



A Liquid Society

Do we underestimate the effect of postmodern culture on our faith?

The change in our cultural situation could be viewed as similar to devastating floods ... the waters simply keep rising, as old structures are weakened and people are forced to live in radically different ways. *Alan Jamieson*

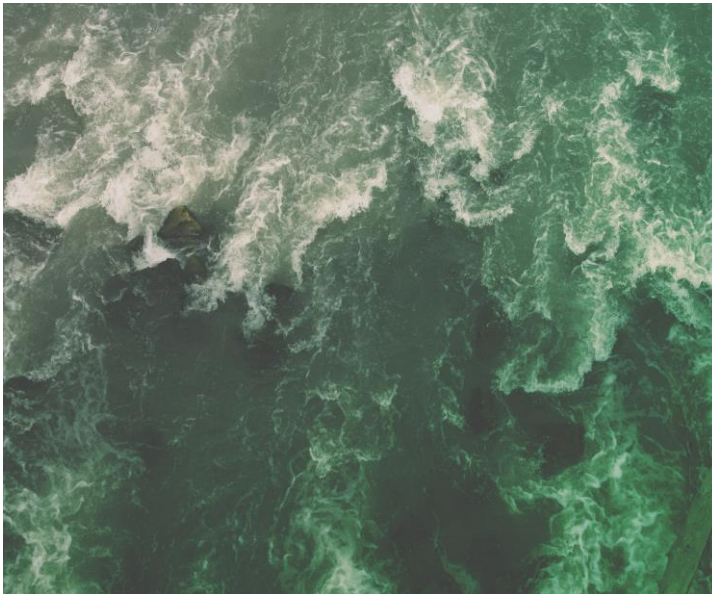


Image: unsplash.com

Our civilization's
blind progress
in wrong courses
through wrong choices
has brought us to nightmare
where what seems,
is, to the dreamer,
the collective mind
of the twentieth century –
this world of wonders
not divine creation
but a big bang
of blind chance,
purposeless accident,
mother earth's children,
their living and loving,
their delight in being
not joy but chemistry,
stimulus, reflex,
valueless, meaningless...

From Millennial Hymn to Lord Shiva by Kathleen Raine

Five streams

In his book, *Chrysalis*, Alan Jamieson highlights five key changes which, according to sociologists, drive the move into postmodernity. By exploring these, we can better appreciate their impact on our own personal faith journey.

A distrust of meta-narratives, experts and authorities creating a crisis of meaning

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the beginning of postmodernism characterised by a distrust of all big stories, overarching frameworks, and authority figures.

A loss of belief in progress creating a crisis of hope

The technologies that previous generations saw as the hope of the future have not solved perennial world problems, but have created new ones, such as environmental problems.

A move away from institutions creating a crisis of identity and belonging

Two fundamental institutions - work and marriage - have become far more fluid. People's sense of identity and belonging is being impacted by the decline of loyalty between employer and employee, and of the strength of family bonds.

A move from a production-driven economy to a consumption-driven economy creating a crisis of debt

Whereas modern capitalism was driven by production, postmodern capitalism is driven by consumerism, spawning an enormous marketing and advertising industry. While not everyone enjoys the consumer lifestyle, we are all affected by it.

An explosion of communication technology which creates a crisis in the relationship of space and time

There has been a phenomenal shift in communication technology in the last hundred years, from morse code to global teleconferencing and the internet. This affects our sense of time and space, causing us to expect to be able to get anything, from anywhere, now.

For further information: [Chrysalis](#), by Alan Jamieson

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