

## Meyer's Intro to Meeks

- **Modern Western Assumption:**
  - all publicly acceptable knowledge must be scientifically verifiable
  - value judgments (e.g. good or beautiful) are not really knowledge
  - Can be called scientism
  - dissuades some from accepting Christian belief
  - discourages believers from certain understandings of cultural experience
- **Scientism's Affect on modern Christian discernment**
  - an activity is questionable only if proven unlawful in biblical terms
  - Wisdom is separated from the law, and has less authority
  - law is deductive like science (and aligns with modern thinking)
  - wisdom is inductive like poetry

## Meeks on Doubt/Belief

- **Knowing:** the responsible human struggle to rely on clues to focus on a coherent pattern and submit to its reality
- Common Christian situation is to hold simultaneous doubt and belief
- The effect on many in the evangelical tradition
  - (for pastors) big commitments to pastor/train others can exacerbate your own doubts
  - expectation in finding certainty, an absolutely exhaustive justification or proof of what they believe
  - Feeling they are falling short and unable to "battle" others and bring others to Christ
- This effect indicates that evangelical Christianity has a prevalence of the modernist approach (over the pre-modern approach) of what knowledge is and what it means "to know"

## Meeks on Authoritative Guides

- The need to reaccredit the role authority plays in knowing
- Ordinary acts of human knowing involves:
  - A normative element
  - A guide
- No matter what the skill is, we follow someone's words or actions in doing it.
- We orient ourselves and navigate to knowing with the help of authoritative guides
- If one decides for themselves what is true, then they are declaring themselves as the ultimate authority.
- Authoritative guides are more subtle and complex, "knowers" are not ultimate but are responsible stewards to what they know
- Multiple authoritative guides
  - We navigate between guides
  - Scripture may be ultimate, but we are within a matrix of authoritative guides, including how scripture gets interpreted to which we submit
  - If used properly it puts us in touch with the world, not that which prevents us from approaching the world

## Polkinghorne on Scripture

- Scripture is not a divinely dictated textbook with all the answers
- Scripture is a record of the human encounter with the reality with God, in particular in Jesus' coming
  - Scripture has an evidential role, it is a laboratory notebook of the spiritual life
- The Church from the time of Jesus has been wrestling with the revelation of God

## Polkinghorne on Balanced Approach

- Western Christianity can overplay the role of bookishness
- Need to balance with worship experience
- Most of science is experimental, things can be repeated and verified.
- Theology, personal engagement with reality and the trans-personal side of God, is more like the observational science (cosmology, biology)
- Full reality of God can never be captured the within our rational limits
- Need to mix bookish and worship approach
  - deductive and inductive
  - move from experience to understanding