



# THE NEW COPERNICANS

**MILLENNIALS**  
AND THE SURVIVAL  
OF THE CHURCH

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER ONE

- What is the significance of frames?
- What is a social imaginary? Can you think of examples from recent books or films that get at what is the good life? Consider, for example, recent Oscar-nominated films.
- Do you agree with the weaknesses in the evangelical church that the chapter points out? Why or why not?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TWO

- How are frames shifted?
- Why are spiritually oriented millennials called New Copernicans?
- Why is research on millennials so consistently distorted? Do you agree?
- What negative stereotypes of millennials have you experienced? What stereotypes are most wrong?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER THREE

- How are the two hemispheres of the brain supposed to work together?
- How have you seen Enlightenment thinking play out in your own life, community, or church?
- Why has this made millennials more attracted to the more liturgical church traditions?
- What community is most oriented to the intuitive mind? What role do they have within the evangelical church?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER FOUR

- What is your personal experience with millennials?
- If you have millennial children, what is their spiritual trajectory?
- What steps have you taken to provide them with an on-ramp to a genuine relationship with Jesus?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER FIVE

- How are millennials both the greatest hope and challenge to the evangelical church? How do we maximize the hope and minimize the challenge?
- How are millennials leaving the church? How much of this has already happened in your church?
- What might we learn from other social institutions who are struggling to reach millennials?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER SIX

- Why are most millennials unaware of the frame shift that they carry?
- Which of the culture-shaping events between 1980 and 2015 do you deem to be most influential in shaping this generation?
- How open are you to celebrating the unique characteristics of New Copernican millennials?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER SEVEN

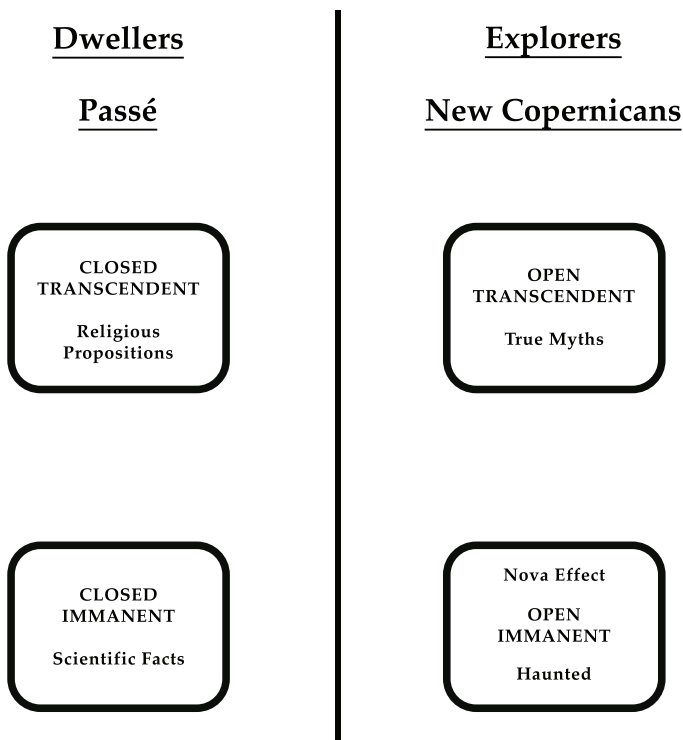
- Why is this shift from closed to open so threatening to evangelical leaders?
- How does this shift lay the groundwork for a change in attitude?
- Can one be open and still be willing to die for one's convictions?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER EIGHT

- How is this experiential bias a natural extension from New Copernicans' post-Enlightenment bias?
- Do you feel that your church experience is about gaining information versus building a spiritual relationship?
- What are some of the most memorable spiritual experiences that you have had? What made them so?
- How would embracing this preference for experience and the experiential change the way we preach or teach discipleship?

# FOUR SOCIAL IMAGINARIES

## Lens of the “Good Life”



FROM CHAPTER NINE

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER NINE

- How does this openness to a magical world change our approach to apologetics?
- How does the Nova Effect create an opportunity and a challenge to the evangelical church?
- Are you walking in pilgrimage with one of these eclectic New Copernican spiritual seekers? What have you learned from them?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TEN

- In what way is George Custer like evangelical church leaders today?
- What are the three intellectual problems with a closed transcendent mind-set?
- Have you had an experience or conversion that pushed you toward an open transcendent perspective? What was it like?
- Where does the music need to better match the lyrics in your life?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER ELEVEN

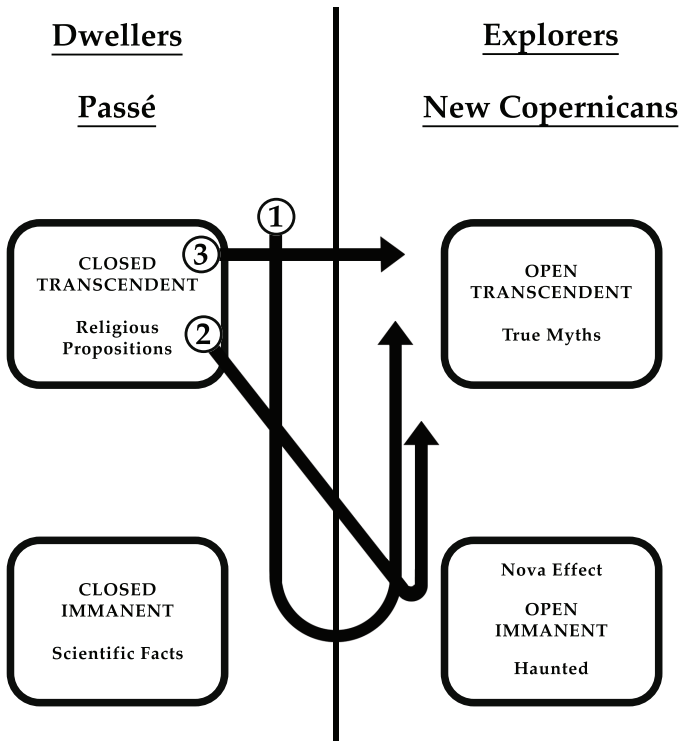
- In what ways is New Atheism culturally passé?
- How does scientism mirror religious fundamentalism?
- Where do we see openness to transcendence in science?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TWELVE

- How are Christian millennials often a distortion from an ideal New Copernican?
- What are your attitudes toward the Burning Man Festival? Do you know anyone who has gone?
- What is the difference between secularity<sub>2</sub> and secularity<sub>3</sub>? Have you observed this difference among your friends?
- What do you think it means to be an open transcendent apprentice of Jesus?

# FOUR SOCIAL IMAGINARIES

## Three Paths of Pilgrimage



FROM CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER THIRTEEN

- What is required for the church to be effective with New Copernicans?
- Why do evangelicals downplay the importance of desire?
- Have you met a person who embodies the characteristics of an open transcendent believer? What made this person different?
- What does this mean: “Whoever wants to become a Christian must first become a poet”? Does this make sense to you?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER FOURTEEN

- How have you noticed the Nova Effect in your community? Can you provide examples from your health food store or yoga studio bulletin board?
- What are the challenges and opportunities of neo-paganism?
- What are the most obvious disconnects that our neo-pagan neighbors have with us that we should overcome? Where do we connect?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER FIFTEEN

- Why is the shift from closed to open so difficult for evangelical leaders? What special challenges do they face in making this shift?
- What attitude is suggested by describing one's faith journey as a "shared sacred pilgrimage"?
- How does this understanding of pilgrimage change our views of evangelism?
- How does one create meaningful love-filled moments? Do you have relationships characterized by that?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER SIXTEEN

- How do you experience a cross-pressured reality in your own views?
- How does the cross-pressured nature of belief impact the way we proclaim and teach the faith?
- What are the institutional and structural obstacles to evangelical leaders being more vulnerable?
- What are the characteristics of an authentic person?
- Have you experienced the dark night of the soul? How did it change you?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

- How does St. Lydia's Church in Brooklyn incorporate these experiential dimensions into its corporate worship?
- How could we make our own homes and churches more experientially oriented? Could they become a local third place?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

- How is social media technology a benefit to relationships?
- What is meant by reality being understood as a verb or a noun?
- What is the difference in seeing immigration as a verb or a noun? How might this change our attitude toward other hot-button issues?
- How are tattoos a way of seeing embodiment as a verb? Do you have any tattoos? What is the story behind them?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER NINETEEN

- Why does the evangelical church desperately need court jesters?
- Do you consider the evangelical church to be real or authentic? Why or why not?
- Who is the most real person you have met? What were his or her characteristics?
- How is Christ seen in unscripted moments? Give examples.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TWENTY

- Why is the church tone-deaf to desire? How does this reflect a wrong anthropology?
- How is this sense of hauntedness an on-ramp for spiritual conversation?
- Of the four kinds of hauntedness, which one do you have the most affinity for? How would you use it as a point of contact with a New Copernican?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

- What is the danger of politicizing a person's longing for social justice or outrage over social injustice?
- How can we cause greater problems by being too quick to give answers? What is most often needed instead of answers?
- How can we each become the kind of person who sees, cares, and collaborates?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

- How can we develop our artistic sensibilities?
- How can we treat artists in an artistic manner?
- How does our church honor or support artists?
- How have we reached out to artists within our local community?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

- What are the internal and external guardrails that guide our experience and conversations about love?
- Which of the two guardrails do you have the hardest time believing is at work to guide seekers?
- How can we affirm the unity of longing without getting sucked into debates about sexual ethics or theological disagreements?
- Why must we celebrate all who are genuinely seeking?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

- In some hip churches, it is more than their hipness that connects effectively with millennials. What are some of these other factors?
- Do you see those factors in your churches, or are there places that need to improve?
- Why is *evangelism* a problem term for New Copernicans? How can we correct this problem?
- What is the role of the Bible in these shared spiritual pilgrimages?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

- Why is habitus so determinative?
- Why is habitus so difficult to change?
- Which of these habitus, if any, do you find most appealing?
- What are some of the problems with the current evangelical habitus? How would you move away from them?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

- What are three approaches one can take to this frame shift?  
What approach is being advocated for here?
- Why are paradigm shifts difficult to navigate? Have you navigated them before in your ministry?
- How can you personally change your approach and what steps can you start taking in your church?