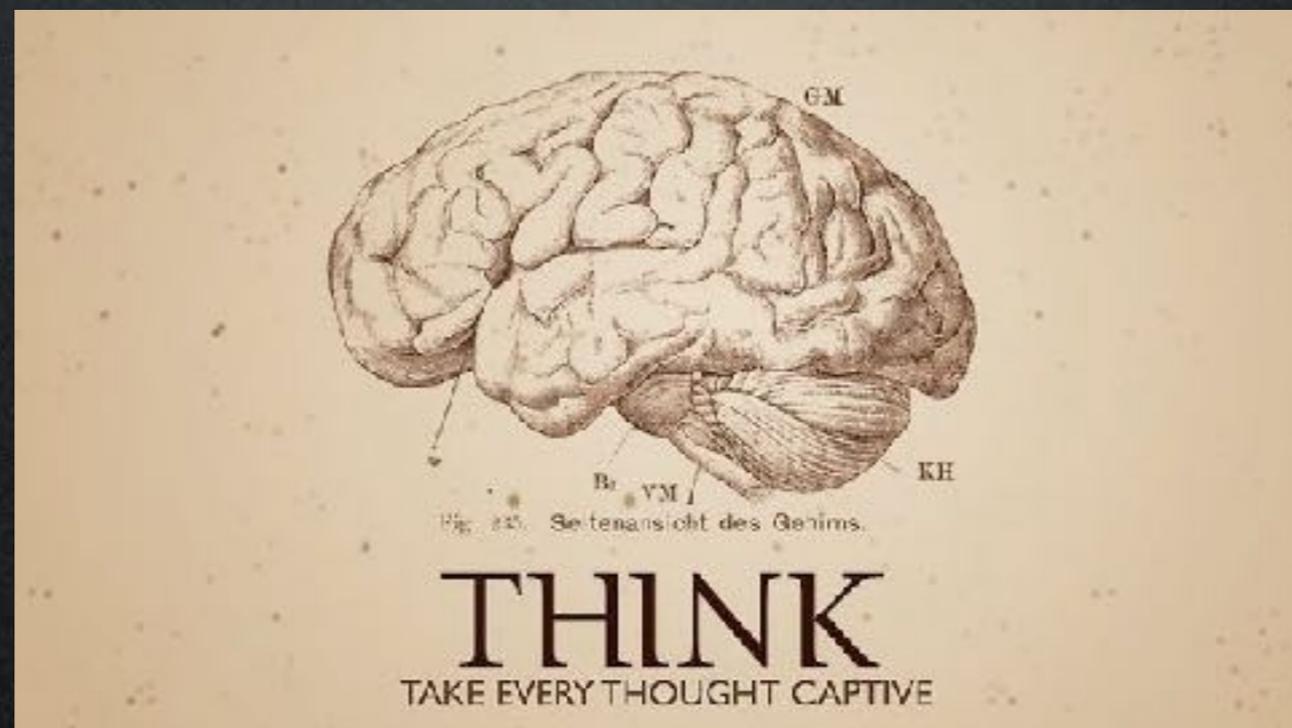
# The Battle for Truth





# Biblical Foundation

We are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

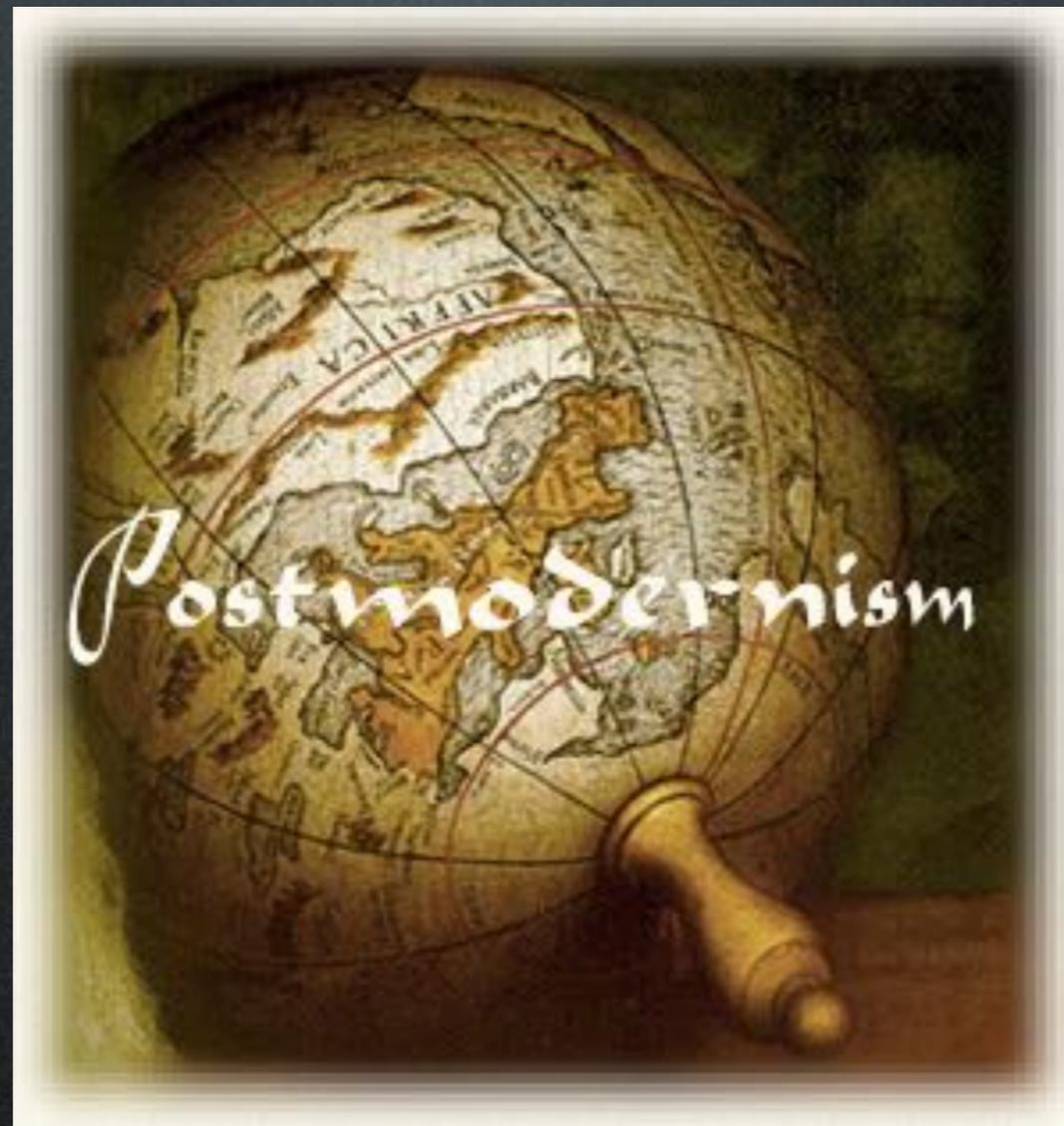


# Biblical Foundation

“Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).



# What is Postmodernism?





# Three Umpires



- “There’ s balls and there’ s strikes, and I call ‘em the way they are.”
- “There’ s balls and there’ s strikes, and I call ‘em the way I see ‘em.”
- “There’ s balls and there’ s strikes, and they ain’ t nothing until I call them.”

*Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be (1995)*

# Three Views of Truth

- **Pre-modernism** – God-centered universe, revelation, truth is absolute.
- **Modernism** – Enlightenment, science, truth is relative.
- **Postmodernism** – loss of hope for truth, truth is created.

# Modernism

- **Modernism** – is the belief that the world can be explained through scientific examination.
- Modernists see the world as one big machine.
- They have faith in rationality, in empiricism, and in science.

# Postmodernism

- **Postmodernism** – is the belief that truth is not discovered but created.
- It is the belief that truth doesn't exist except as the individual wants it to exist.
- Truth isn't objective or absolute.
- Truth is personal and relative.

# Postmodernism

- **Postmodernism** – isn't really a set of doctrines or truth claims.
- It is a completely new way of dealing with the world of ideas.
- Literature, history, politics, education, law, sociology, linguistics, even the sciences.

# Postmodernism

- It is skeptical of people (e.g., Christians) who claim to know truth.
- But it doesn't actually seem hostile to religion or spirituality.
- Postmodernists have no problem with religion unless it makes certain claims about its religion.

# Postmodernism

- Postmodernists tolerate religion as long as it makes no claim to universal truth and has no authority.
- They are very critical of Christian missionaries because they believe they are “destroyers of culture.”

# Postmodernism

Star Trek - The Prime Directive



# Self-defeating Propositions

- Assert that all worldviews have an equal claim to the truth (deny absolute truth).
- Denial of absolute truth is self-defeating.
- Claim that relativism is true for everyone, everywhere, at all times.
- But that itself is an absolute truth.

# Religious Pluralism

- **Religious pluralism** – the belief that every religion is true.
- But various religions and religious groups make competing truth claims, so they cannot all be true.
- God either exists or does not exist, He is either personal or impersonal.

# Is Truth Exclusive?

- **Law of Non-contradiction** – A and the opposite of A cannot both be true.
- Many believe that truth claims are “both/and” rather than “either/or.”
- Mutually exclusive propositions cannot both be true (square circles).

# An Exclusive Claim

- **John 14:6** – Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
- Jesus taught that salvation was through Him and no one else.
- This contradicts other religions.

# The New Capital T

- We used to live in a society that believed in “Truth” (with a capital T).
- This has now been replaced by a new word with a capital T.
- **Tolerance**
- All moral questions can be summed up with the phrase: Who are you to say?

# Do Not Judge

- Most quoted verse: Matthew 7:1 - “Do not judge, or you too will be judged.”
- Jesus calls people pigs and dogs (7:6) “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (7:15).
- We should use sound judgment:
- 1 Kings 3:9; Proverbs 15:14; 1 Corinthians 12:10; Philippians 1:9-10

# Moral Relativism



# Moral Relativism

- **Relativism** – morality is relative to the person, there are no set of rules that universally apply to everyone.
- According to relativism, morals are a matter of personal preference.
- Can be summed up with the phrase:  
It all depends.

# Self-defeating Propositions

- Moral relativists are inconsistent: they make moral judgments all the time.
- Atheists deny God's existence but use an absolute moral standard to judge evil.
- Example: Ravi Zacharias debate - Bernard Leikind (Senior Editor, Skeptic magazine)

# Self-defeating Propositions

- Moral relativism is also self-defeating in its application:
  - Can't critique from the outside (Nuremberg Trials).
  - Can't critique from the inside (no place for moral reformer).

What is the Impact  
on the Church?

# Teen's New Definitions

- Truth means whatever is right for you.
- Tolerance means accepting that each individual's values and lifestyles are equally valid.
- Moral judgments mean bigoted attitudes we have no right to hold.

*The Last Christian Generation (2006)*

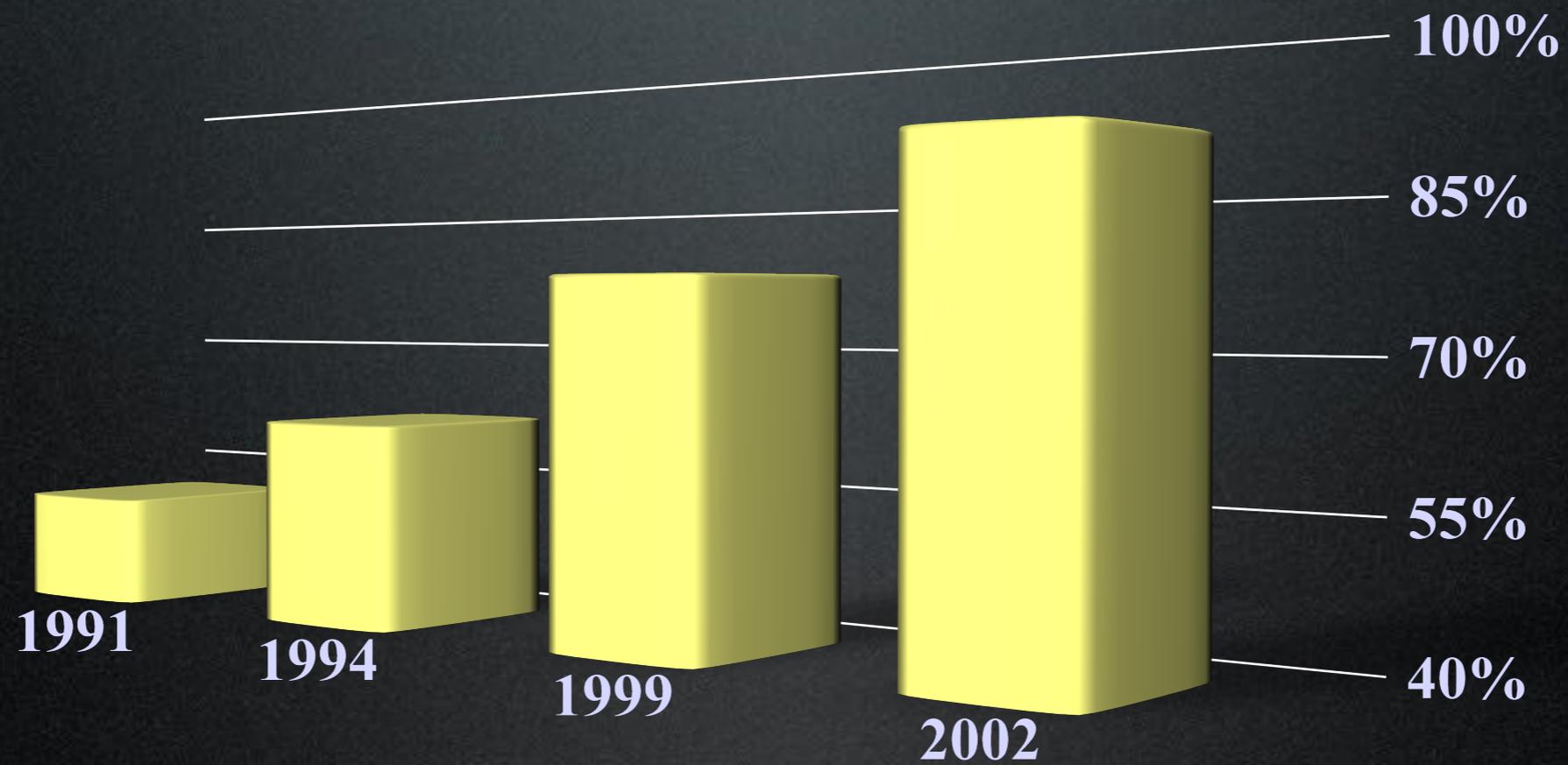
# George Barna

- Only 9 percent of born again Christians have a biblical worldview.
- A minority of born again adults (44 percent) and an even smaller proportion of teenagers (9 percent) are certain of the existence of absolute moral truth.

# George Barna

- By a three-to-one margin adults say truth is always relative to the person and their situation.
- The ratio is even more lopsided among teenagers.
- Only 4 out of 10 people are “absolutely committed” to the Christian faith.

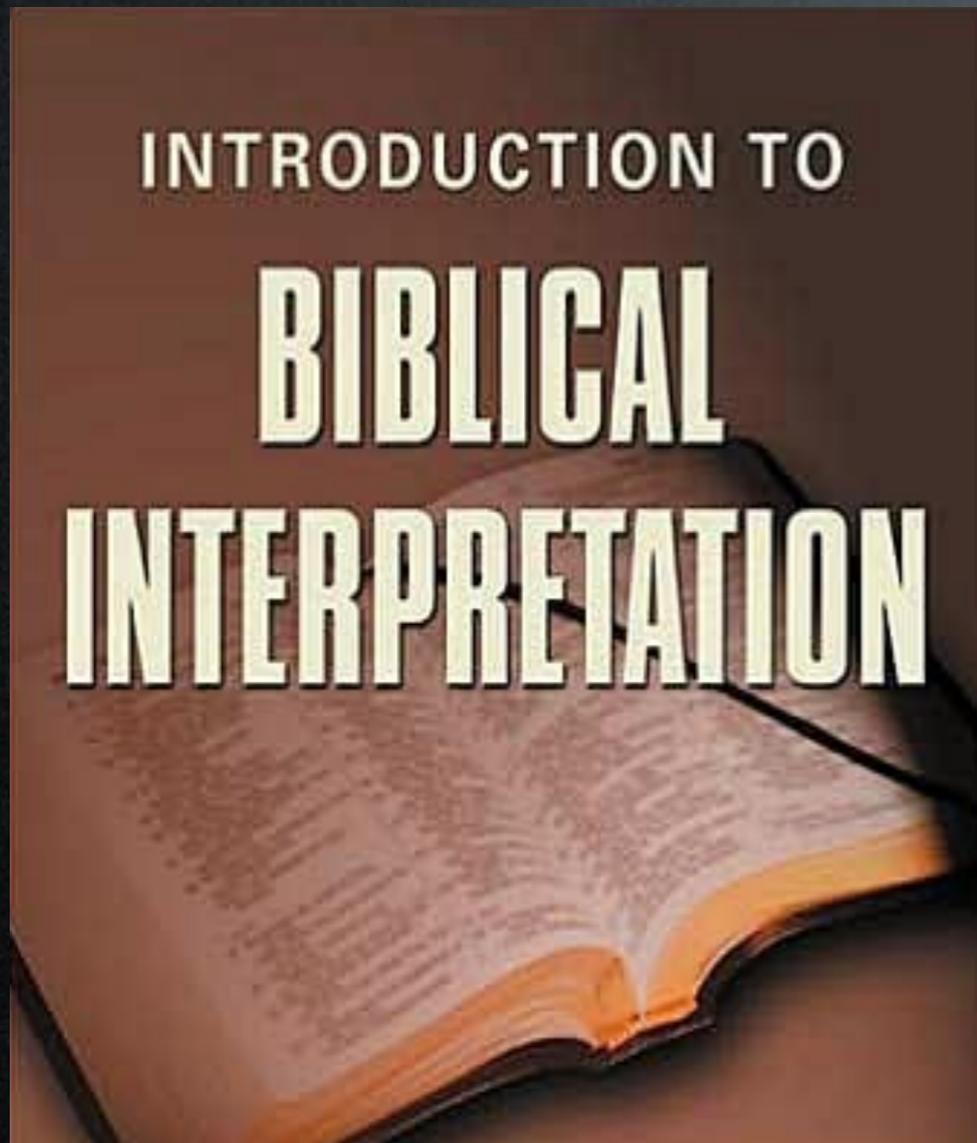
# “There is no absolute truth”



# Biblical Interpretation

- People are reading literature (including the Bible) differently than before.
- Literary interpretation uses what is called “postmodern deconstruction.”

# Biblical Interpretation



- Many Christians no longer interpret the Bible by what it says.
- Instead, they interpret the Bible by asking what the passage means to them.

What Can We Do?

# Be Prepared for a Battle

“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.”

Colossians 2:8

# Search the Scriptures

Paul says the Bereans were “noble-minded” because “they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”

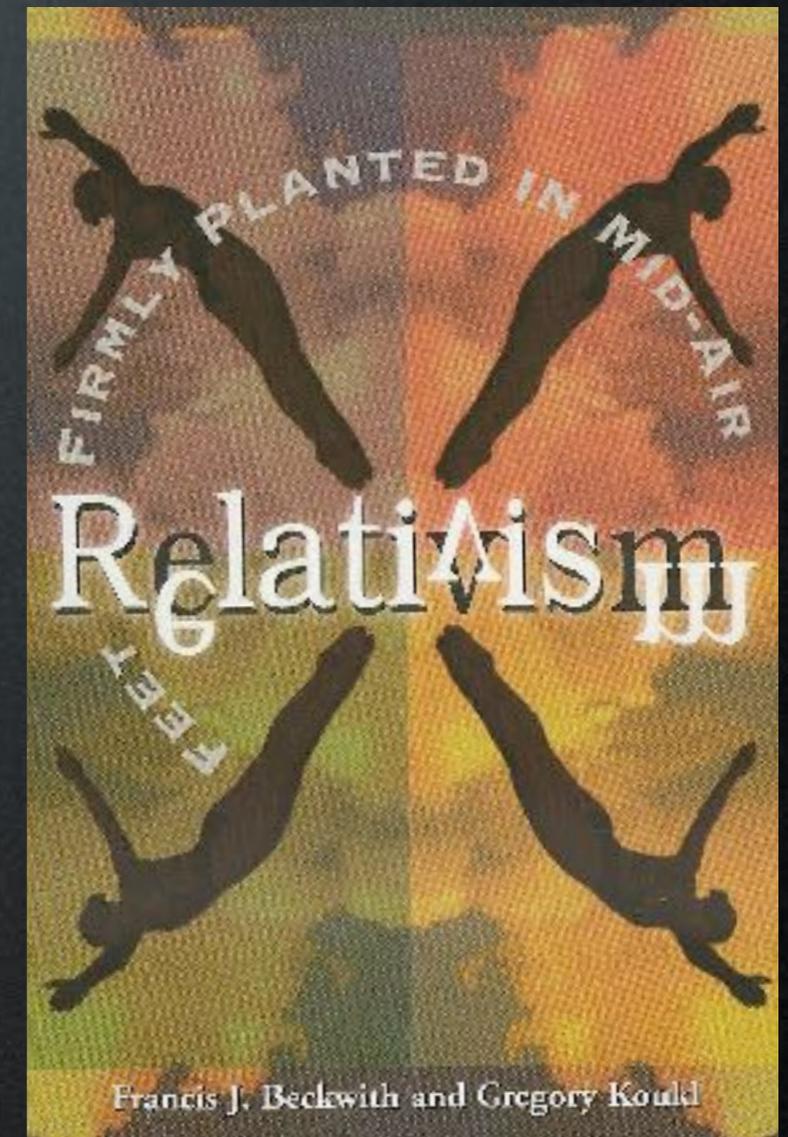
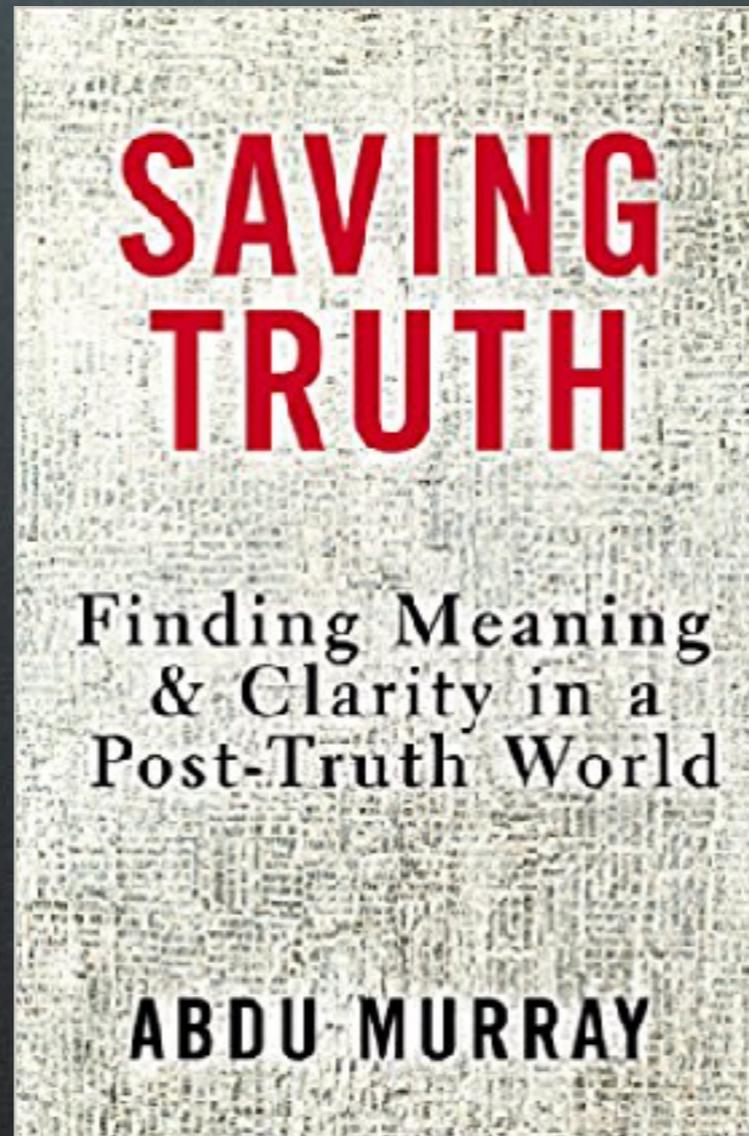
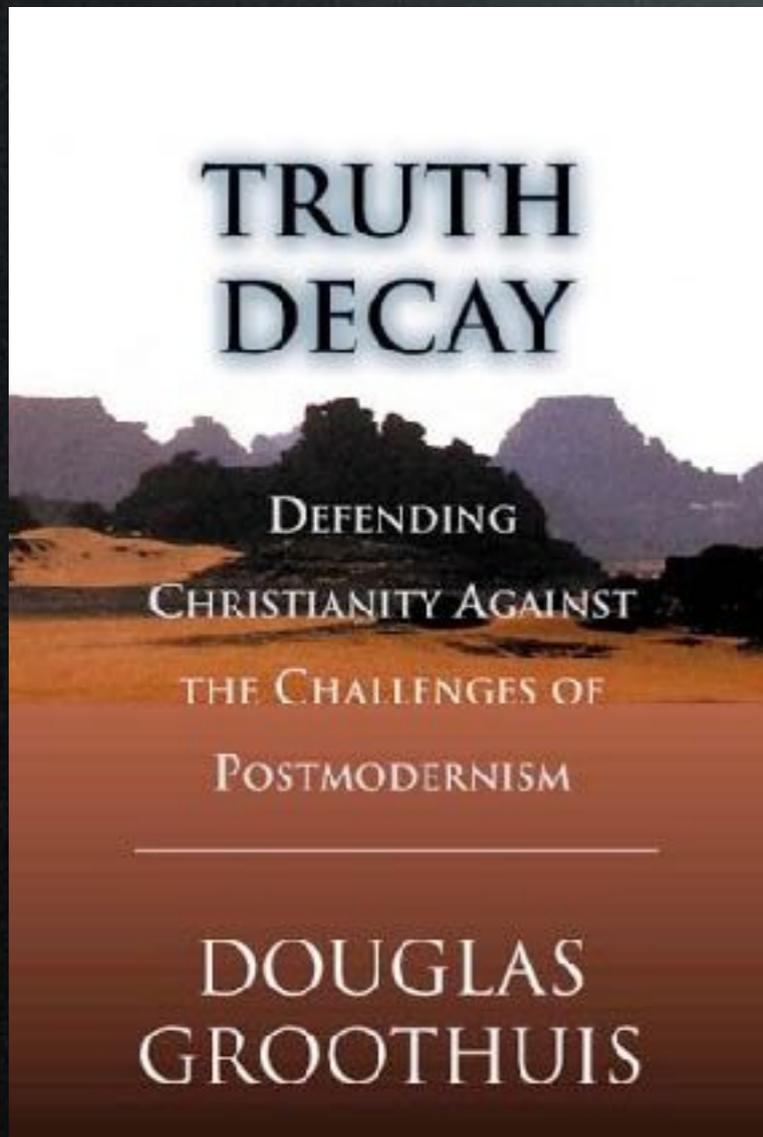
Acts 17:11

# Media and Discernment

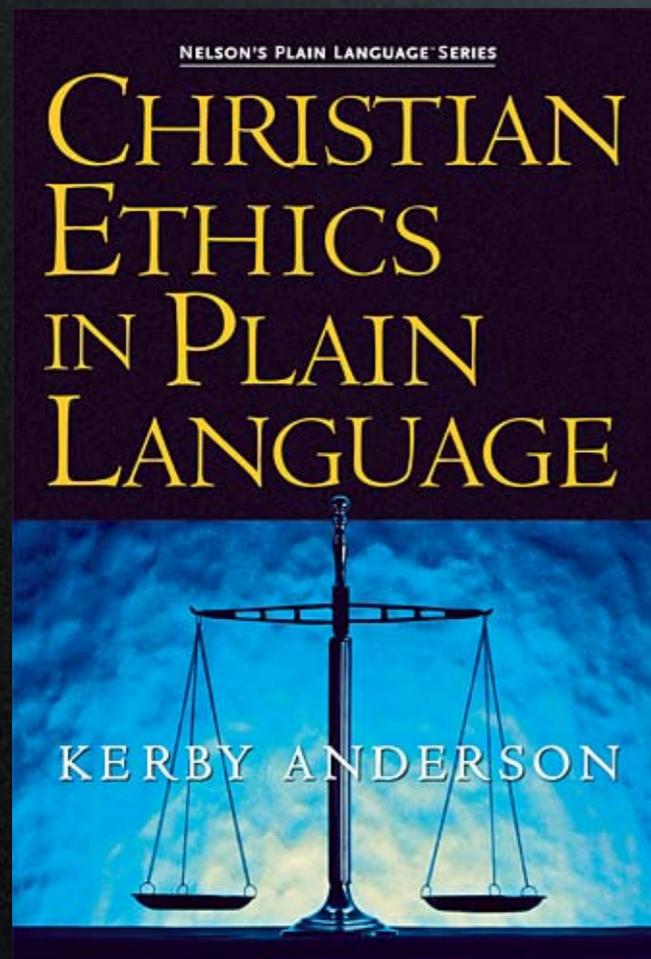
“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”

Philippians 4:8

# Resources



# Resources

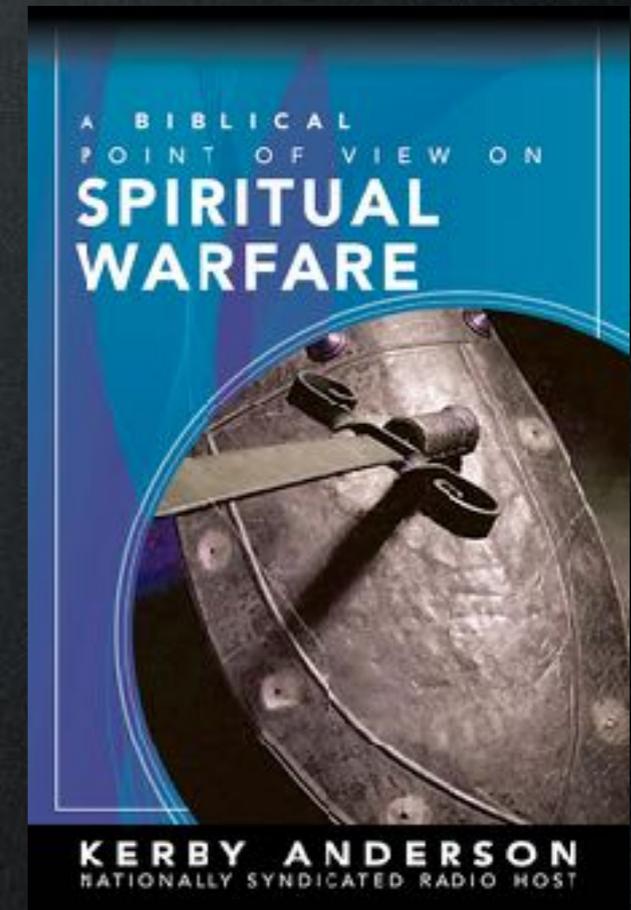
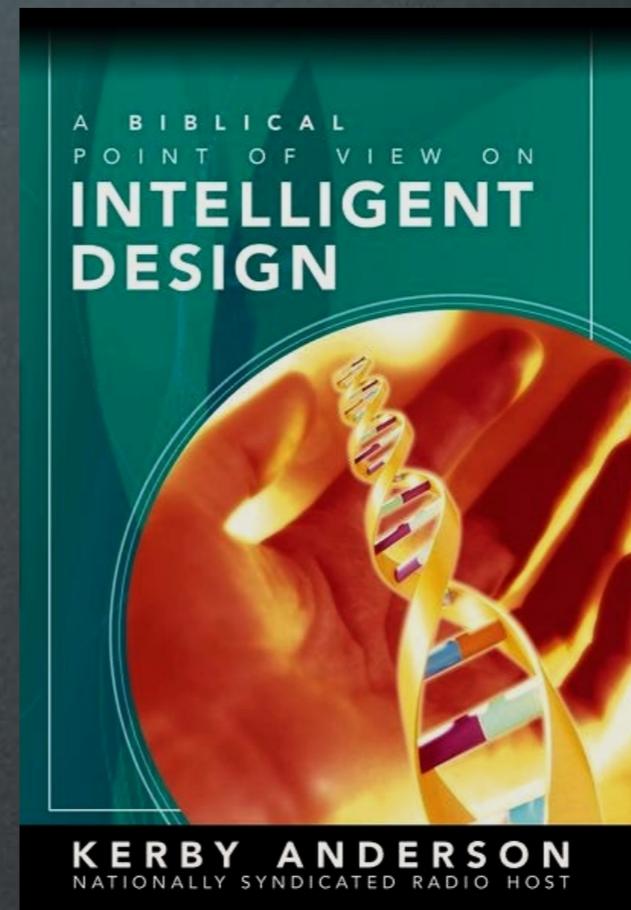
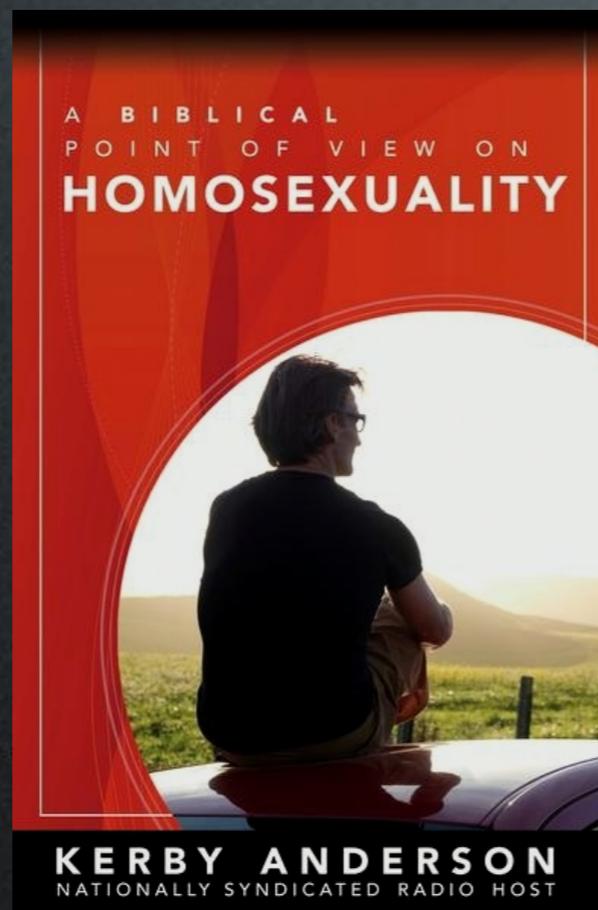
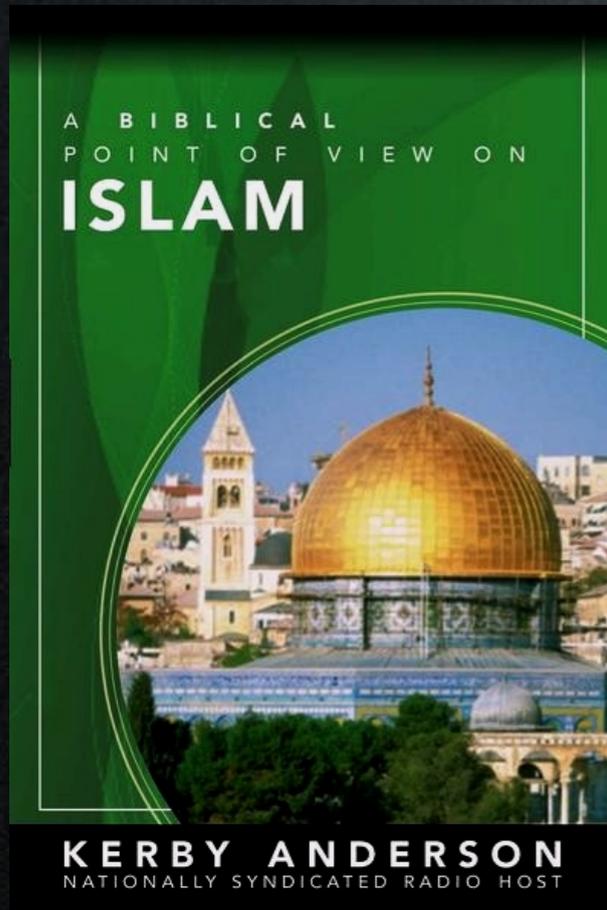


Articles on postmodernism and relativism and even a Powerpoint presentation are on the Probe website:

[www.probe.org](http://www.probe.org)

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# Harvest House Series



# Christian House Series

