



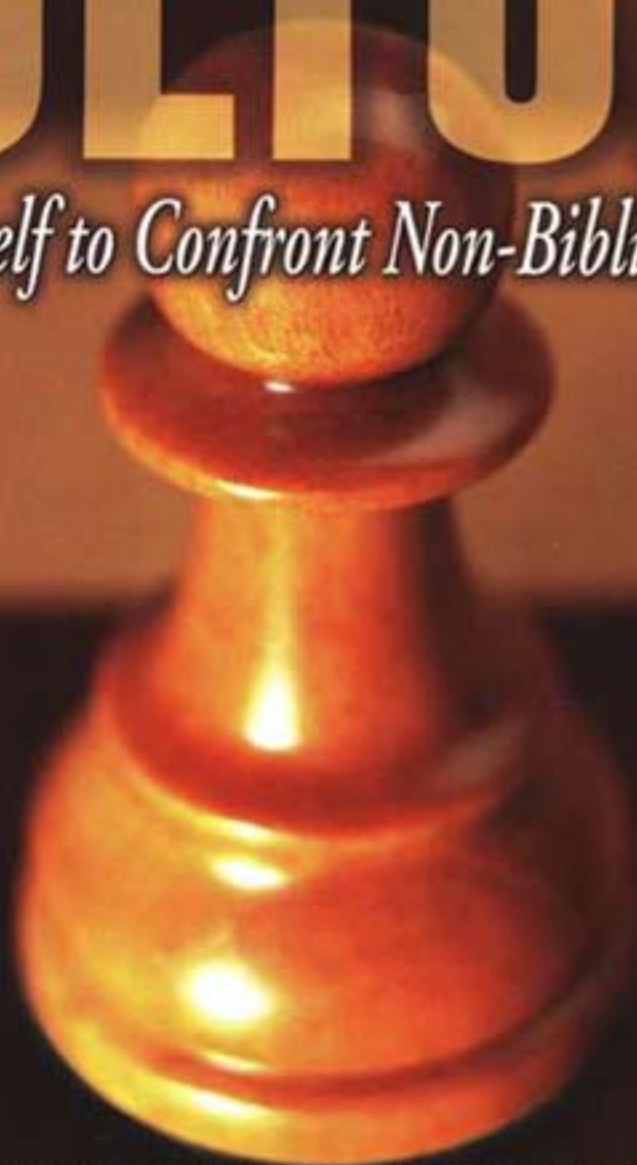
W O R L D V I E W S I N F O C U S

INCLUDES LEADER'S GUIDES ON CD
with detailed lesson plans
for home school, youth group,
college and adults.



COUNTERING CULTURE

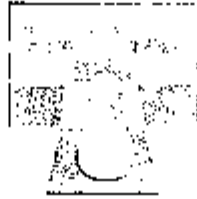
Arming Yourself to Confront Non-Biblical Worldviews



FROM THE AUTHORS OF THINKING LIKE A CHRISTIAN
Countering Culture
complements and
expands the
*Thinking Like
A Christian*
study.
FROM THE AUTHORS OF THINKING LIKE A CHRISTIAN

DAVID NOEBEL AND CHUCK EDWARDS

CHAPTER 1



Engaging Our Post-Christian Culture

“...as a society we are in the midst of secularization, and therefore we are an utterly irreconcilable mix of rival views of the universe, of human nature and the human good.... The culture wars are cosmological wars.”¹

—BENJAMIN WIKER

“When we American college teachers encounter religious fundamentalists, we do not consider the possibility of reformulating our own practices of justification so as to give more weight to the authority of the Christian scriptures. Instead, we do our best to convince these students of the benefits of secularization. Rather, I think these students are lucky to find themselves under the benevolent Herrschaft of people like me, and to have escaped the grip of their frightening, vicious, dangerous parents.”²

—RICHARD RORTY

A mother's tear-stained letter describes what happened when her daughter went off to college: "Our daughter was raised in Christian schools and in a Christian home where we taught her Christian values and morals. . . . Two years out of high school—at 20 years old, she enrolled at the University. . . . Unfortunately she was overwhelmed by the professors and began to believe their philosophies. . . . and has turned her back on all that she believed in."

How tragic! Yet this one example represents a growing trend: Kids raised in Christian homes lose their faith while attending college. What causes a bright young woman to turn her back on all she has been taught to believe for 20 years? James Dobson and

1 CHRONICLES 12:32

From the Issacharites, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do: 200 chiefs with all their kinsmen under command.

Gary Bauer have an answer to why a once faithful college student would turn her back on Christ. In their book, *Children at Risk*, Dobson and Bauer write, "Nothing short of a great Civil

War of Values rages today throughout North America. Two sides with vastly differing and incompatible worldviews are locked in a bitter conflict that permeates every level of society." They go on to describe the present civil war as a struggle "for the hearts and minds of people. It is a war over ideas."

The centerpiece of the conflict is the battle between competing worldviews. The Christian worldview stands on one side while on the other are the humanistic worldviews which can be divided into three branches: Secular Humanism, Postmodern Marxism, and Cosmic Humanism (including New Age pantheism and Neo-paganism). Although these three worldviews do not agree in every detail, there is

one point on which they unanimously concur—they oppose biblical Christianity.

"Someday soon," Dobson and Bauer note, "a winner [in the battle for hearts and minds] will emerge and the loser will fade from memory. For now, the outcome is very much in doubt." In order to survive on the front lines, much less emerge victorious, Christians must mimic the ancient tribe of Issachar which led the nation of Israel because they had an understanding of the times and knew what they ought to do (see 1 Chronicles 12:32).

SALTY CHRISTIANS

As with the Israelites centuries ago, there is a need for faithful people today to understand the times in which they live. The late rheologist and philosopher Francis Schaeffer observed, "The basic problem of the Christians in this country [referring to the United States of America in the mid-1980's] in the last eighty years or so... is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals." Schaeffer suggests that most Christians view their lives as a set of isolated, independent areas which do not necessarily interact with each another. They fail to see how their belief in God and the Bible interrelates with their personal, social, and community lives, and they do not understand or act as if Christianity is a total world and life view.

There are at least two consequences of this "bit and piece" focus. First, we have not understood the scriptural admonition to develop a total Christian mind. Recall that Jesus' Great Commandment in Matthew 22:37-38 includes loving God with our minds as well as our hearts. The failure to heed both aspects of this command has led to an intellectually anemic Christianity. George Barna explains the result of this anti-intellectual approach, "Without a biblical



MATTHEW 22:37-38

He [Jesus] said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment."

worldview, all the great teaching goes in one ear and out the other. There are no intellectual pegs . . . in the mind of the individual to hang these truths on. So they just pass through. They don't stick. They don't make a difference." No wonder most Christians can't remember on Monday what the sermon was about the day before!

Second, a "bit and piece" focus causes many Christians to make a distinction between what is "sacred" (e.g., Bible study, prayer, church attendance, witnessing) and other areas of life that are "secular" (vocation, political involvement, education, psychology, etc.). Thinking about life in this sacred/secular dichotomy has resulted in the church generally withdrawing from those areas considered to be secular. This withdrawal by Christians actually began in the mid-1800's and accelerated in the early twentieth century as the church abandoned first one area of public life and then another. Those with a humanistic worldview, far removed from the biblical Christian perspective, filled the void in the public arena left by Christians.

The results of this shift in worldview have been the demise of both public and private morals, a debasement of law and politics, an undermining of

Author Heather MacDonald notes simply that we are now living under a heavy "burden of bad ideas."

educational values, and the corruption of media and popular culture. Over the past two decades, several authors have noted the rapid decline of our society's soul. Chuck Colson, President of Prison Fellowship, describes our social decline as an approaching storm ready to plunge our culture into a new Dark Age.² Judge Robert Bork suggests that our nation has become like a beast heading toward a modern-day Gomorrah.³ And author Heather MacDonald notes simply that we are now living under a heavy "burden of bad ideas."⁴

In contrast to the way many Christians approach life today, Jesus taught that the church ought to have an upbuilding and enlightening influence on society (see Matthew 5:13). With the removal of a distinctly Christian influence in areas of public concern, the outcome has been an increasingly tasteless and dark society—as evidenced every day on the news. The antidote is that

Christians need to replace our narrow "bit and piece" focus with a broader understanding and application of the total picture of biblical truth.

MATTHEW 5:13

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled on by men.

It was God's intent all along that man should apply righteous principles to every area of life. After creating Adam and Eve, God instructs them to have dominion over all living creatures (see Genesis 1:26-28)—historically referred to as the Cultural Commission. Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey comment, "Until the sixth day, God has done the work of creation directly. But now he creates the first human beings and orders them to carry on where he leaves off: They are to reflect his image and to have dominion (Gen. 1:26). From then on, the development of the creation will be

Chuck Colson's first major entry into public life came as the 29 year-old manager of the 1950 California senate campaign for Congressman Richard Nixon. More than two decades of unflinching loyalty to the man who became the 36th president of the United States brought him to the forefront of the Watergate crisis—and to the frontlines of America's spiritual battle. In 1974, his newfound faith led him first to prison and then to begin one of the most powerful prison ministries in U.S. history. During the past 30 years, he also has become a leading spokesperson for biblical worldview thinking, through both his writing (such as *How Now Shall We Live?*) and his "Breakpoint" daily radio program. Taken from the 2003 biography *Charles Colson: A Story of Power, Corruption, and Redemption* by John Perry (Broadman & Holman Publishers), the following excerpt reflects Colson's courageous defense of the faith from his earliest days as a Christian.

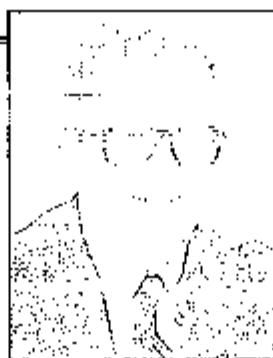
Just before lunch the switchboard at Dickstein, Shapiro & Morin sprang to life. Every reporter in Washington, it seemed, wanted a statement from Chuck Colson. This was what happened every time some big announcement was made. At last, Colson thought, *the indictments have come through.*

The first call he took was from Aldo Beckman, Washington bureau chief of the *Chicago Tribune*. There were reports on the news wires about Colson attending a prayer meeting at the White House, and Colson and Hughes becoming friends. "And then there's something else here about your having found religion."

Colson's face flushed with anger. "My religion is my own business and I'm not about to talk about it in the public press."

"Jerry Warren announced it. It's already public."

As calls poured in, Colson asked his secretary to make a list of them. Then he thought about what had



CHUCK COLSON

happened that morning. He had been to the White House many times since resigning from the presidential staff. Why had [Dan] Rather decided to ask about this particular visit? Why hadn't Warren brushed the question aside?

Colson briefly supposed it could be a one-in-a-thousand coincidence, but then had another thought: this was all God's doing. He was recognizing Chuck's commitment and at the same time making sure he couldn't backtrack on it. Chuck Colson was now locked into living his life for Jesus. He couldn't deny it, couldn't soft-pedal it, so he did his best to explain it, calling back all the reporters and telling them he had accepted Christ.

*Colson offers these reflections
in the biography's epilogue:*

I can see the pattern that God has used in my life and the things he's led me into. And the one thing I can tell you . . . is that I never planned any of this out. I didn't plan to start a resurgence of the born again movement. I didn't plan to try and be the driving force in getting people to take up the gospel, salt and light, in the form of prison ministry.

I wasn't the guy who sat down and thought, "You know maybe some time we should start talking about Christian worldview because we live in an era of radical individualism and people need to be thinking about these things." I didn't strategize that, I just felt a real hunger for it, and studied it, greatly influenced by Francis Schaeffer. And I started to pick that up after Schaeffer died; it was just a natural thing.

It was a kind of outgrowth of what I was doing, and an outlet for my own intellectual pursuits. And yet it's turned out to be extremely timely, certainly after the terrorist attacks of September 11 [2001]; this is a worldview clash that we're in the middle of, the battle of worldviews between Islam and Christianity.

primarily social and cultural: It will be the work of humans as they obey God's command to fill and subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28)."¹

In the life of Daniel in the Old Testament, we find an example of a man living out the Cultural Commission in the midst of a pagan culture. Daniel was trained in the "language and literature of the Babylonians" (Daniel 1:4), excelled in a high government position, and yet maintained a strict devotion to God.

STAYING OUT OF CAPTIVITY

The Scriptures warn us not to be taken captive by the deceptive philosophies pervading our culture (Colossians 2:8). What makes non-Christian worldviews deceptive? A deception is anything that pretends to be the real thing but is not. A deceptive worldview looks good on the surface, but in fact does not conform to the way things actually are. It is a counterfeit of the real thing.

Some Christians insist that believers should stick only to studying the Bible and not waste time becoming familiar with deceptive philosophies. Some even use the example that U.S. Treasury agents supposedly are trained to spot counterfeit currency by analyzing only real bills. But this is actually an urban legend. In reality, agents have a thorough knowledge of faked bills as well. By knowing how to spot both the real and the counterfeit, they are not fooled when presented with a cleverly designed fraud. Similarly, Christians must be aware not only of why a biblical Christian worldview represents the real thing, but also of the earmarks of a false worldview.

Besides being a need for every Christian person-

ally, it is critical for Christian parents and teachers to endow younger people with protection against deceptive philosophies. In fact, not to prepare the next generation to understand other worldviews sets them up for nearly certain failure. Professor William McGuire conducted experiments to study how students respond when a persuasive speaker tries to change their minds about a commonly held belief. The study used as an example the idea that brushing teeth is good for oral health.² McGuire found that students who were given only a general verbal reinforcement of what they already believed (called a "concept boost")—in this experiment, that brushing one's teeth is good—were found to change their minds in greater

numbers than those who were given clearly delineated reasons for refuting arguments presented by the speaker.

The findings of this study parallel what happens to many Christian young people today. If Christian teens are given only a "concept boost" by their parents, pastors, and youth leaders—that they should "believe in God and the Bible"—then when they are confronted in college with persuasive arguments against believing in God and the Bible by articulate

non-Christian faculty, these students are defenseless. In contrast, students who understand why non-Christian worldviews are false are able not only to withstand attacks on their faith, but also are equipped to go on the offensive by using winning arguments of their own. Adult Christians experience the same thing. They become intimidated and afraid to speak out for what is moral and true because they are not sure what to say, how to say it, or why their view makes sense.

COLOSSIANS 2:8

Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ.



HOW ARE WE DOING?

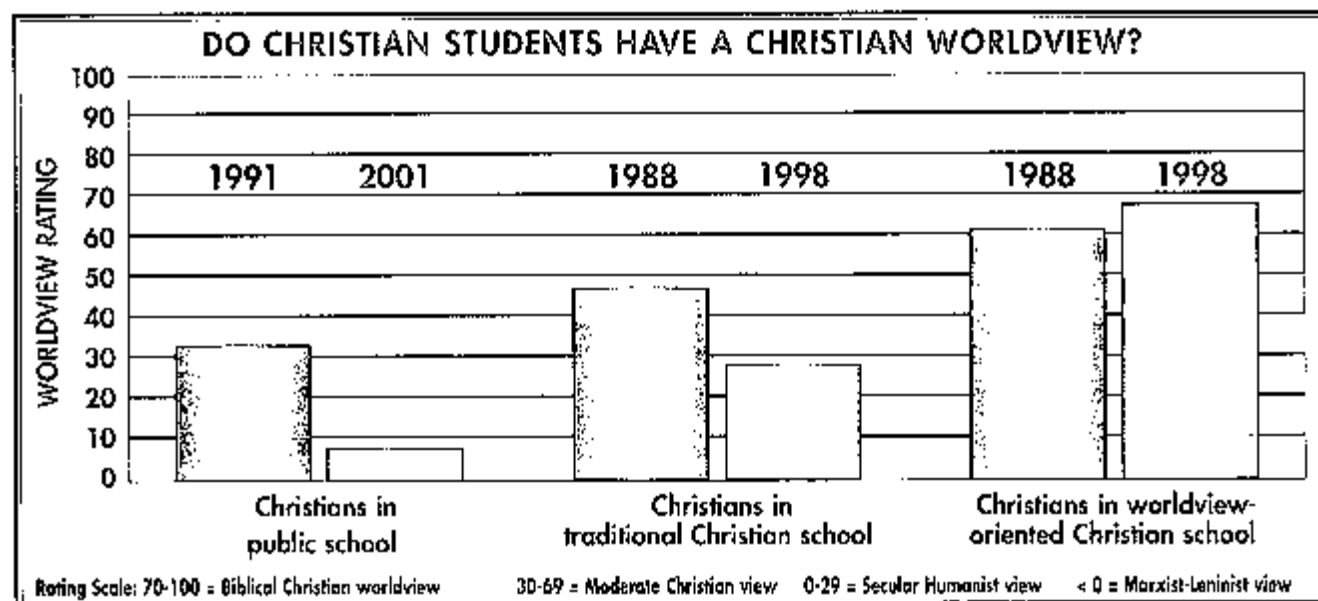
Christian students are especially vulnerable to being captured by alien worldviews while attending college. UCLA has surveyed students attending universities and colleges across America and has found that between 34 and 51 percent of the students who claim to be "born again" as freshmen no longer place themselves in that category by their senior year.¹⁵ This is a tremendous dropout rate!

Evidently, we are not preparing Christian young people to face the worldview challenges of a college education. But what can account for a shift of this magnitude away from Christianity? Which worldviews have the greatest influence during the teen years? To explore this issue, the Nehemiah Institute developed a survey to determine the worldviews of high school students in five key areas: politics, education, economics, religion, and social issues (P.E.E.R.S.). This survey evaluates the degree to which the student's worldview aligns with biblical Christianity. The instrument yields a score from negative one hundred to positive one hundred. A score in

the 70 to 100 range means a student is answering the questions in line with an essentially biblical Christian viewpoint. Students who score between 30 and 69 are embracing a more moderate Christian worldview and could well move away from a biblical viewpoint on a number of key issues if presented with persuasive arguments. From 0 to 29, the student is thinking like a Secular Humanist in the majority of key areas. Even though students in this range may say they have a love for Jesus in their hearts, they are approaching life's major issues as practicing atheists. A student with a score of less than zero is responding to the questions as a Marxist-Leninist.¹¹

Christian students in over 45 states have taken the P.E.E.R.S. survey since 1988, and their average scores show a steady decline. For Christians from evangelical churches who also attended public schools, the score in 1991 was 33, barely in the moderate Christian category. By 2001, the average for the same group had dropped to 8.2—a strong Secular Humanist position.

Stop and let that sink in a minute. Our best and brightest Christian youth actually are thinking like atheists when it comes to the major moral, social,



political and educational issues of our day! If this trend continues, it is estimated that the church will have lost an entire generation of Christian youth by the year 2015.

Unfortunately, students attending “traditional” Christian schools do not fair much better. A traditional Christian school is defined as one which may have chapel services, Bible classes, and begin classes with prayer but does not provide an inter-disciplinary worldview approach in every subject. From an average high of 47.2 in 1988, student scores fell to 29.7 by 1998. Only in Christian schools that emphasize a worldview approach in every class was there a gain over this same ten-year period, from 61.2 to 67.7.

The results of the P.E.E.R.S. survey tell us two things. First, Christian students in typical educational settings (whether government schools or “traditional” Christian schools) are being influenced more by secular culture than by a biblical worldview. Second, when presented with a well-planned approach to worldview issues, teens can embrace and defend the biblical perspective on those issues.

SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS

George Barna, in his book *Generation Next*, helps us understand the youth to whom we will soon entrust the future of Western civilization. Barna reports:

Because the Bible and most religious activities are foreign to them and seem irrelevant to what “real life” is all about, they perceive two parallel worlds—coexisting: the spiritual, impractical world that contains many pure and absolute (and impractical) dictums (such as truth, morality, love, faith), and the real world, the one they inhabit, which deals with

the hard stuff of daily living. Truth may be a wonderful concept, but many teens don’t have sufficient interest in such an “impractical” or unrealistic concept to explore it further. Millions of those who do have the interest do not have the philosophical, intellectual and spiritual foundations to take such an exploration to the next level. [emphasis added].

Barna concludes that even among those who have a desire to follow the truth (which presumably would include many of the youth in our Christian homes and churches) they do not have the “spiritual foundations” on which to build! One Christian college administrator put it this way: “Students come here with a love for God in their hearts, but their minds think like pagans.” To reverse this disturbing trend, parents, pastors, and youth leaders must teach the next generation how to think biblically and how to take the lead in making positive changes in our culture. That may mean parents, pastors, and youth leaders must themselves learn to counter our culture with godly insight!

SETTING CAPTIVES FREE

Not only are we warned about falling victim to deceitful philosophies, we also are instructed to set free those who have been captured by these same philosophies (2 Timothy 2:24-26). In 2 Corinthians 10:5, Paul explains how to do this. He tells Christ’s followers to “...demolish arguments and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”

The best way to demolish an argument is to point out its inconsistencies and offer a better argument in its place. All non-biblical worldviews have distinct

weaknesses because they are out of sync with the real world. Once these weaknesses are brought to light, they can be contrasted with the strength of the biblical position. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul provides an excellent example of putting into practice what he preached.

In Acts 17 we read that upon entering Athens, the intellectual and cultural center of the Roman Empire, Paul observed the pagan altars and idols that abounded in the city. As a result, "his spirit was greatly troubled" (v. 16). But instead of being depressed and discouraged, Paul took action. He "reasoned in the synagogue... and in the market-

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4-5

We demolish arguments and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

2 TIMOTHY 2:24-26

²⁴The Lord's slave must not quarrel, but must be gentle to everyone, able to teach, and patient, ²⁵instructing his opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant them repentance to know the truth. ²⁶Then they may come to their senses and escape the Devil's trap, having been captured by him to do his will.

place every day ..." with those who happened to be present (v. 17). The same should be true for Christians today. When we observe our culture and see how it is dominated by secular and pagan worldviews, we should feel compelled to rescue those captured by alien worldviews and take appropriate action.

Paul's action was a "reasoned" dialogue—a public debate. This caught the attention of the city leaders, who invited him to address their council. Never underestimate God's ability to use our efforts to spread His truth. For instance, a graduate from one of Summit Ministries' summer leadership camps was motivated to take an active role in shaping society.

When she noticed an article in the local newspaper highlighting a proposed sex-education curriculum for the local schools, she wrote a letter to the editor expressing her opposition to it, providing a well-reasoned argument why teaching "safe-sex" techniques in school was not in the best interest of the students nor the community. This

caught the attention of a businessman who invited this young lady to present her views to those in his civic club. This, in turn, led to other invitations to speak to other civic groups. On one occasion, a state senator attending the meeting was so impressed that he asked her to testify in the state capitol before a subcommittee on education. All of this from writing one letter!

It is worth noting that as Paul stood before the leaders of Athens the first words out of his mouth was a compliment. He said, "I see that you are religious in every respect" (v. 22). Instead of haranguing his audience for their false beliefs, Paul attempts to gain their ear. He was addressing the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, whose philosophies are comparable to the atheists (Secular Humanists and Postmodernists) and pantheists (Cosmic Humanists) of our day. During Paul's speech, he demonstrates his knowledge of their beliefs by quoting from their own authorities. In finding common ground between his worldview and theirs, Paul acknowledges God's general revelation to all men (Romans 1:19-20). Every worldview has some points of contact with the way God has made the world; otherwise no one would believe it. Paul used this to his advantage, and similarly, we need to discern where a person's beliefs intersect the truth and use that knowledge to lead him or her out of deception and into the light of God's truth.

Paul begins his apologetic by addressing the question



PAUL'S SERMON TO THE ATHENIAN LEADERS

While Paul was waiting for them [Silas and Timothy] in Athens, his spirit was troubled within him when he saw that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with those who worshiped God, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Then also, some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers argued with him. Some said, "What is this pseudo-intellectual trying to say?"

Others replied, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign deities"—because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

They took him and brought him to the Areopagus, and said, "May we learn about this new teaching you're speaking of? For what you say sounds strange to us, and we want to know what these ideas mean." Now all the Athenians and the foreigners residing there spent their time on nothing else but telling or hearing something new.

Then Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it—He is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in shrines made by hands. Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. From one man He has made every nation of men to live all over the earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live, so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' Being God's offspring, then, we shouldn't think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination.

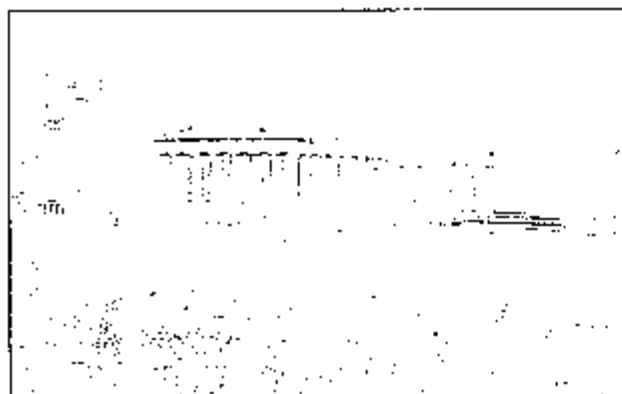
"Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has set a day on which He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead."

When they heard about resurrection of the dead, some began to ridicule him. But others said, "We will hear you about this again." So Paul went out from their presence. "However, some men joined him and believed, among whom were Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

of theology, "What about God?" Because Paul had "looked carefully" at their religious expressions and understood their worldview, he found an opening for the truth. He pointed to one of their altars erected "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD," and realized that built into their belief system was an unanswered question, "What if there is a God whom we don't know?" The Greeks had filled a pantheon with gods to oversee every conceivable situation in life. Yet, even with thousands of gods, they feared that some god might be left out. So in order to cover their bases, they built this

altar. Paul used their lack of knowledge to explain that this "unknown God" is the Creator of "the world [cosmos] and everything in it," and that He is "Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in shrines made by hands" (v. 24). This declaration counters the Epicureans' practical atheism that placed the "gods" in another realm, inaccessible to the material universe. It also corrected the Stoics' pantheistic belief that the various Greek gods reflected different representations of the "world soul."

Paul then turns from theology to psychology



The Acropolis in Athens, Greece remains today near the site where Paul of Tarsus argued the truth of Christianity with Stoic and Epicurean philosophers.

("What about man?"). He declares that man receives "life and breath and all things" from the one Creator and that "from one man—He [God] has made every nation of men..." (v. 25-26). The purpose of each individual, Paul continues, is to "seek God and perhaps they might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (v. 27). Then Paul quotes two Greek poets who had written similar ideas. Epimenides, the 6th century BC philosopher, has said, "For in him we live and move and exist" and the Stoic, Aratus, a poet who had lived 300 years earlier, wrote, "We are also His offspring" (v. 28). While these comments were originally directed toward Zeus, not Yahweh of the Hebrew Scriptures, Paul recognized the ideas expressed were essentially correct.

By way of application, Paul then says, "Being God's offspring, then, we shouldn't think that the divine nature is... an image fashioned by human art and imagination" (v. 29). Paul had just made it clear that the Athenians' "unknown God" was the exact opposite of an idol—it was His skill that designed us, not the other way around. That being the case, God calls all men to repent because "he has set a day on which He is going to judge the world in righteousness" (v. 30). Paul makes the connection between theology, psychology and ethics by presenting the notion

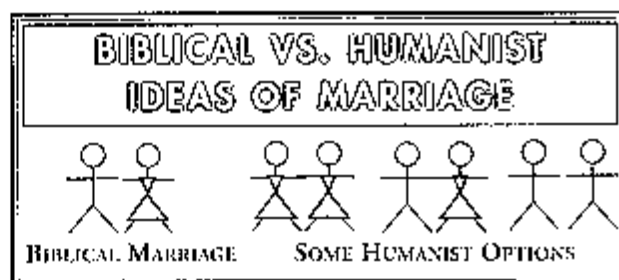
that God is holy and just and man is sinful and separated from God's righteousness and needs to repent of his moral failings (for an explanation of these ideas, see Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 3, verses 21-26).

Why should those listening to Paul believe this picture of reality? ("How do I know?" is a key question of philosophy.) Paul affirms that God "has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him [Jesus] from the dead" (v. 31). As the capstone of Paul's argument, he appeals to the resurrection of Jesus (the central issue in the worldview category of history). His argument rests on a historical event validated by numerous eyewitnesses (this is detailed in Paul's account found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

Those who heard Paul that day responded in one of three ways: with contempt (probably the Epicureans because their worldview precluded a bodily resurrection), contemplation ("We will hear you about this again," most likely echoed by some of the Stoics), or commitment ("some... believed.") (v.32-34). We can expect the same range of responses as we share with others that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

WHAT IS THE FAMILY?

When it comes to demolishing deceptive philosophies, consider a contentious question of our day: What is a family? A national debate currently rages



over this issue. On one side are the humanists who define family in a way that is fluid and changes with the times. They claim the biblically prescribed family (one man and one woman married for life in order to establish a home and raise children) is not necessarily the only way or even the best way to define marriage and the family. In fact, both Secular and Cosmic Humanists insist that people should have the freedom to establish any kind of marriage they desire—two men living together, two women together, or any other combination of their choice.

Does the biblical view offer individuals and society a better answer to the “What is a family” question? Does it have a better “fit” with the real world?

Numerous social, psychological, and demographic studies reveal that husbands, wives, and children are all better off emotionally, physically, spiritually, economically, and academically when the traditional family unit is maintained. The following are just two examples from the many that could be cited:

- ? Divorced more likely
- Married mothers are half likely to experience domestic violence as are never-married mothers.
 - Teenagers from intact, two-parent families have a 20 percent lower rate of sexual activity than their counterparts living with a single, divorced, remarried, or cohabitating parent.¹⁶

The answer to the family question clearly is: “Yes, the traditional family is best for individuals and for society.”

As these statistics suggest, general revelation (also described as “natural law,” i.e., what we can discern from studying the world around us) works in concert with God’s special revelation (the Bible) to present a consistent picture of reality. Thus, a biblical worldview

appeals to natural law as well as divine law in demonstrating how a biblical perspective offers the best course for life. As Christians, we should be actively persuading our friends and fellow citizens of the truth of God’s design for life. As we do this, we are fulfilling Jesus’ call to be “salt and light” in our world.

FACING THE CHALLENGE

As the Apostle Paul faced the religious worldviews of his day, so faithful and aware Christians must face the false philosophies of our day. In the West, this means facing humanism and postmodernism in all

forms. Since there are biblical and practical reasons to study other worldviews, where should we begin? This text

The heart of Christian theology is theism,
just as the heart of Secular Humanist
biology is evolution or the heart of
Cosmic Humanist ethics is relativism.

provides an introduction to Secular Humanist, Postmodern Marxist, and Cosmic Humanist worldviews while presenting an intelligent defense of biblical Christianity. We intend to present these views as accurately as possible. No humanist, upon reading this text, should find that we misrepresent the humanist position. When we say Secular Humanism is atheistic, we show you why by presenting what Secular Humanists say about the issue. When we note that Cosmic Humanist ethics are morally relative, you will read supporting statements from their own books and articles. When we contend that Marxist sociology relies on class warfare, you will hear that from Marxist sociologists. No quote has been taken out of context purposely. We have, in the best tradition of Christian scholarship, allowed proponents of alternative worldviews to have their say as they wish to say it.



FOUR WESTERN WORLDVIEW MODELS				
	BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY	SECULAR HUMANISM	POSTMODERN MARXISM	COSMIC HUMANISM
SOURCES	THE BIBLE	HUMANIST MANIFESTOS I, II, III	MARX, NIETZSCHE, FOUCAULT, PROBY	WRITINGS OF SPENCER, FERGUSON, ETC.
THEOLOGY	Theism	Atheism/Scepticism	Materialism/Atheism	Earthism/Organism
PHILOSOPHY	Supernaturalism	Naturalism	Anti-Fundamentalism	Non-Naturalism
BIOLOGY	Creation	Darwinian Evolution	Class Theory	Cosmic Evolution
PSYCHOLOGY	Dualism/Mind/Body	Monism/Self-Actualization	Nihilism, Will to power	Mindless Higher Consciousness
ETHICS	Moral Absolutes	Ethical Relativism		Individual Autonomy
SOCIOLOGY	Traditional Home, Church and State	Non-Traditional Family	Culturally Constructed Values	Non-Traditional Home, Church and State
LAW	Biblical and Natural Law	Positive Law	Anti-culturalism	Self-Law
POLITICS	Justice/Freedom/Order	World Government	Victim Group Empowerment	New Age Order
ECONOMICS	Sewardship of Property	Interventionism	Power Politics	Enlightened Production
HISTORY	Historical Restoration	Historical Evolution	Socialism	Evolutionary Godhood

We paint the picture of these three worldviews with broad strokes. Since each subject could fill countless pages by itself, we do not address every subtlety but rather attempt to capture the kernel of each worldview's perspective on the key disciplines most influential in shaping our culture. Following C. S. Lewis' formula in striving to capture "mere Christianity," we attempt to present mere Secular Humanism, mere Postmodernism, and mere Cosmic Humanism. The heart of Christian theology, for example, is theism, just as the heart of Secular

Humanist biology is evolution or the heart of Cosmic Humanist ethics is relativism. Thus, we examine the core, the central foundation, of each worldview. For a summary of how each worldview approaches each of ten major subject categories, see the chart above.

This course of study is based on the belief that by learning to contrast worldviews, a Christian improves his overall conceptual skills. We contend that by seeing worldviews compared, readers will better understand their own worldview and be positioned to offer a persuasive and intelligent defense. Many people



today do not have the foggiest notion what they believe; it is the duty of Christians to share God's truth with this spiritually rootless generation. The Apostle Peter says as much when he exhorts believers in Jesus Christ to "always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

As you proceed through the text, our prayer is that you will see the full value, truthfulness, and superiority of the Christian worldview and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

RECOMMENDED READING

Colson, Charles and Nancy Pearcey. *How Now Shall We Live?* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999.

Dobson, James C. and Gary L. Bauer. *Children at Risk: The Battle For the Hearts and Minds of Our Kids*. Dallas, TX: Word, 1990.

Schaffer, Francis A. *How Should We Then Live?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1983.

ENDNOTES

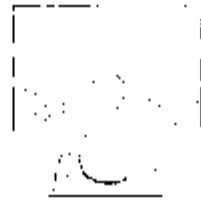
1. Benjamin Wilke, *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002) p. 301, 314.
2. Robert B. Brandom, Editor, *Rorty and His Critics* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000) p. 21-2.
3. James C. Dobson and Gary L. Bauer. *Children at Risk: The Battle For the Hearts and Minds of Our Kids* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1990), p. 79.
4. Ibid., p. 19.
5. Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1981), p. 17.
6. Quoted in *How Now Shall We Live?*, Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999) p. ix.
7. For more on the historical development of the "pietistic movement" among Christians in America from the mid-1800's and into the twentieth century, see *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, by J. P. Moreland. Moreland traces the steps taken by the church in the United States to arrive at the point where one's emotions are the primary vehicle for relating to God. He then builds a case from Scripture that God has designed people with rational minds as well as emotional hearts, and to neglect the mind is to miss the mark of a true Christian.
8. See Charles Colson, *Against the Night: Living in the New Dark Ages* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1989).
9. See Robert H. Bork, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996).
10. See Heather MacDonald, *The Burden of Bad Ideas: How Modern Intellectuals Mushape Our Society* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 2000).
11. Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999), p. 295.
12. See William McGuire's article, "Inducing Resistance to Persuasion" in *Advances in Experimental Psychology, Vol. 1*, Leonard Berkowitz, ed. (Academic Press, NY, 1964) p. 192-231.
13. Gary Lyle Railsback, "An Exploratory Study of the Religiosity and Related Outcomes Among College Students," Doctoral dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1994.
14. If you would like to use the P.E.E.R.S. survey to test students or adults in your church or Bible study, contact Nehemiah Institute, Inc., 3735 Harrodsburg Rd., Suite 150, Lexington, KY 40513, (800) 948-3101, nehemiah@midco.net, www.nehemiahinstitute.com. There is a charge for the full 70-question survey and evaluation.
15. George Barna, *Generation Next* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1995), p. 33.
16. Patrick F. Fagan, et. al. *The Positive Effects of Marriage: A Book of Charts*, "The Effects of Marriage on Children," <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Features/Marriage/index.cfm>
17. The issues raised in this example will be covered in more detail in chapter eight. It is included here to illustrate how a consistent biblical Christian worldview provides a framework to understand the connections between the various disciplines and the real world. We also suggest a careful reading of George Gilder's *Men and Marriage*.

- (1) Chuck Colson: From Charles Colson: A Story of Power, Corruption, and Redemption by John Perry (2003 Broadman & Holman Publishers: Nashville, TN)
- (2) Acropolis: From Countering Culture video (2004 Summit Ministries: Maricao Springs, CO)





CHAPTER 2



Worldviews Seeking To Capture You

"Who are you?... Then, who am I?...
Was nothing real?"

—TRUMAN (FROM THE FINAL SCENE OF *The Truman Show*)

"In the United States of America, our
traditional, Western, Judeo-Christian culture is
collapsing. It is not collapsing because it failed.
On the contrary it has given us the freest and
most prosperous society in human history.
Rather, it is collapsing because we are
abandoning it."¹

WILLIAM S. LEND

"... the clash that is coming—and that has,
indeed, already begun—is... between those who
claim the Judeo-Christian worldview and those
who have abandoned that worldview in favor of
the 'isms' of contemporary American life—
feminism, multiculturalism, gay liberationism,
lifestyle liberalism—what I here lump together
as a family called 'the secularist orthodoxy.'"²

ROBERT P. GEORGE

In *The Truman Show*, the hit comedy film starring Jim Carey, Truman is a man who has lived his entire life confined in an enormous Hollywood studio, never realizing his every move was seen live by millions of television viewers around the world. Everyone in his life was an actor, playing the part of wife, neighbors, and friends, yet Truman was playing only himself. Talk about a strange twist on reality TV! But Truman begins to suspect all is not as it appears in his soundstage world, and he finally determines to face reality by walking off the set.

In the final scene, Truman makes his way in a boat to the edge of the “ocean” and locates a set of stairs leading to an exit. As Truman opens the door, the voice of Christof, the show’s director, booms through the loudspeaker, apparently coming down from the sky. Truman asks Christof a series of three sweeping questions. The first, foundational to the others, is “Who are you?” (with the clear implication, “Who are you, God?”). This ultimate question is the central question of theology.

After considering Christof’s answer, Truman asks a second question: “Then who am I?” This time, Truman seeks knowledge about his own being, which is the focal issue of psychology. Finally, after pondering Christof’s response, Truman asks, “Was nothing real?” Here is the great philosophical question, as bright as day. To this Christof answers, “*You* were real. That’s what made you so good.”

Truman’s three questions are the ones every person on earth must answer in some way. The answers form the bedrock for how we understand our world and our relationships to God, ourselves and our fellow human beings. Together, they are the cornerstone of a total worldview.

WORLDVIEW THINKING

If Truman’s questions are the starting point, how should a total worldview be defined? There are various ways of slicing the “worldview pie,” depending on whom you read, but we find a great advantage in segmenting the framework for a worldview into the following ten disciplines:

1. **Theology.** At some point, everyone asks the question, “What about God?”
2. **Philosophy.** We are curious about the nature of reality and how we know what is true.
3. **Biology.** We have questions about the origin of life.
4. **Psychology.** We wonder about ourselves.
5. **Ethics.** How do we go about making moral choices?
6. **Sociology.** We question how society ought to be structured.
7. **Law.** How should legal issues be solved?
8. **Politics.** We’re concerned about how government should be structured.
9. **Economics.** We ponder what is the best system by which to make and spend money.
10. **History.** What can we learn from the past?

Thinking Like A Christian, the first study in the *Worldviews in Focus* series, explores these disciplines in detail. It examines how a biblical Christian approach addresses each issue and demonstrates how these ten disciplines provide a comprehensive framework of life—a total worldview. The Western educational enterprise is structured around these disciplines. Universities, in particular, offer courses in each area, corresponding to how Western civilization approaches life’s crucial questions.



THE WORLDVIEW TREE

Defining a worldview through these ten areas also helps one understand the inter-relationships between the various disciplines. To visualize these interrelationships, think of a fruit tree supported by a root system. The tree draws nourishment from the roots, transfers it through the trunk, and produces fruit at the end of the branches. Although the fruit is separated from the underpinnings of the tree, it is nevertheless organically connected to the roots.

Jesus said of his disciples, "You'll recognize them by their fruit" (Matthew 7:16). Similarly, a worldview operates as an organic whole. Fruit (outward behavior) flows naturally from the root (inner beliefs). The root

system of every worldview is composed of the twin disciplines of theology and philosophy. Together, these form assumptions about God, reality, and knowledge. From these *religious* roots flow implications for each of the other eight disciplines, the branches of the tree. And at the end of these branches is the fruit—the outworking of these assembled beliefs in a person's life.

CULTURAL RADICALS

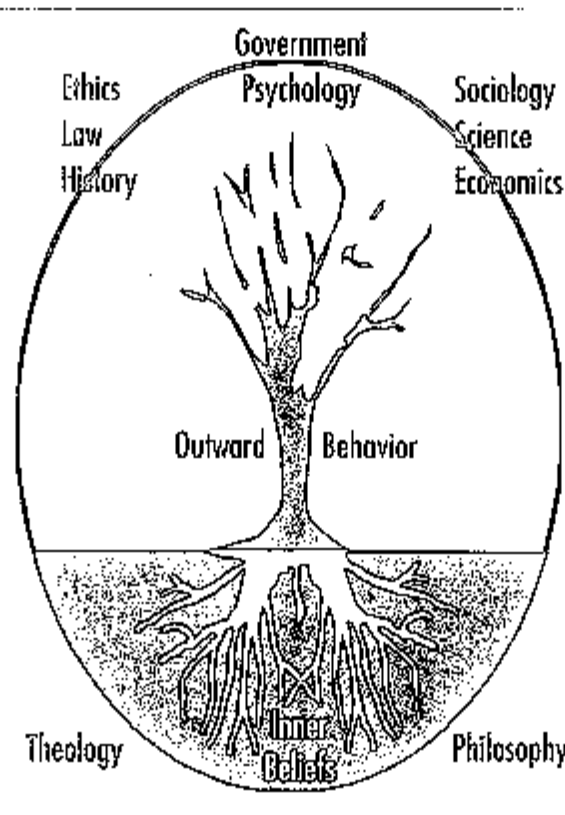
For nearly 2,000 years, Western culture has grown and blossomed as it drew nourishment from biblical

answers to the questions raised by the ten disciplines outlined above. Yet in recent years, voices calling for radically different answers have gained a hearing. William S. Lind describes the serious implications of these new and different answers: "In the United States

of America, our traditional, Western, Judeo-Christian culture is collapsing. It is not collapsing because it failed. On the contrary it has given us the freest and most prosperous society in human history. Rather, it is collapsing because we are abandoning it."⁴ To use our tree analogy, Western society is abandoning the Judeo-Christian roots that have been its very source of nurture.

What could cause such a dramatic and widespread shift in perspective? Lind also comments on some of the people and strategies that have been used to initiate this mutation of culture which in the past has served us so well:

Starting in the mid-1960s, we have thrown away the values, morals, and standards that define traditional Western culture. In part, this has been driven by cultural radicals, people who hate our Judeo-Christian culture. Dominant in the elite, especially in the universities, the media, and the entertainment industry, the cultural radicals have successfully pushed an agenda of moral relativism, militant secularism, and sexual and social "liberation."



When we consider the significant moral and social issues of today, we see disturbing fruit emerging. “Cultural radicals” seek to cut off a biblically-based root system and graft in another that is composed of drastically different answers to the foundational religious questions. The radical ideas now taught in the classroom, promoted through the media, and encouraged by entertainment industry are simply the result (fruit) of a revised view of life and reality. These ideas fall into one of the three specific worldviews outlined in chapter one—Secular Humanism, Postmodern Marxism, and Cosmic Humanism.

To fully understand the current culture war, we need to recognize each of these divergent worldviews and apprehend their influence throughout our society—even in many of our seminaries and churches.

SECULAR HUMANISM

Perhaps the single most important reason Secular Humanism exerts such a dramatic influence on our society is that it is the dominant worldview in our secular educational system. Proponents of this atheistic view have long recognized the classroom as a powerful place to indoctrinate young minds. Writing in the 1930’s, humanist Charles Potter penned these words:

Education is the most powerful ally of humanism, and every American public school is a school of humanism. What can the theistic Sunday schools, meeting for an hour once a week, and teaching only a fraction of the children, do to stem the tide of a five-day program of humanistic teaching?

And how are humanists doing in their goal of changing the educational landscape? They are doing quite well.

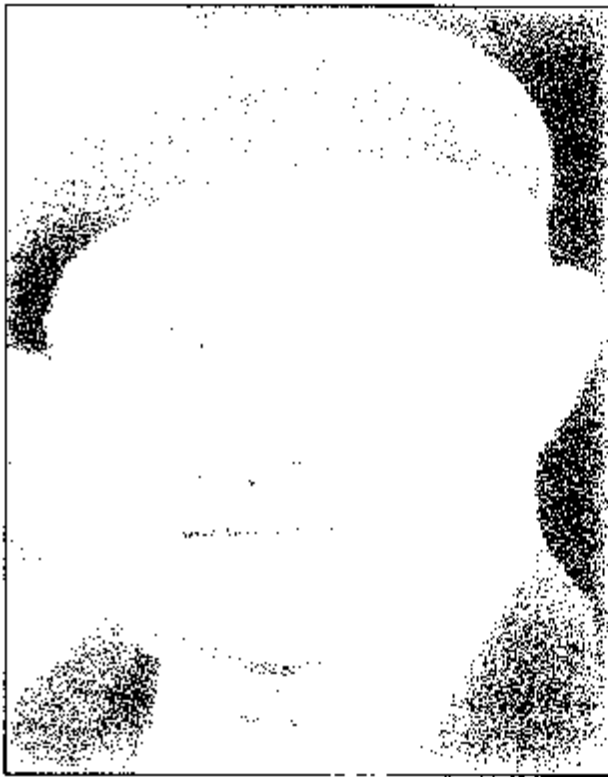
In recent years, Christianity has been deliberately—some would say brilliantly—erased from America’s educational system. In the subject of biology, for example, the only view allowed in the classroom is naturalistic evolution, one that excludes the possibility of God’s involvement in creation. When Christians have attempted to introduce a balanced treatment of the origin of life by including the concept of an Intelligent Designer, there has been an uproar that favors banning any mention of a Creator in science classes.”

In the area of social studies, humanists also are taking the upper hand by eradicating the study of Christianity from textbooks, or if Christians are mentioned, it is usually in a negative light. Professor Paul Vitz systematically reviewed textbooks used in schools across the United States and summarizes his findings from books used in first through fourth grades:

...this sample of forty social studies texts, which were ostensibly meant to introduce students to American society as it exists today (and, to a lesser extent, how it existed in the past), did not contain a single reference in word or image to today’s powerful Protestant religious world of the Bible belt.... Nothing about the world of mainline Protestantism was acknowledged even once. The books placed a heavy emphasis instead on such things as today’s job market and the world of recreation.”

Regarding U.S. history textbooks used in an estimated 60 percent of the country’s eleventh and twelfth grades, Vitz noted that “Not one of these texts recognized, much less emphasized, the great religious energy and creativity of the U.S. . . . although a few of them mentioned the Scopes trial.” So the only image of religion most students receive is cast in the negative light of the





Early 20th century humanist Charles Francis Potter envisioned public school education as a way for humanism to replace Judeo-Christian beliefs as our culture's dominant philosophy.

Scopes "monkey trial" in Tennessee! Five other independent studies confirm the same religious bias revealed by Vitz."

Furthermore, if you step into any psychology class on the average university campus, you will study the major contributors of "modern psychology"—B.F. Skinner, Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Erich Fromm. What you probably will not hear is that each one of these men was an atheist, and every single one except Freud was selected as "Humanist of the Year" by the humanist movement.

INDOCTRINATION 101

From grade school to graduate school, the results of this shift away from a biblical understanding of course

material is evident. Many professors are unabashedly indoctrinating their students into their humanist worldview. Professor Richard Rorty boldly states his purpose: "We are not going to tolerate you bigoted Christians. We liberal Profs try to change the fundamentalist students... away from their bigoted parents."¹¹ To grasp how far Rorty is willing to take our Christian students, one need only read *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth Century America*. While he insists, for example, that he is a militant anti-communist and believes the war against Stalin was legitimate,¹² he also finds the Communist Party USA useful in recruiting "a few good agents for Soviet intelligence" and praises those who apologized for Stalin since they "helped change our country for the better."¹³

Attorney and author David French recalls the indoctrination into liberal thinking he received in law school when he comments:

I was surprised by both the unrelenting liberalism of my professors and by their daily zeal in advancing their various worldviews.... [M]y criminal law class was an exercise in coercing a reexamination of our attitudes towards race and poverty.... My family law professors tried to persuade their students to abandon traditional conceptions of childhood, gender, and parental roles. My human rights teachers spent much of the class attacking religious fundamentalism of all stripes....¹⁴

French goes on to relate that the most discouraging part of his law school experience was how the other students accepted uncritically their professors' teaching. Often, he was the only one willing to challenge the blatantly outrageous ideas expressed from the front of the classroom.

Recent surveys support this anecdotal evidence of



anti-Christian and liberal bias in much of education. The fall 2001 survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies finds that 29.9 percent of students entering four-year colleges and universities characterize their political views as "liberal" or "far left," the highest percentage in two decades... [while] just 20.7 percent consider themselves "conservative" or "far right."⁵ This demonstrates that liberal indoctrination is not confined to the university campus. Evidently, many students are introduced to liberalism through their high school experience! Charles Potter's words in 1930 clearly were prophetic.

HUMANIST INFLUENCE IN POPULAR CULTURE

This brings us to another reason for examining the Secular Humanist worldview: many humanists have gained positions of considerable influence in our society. Most mainline media—including nightly news broadcasts, television shows, movies, and even much of popular music—present opinions, story lines and lyrics consistent with the humanist vision. For instance, in the film, *The Cider House Rules*, the viewer is presented with six convincing arguments for abortion on demand as the main character, played by Toby McGuire, moves from pro-life to pro-choice by the end of the story. And in *John Q.* starring Denzel Washington, the story from beginning to end is an impassioned case for universal health care, yet another cause championed by liberals.

For a closer look at how the mainstream media exhibit a consistent bias toward liberal causes in reporting the news, one need look no further than

Bernard Goldberg's book, *Bias*. An award-winning broadcast journalist who worked for more than three decades at CBS News, Goldberg offers an insider's take on major news organizations. He describes how "during the Clinton impeachment trial in 1999, as the senators signed their names in the oath book swearing they would be fair and impartial, Peter Jennings, who was anchoring ABC News's live coverage, made sure his audience knew which senators were *conservative*—but uttered not a word about which ones were *liberal*."⁶ Goldberg explains why this incident is revealing: "On that particular day, Peter identified the conservatives because he thought it mattered. He thought his viewers needed to know.... In the world of the Jenningses and Brokaws and Rathers, conservatives are out of the mainstream and need to be identified. Liberals, on the other hand, *are* the mainstream and don't need to be identified."⁷

Goldberg also highlights numerous other examples of liberal bias. He spends a chapter discussing how the media *created* the AIDS "scare" by misinforming the public about the nature and transmission of HIV. This was due to the media elite's reluctance to expose AIDS as a disease transmitted primarily through homosexual acts.

The press reveals their bias not only by over-reporting certain items, but also by under-reporting others. Goldberg points out the almost non-existent reporting of the declining health and well being of "latch-key kids." About the lack of reporting on a major study on children, he makes clear that journalists do not want to take on the feminists' love affair with daycare. If it were widely reported that children in daycare centers generally do not fare well, then many working moms might feel guilty, thus subverting the feminist goal of liberating all women from the constraints of husband and children. Goldberg does not suggest media elites are engaged in a "vast left-wing



EXCERPT FROM BIAS BY BERNARD GOLDBERG*(Regnery Publishing, Inc.: Washington, DC, 2002), pages 57-59*

This blindness, this failure to see liberals as anything but middle-of-the-road moderates, happens all the time on network television. The Christian Coalition is identified as a conservative organization—so far, so good—but we don't identify the National Organization for Women (NOW) as a liberal organization, which it surely is.

Robert Bork is the "conservative" judge. But Laurence Tribe, who must have been on the CBS Evening News ten million times in the 1980s (and who during the contested presidential election in 2000 was a leading member of Team Gore, arguing the vice president's case before the U.S. Supreme Court), is identified simply as a "Harvard law professor." But Tribe is not simply a Harvard law professor. He's easily as liberal as Bork is conservative.

If we do a Hollywood story, it's not unusual to identify certain actors, like Tom Selleck or Bruce Willis, as conservatives. But Barbara Streisand or Rob Reiner, no matter how active they are in liberal Democratic politics, are just Barbara Streisand and Rob Reiner.

Rush Limbaugh is the conservative radio talk show host. But Rosie O'Donnell, who while hosting a fundraiser for Hillary Clinton said Mayor Rudy Giuliani was New York's "village idiot," is not the liberal TV talk show host.

During the Clinton impeachment trial in 1999, as the senators signed their names in the oath book swearing they would be fair and impartial, Peter Jennings, who was anchoring ABC News's live coverage, made sure his audience knew which senators were conservative—but uttered not a word about which ones were liberal.

As the senators each signed the oath book, Jennings identified several Democrats, including Barbara Boxer and

Ted Kennedy, two of the most liberal members of the Senate, without ever mentioning that they are indeed liberal. That would have been just fine, except for what happened later. When Senator John McCain signed the book, Jennings said, "Senator John McCain here of Arizona, left-hander. More right than left in his politics and intending to run for president of the United States." Jennings spotted another conservative. "Senator McConnell of Kentucky, very determined conservative member of the Republican Party."

When Jennings identified the next senator to sign the book it was, "Senator Mikulski of Maryland."

Plain and simple. Unadorned. Senator Mikulski of Maryland. Not a word that Senator Mikulski is a liberal Democrat from Maryland.

Then, a few second later, Jennings, with pinpoint precision, continued identifying the conservatives. "Senator Rick Santorum, one of the younger members of the Senate, Republican, very determined conservative member of the Senate. That's Senator Daschle there in the left-hand side of your picture."

Santorum was a conservative Republican but Tom Daschle, a liberal from South Dakota, was simply...Senator Daschle.... On that particular day, Peter identified the conservatives because he thought it mattered. He thought his viewers needed to know. And he was right. He didn't identify the liberals, obviously because he thought it didn't matter. And he was wrong. In the world of the Jenningses and Brokows and Rathers, conservatives are out of the mainstream and need to be identified. Liberals, on the other hand, are the mainstream and don't need to be identified.

conspiracy," but rather, that they are merely living out their worldview assuming theirs is the correct way to look at the world and oblivious to their own biased

inclinations. These observations highlight our contention all along: worldviews matter!



POSTMODERN MARXISM

Like Secular Humanism, Marxism-Leninism is a well-developed atheistic worldview. Over the past century, followers of Marx and Lenin have crafted a perspective on each of the ten disciplines—generally in great detail. Marxists often produce a “champion” of their perspective in various fields (e.g., I.P. Pavlov in psychology, T.D. Lysenko in biology, Stephen J. Gould in paleontology, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in politics, or Stanley Fish in humanities).

Yet, over the past 20 years, traditional Marxism-Leninism has morphed into the currently fashionable “postmodernism”—a view animating the “politically correct” ideology prevalent in the majority of our universities today. And while Postmodern Marxism does not offer a perspective as comprehensive in all ten worldview disciplines as traditional Marxism-Leninism, studying this version of Marxism is crucial for Christians in order to understand why so many bizarre-sounding ideas are emanating from college campuses across our land—speech codes, biased admissions practices, celebration of “Gay Pride,” mandatory diversity training, radical professors in almost every department, plus many other elements of the radical cultural agenda. Of perhaps even greater significance, Marxism needs to be analyzed because it is currently one of Christianity’s most rabid detractors.

MARXIST INFLUENCE IN EDUCATION

As their atheistic comrades the Secular Humanists have targeted education, so Marxists have recognized the classroom as the key to influencing our nation. As early as the 1950’s, U.C.L.A. was referred to as the “Little Red School House” because of the Marxist

influence on campus. Not only there, but on campuses across the U.S., “radical” students of the ‘60’s protested the Vietnam War and embraced the Marxist worldview. To secure their stronghold, many of them never left the campus but stayed on to earn their Ph.D.’s and now are tenured professors teaching our current generation of students.

Even as early as 1982, a *U.S. News and World Report* article entitled “Marxism in U.S. Classrooms,” revealed that 10,000 Marxist professors were teaching on America’s campuses.¹⁰ And by 1987, New York University’s Herbert London remarked, “The strides made by Marxism at American universities in the last two decades are breathtaking. Every discipline has been affected by its preachment, and almost every faculty now counts among its members a resident Marxist scholar.”¹¹ Alvin Schmidt describes “a 1992 conference, ‘Marxism in the New World Order: Crisis and Possibilities,’ held at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Only 300 were expected to attend, but 1,500 registered. Nearly all were pro-

“Marxist academics,”
writes Arnold Beichman,
“are today’s power elite
in the universities.”

fessors. The conference attendees were diehard believers in Marxism, not realists

who recognized that the most inefficient, cruel, and inhumane socioeconomic system had come to an end.”¹² Georgie Anne Geyer further states “the percentage of Marxist faculty numbers can range from an estimated 90 percent in some midwestern universities.”¹³

“Marxist academics,” writes Arnold Beichman, “are today’s power elite in the universities.”¹⁴ And those in power are not shy about expressing their intentions. Duke University Professor



Frederic Jameson told *Commentary* magazine that "to create a Marxist Culture in this country, to make Marxism an unavoidable presence in American social, cultural, and intellectual life, in short to form a Marxist intelligentsia

for the struggles of the future...seems to me the supreme mission of a Marxist pedagogy."¹⁴ It is certainly no accident that the new "Communist Manifesto" for the twenty-first century was published by Harvard University Press and is owned by the fellows of Harvard University.¹⁵

The Postmodern Marxist influence has reached its most alarming heights in the humanities departments of America's universities. "With a few notable exceptions," says former Yale professor Roger Kimball, "our most prestigious liberal arts colleges and universities have installed the entire radical menu at the center of their humanities curriculum at both the undergraduate and the graduate level."¹⁶ Kimball provides examples of how Duke University has been and continues to be in the forefront of academia's move toward Postmodernism, noting that it has "conducted a tireless—and successful—campaign to arm its humanities department with the likes of the Marxist literary critic Frederic Jameson, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Frank Lentricchia, Stanley Fish (and his like-minded wife, Jane Tompkins), and other less well known souls of kindred intellectual orientation."¹⁷

The result of this Postmodern Marxist influence is that the culture wars are fiercest on our campuses, with battles being waged over political correctness, feminism, multiculturalism, and deconstructionism. Yet

"The shadow university, with its shadow curriculum, dominates freshman orientation, residential programming, extracurricular student life, the promulgations of codes and regulations, and the administration of what passes, on our campuses, for justice."
—*The Shadow University* (Kors and Silvergate)

many of the most critical battles are shielded from the public eye. According to Professor Alan Charles Kors and lawyer Harvey A. Silvergate, authors of *The Shadow University*, much is going on behind the scenes to further radicalize

higher education:

To know the betrayal of liberty on our campuses, one must understand what has become of their divisions of university life and student life, residential advisors, judicial systems, deans of students and their officers, and of their new and profoundly disturbing student rules and regulations. This threat has developed not in the glare of publicity, debate and criticism, as has been the case with new academic disciplines, courses, and pedagogies, but in the shadows.... The shadow university, with its shadow curriculum, dominates freshman orientation, residential programming, extracurricular student life, the promulgations of codes and regulations, and the administration of what passes, on our campuses, for justice.¹⁸

As this overview demonstrates, Postmodern Marxism is thriving on the American campus and in the classroom. If Christian students are to survive their college experience with their faith intact, they must understand the weaknesses of a Marxist worldview and be able to articulate a positive biblical response.



MARXIST INFLUENCE IN POPULAR CULTURE

Once embraced by students, a worldview does not remain confined on campus but gradually influences all arenas of society, such as popular media, film and television. A recent article in *National Review* explains, "In Hollywood, it was—and is—more chic to be a Commie than a conservative."²² A case in point is TV producer Norman Lear, who has produced and/or significantly influenced numerous popular shows in the early 1970's such as *All in the Family*, *Maunder*, and *The Jeffersons*. According to media observer and Lear fan Robert S. Alley, "no single individual has had more influence through the medium of television in its 50-year history than Norman Lear."²³

In addition, according to Alley, by 1980 Lear became "alarmed by the radical religious fanaticism of Christian fundamentalists. At first he thought he would use a television series to respond.... He became convinced that another approach would be more effective for him, and in 1982 he founded People For The American Way (PAW) to speak out for Bill of Rights guarantees and monitor violations of constitutional freedoms. By 1996 the organization had become one of the most influential and effective voices for freedom."²⁴

What Alley's article fails to mention is that many of the issues taken up by PAW seek to replace traditional morality with a radical liberal agenda. Another article, by former radical David Horowitz, uncovers the worldview that sets the tone for his "voice for freedom" and reveals the source of that voice to be Marxism. Horowitz recounts that a meeting was held in the PAW offices in 2003 to create a new organization called "United for Peace and Justice" to oppose the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq. The "organizer and head of the new organization," writes Horowitz,

*Excerpt from World magazine, July 19, 2003,
feature article by Marvin Olasky, page 16.*

MARX LIVES

Socialism in America still attracts some among the counterculturally audacious or embittered.

One morning 34 years ago, my college roommate and I saw a notice in the *Yale Daily News* about a meeting on socialism to be held that evening in one of the university classrooms. We showed up on time and found ourselves the only ones in the room except for a solemn man precisely arranging on a front table piles of publications from the Socialist Workers Party. Saying not a word to us, he focused on squaring each stack and having the distance between each stack exactly the same. My roommate and I took one look at each other and bolted the room, heading down the stairs as the comrade, jolted from his reverie, hurried after us yelling, "Wait, wait."

We didn't wait, that evening. We never went back to that particular clique. But both of us were alienated: I had grown up within Judaism and my roommate within Christianity, but neither of us had absorbed reasons beyond social custom for maintaining our allegiance. I continued drifting left, participating in "peace" marches and joining the Communist Party, before resigning from it late in 1973. My roommate drifted in another way, announcing several years after graduation that he was gay. (In college he had talked about heterosexual pursuits like the rest of us.) I don't know what has happened to him.

Three weeks ago I attended "Socialism 2003," a three-day gathering of 900 leftists, most of them under 30. The International Socialist Organization, publisher of *Socialist Worker*, the same periodical I had seen neatly stacked in 1969, sponsored the meeting. Three decades had gone by since the last Marxist function I attended, and many have proclaimed that Marxism is dead, but judging by the enthusiasm and intensity of the folks I mingled with, Marxism is alive among some deeply alienated individuals, some red-diaper babies who respect their radical parents and hope to replicate the 1965-1974 golden age of unrest, and some graduate students in fields such as sociology and women's studies.



"was Leslie Cagan, a pro-Castro Sixties radical who was still a member of the Communist Party USA after the fall of the Berlin Wall."¹⁰ Unless Cagan has experienced a dramatic change of heart, her radical background continues to animate her current activities in guiding this organization in "peace and justice." And in fact, she called for "protesters to 'disrupt normal life' once the war started."¹¹

Along with groups like PAW, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) tends to champion left-leaning causes and bring these issues before the courts. After the 2003 Supreme Court decision striking down the Texas Sodomy law, the ACLU announced its intention to "launch a national campaign and companion Web site—"Get Busy, Get Equal,"—to empower lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities to push for equality."¹² Of course this makes sense when one realizes that socialist-communist Roger Baldwin founded the ACLU in 1920.¹³

Because Marxists of every stripe are convinced their worldview is true, they also are committed to seeing their perspective win the hearts and minds of all Americans. And if educational and popular-level indoctrination do not work well enough, they will use any means to have their way, including finding like-minded judges who will overrule through the courts the will of the people as expressed by laws created by duly elected representatives. In this way, Postmodern Marxists force their agenda onto the American public in moral and ethical issues such as abortion, sodomy, gay marriage, and cloning, and in social causes such as affirmative action quotas and universal healthcare.

COSMIC HUMANISM

Cosmic Humanism consists of a broad mixture of neo-paganism and neo-panteism, best known as the

New Age movement (NAM). Because it disdains any unified dogma, this worldview is less well defined than Secular Humanism or Postmodern Marxism. Indeed, some Cosmic Humanists go so far as to claim that their worldview "has no religious doctrine or teachings of its own."¹⁴

This attitude, according to most Cosmic Humanists, results from the belief that truth resides within each individual and, therefore, no one can claim a corner on the truth or dictate truth to any one else. "The New Age," explains Christian writer Johanna Michaelsen, "is the ultimate eclectic religion of self: Whatever you decide is right for you is what's right, as long as you don't get narrow-minded and exclusive about it."¹⁵

The very assumption that truth resides within each individual rather than being externally defined, however, sets the cornerstone for a worldview. Granting to oneself the power to discern all truth is a facet of theology, and this theology has undeniable ramifications. Some Cosmic Humanists actually have begun to articulate their movement as a worldview.

Marilyn Ferguson, author of *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (a book referred to as "The New Age watershed classic"), says the movement ushers in a "new mind—the ascendance of a startling worldview."¹⁶ The skeletal outline of this worldview is summed up by Jonathan Adolph: "In its broadest sense, New Age thinking can be characterized as a form of utopianism, the desire to create a better society, a 'New Age' in which humanity lives in harmony with itself, nature, and the cosmos."¹⁷

While the New Age movement is still fragmented and lacking focused leadership, it is growing at a remarkable rate. The Stanford Research Institute estimates that "the number of New Agers in America could be as high as 5 to 10 percent of the population—12 million or more people."¹⁸ Others have put



the figure as high as 60 million although this includes people who simply believe in the reincarnation and astrological elements of New Age thought. John Randolph Price, a leading spokesperson for the New Age, says, "there are more than half a billion New Age advocates on the planet at this time, working among various religious groups."¹⁰⁰ Further, Malachi Martin lists dozens of organizations that are either New Age or New Age sympathetic. Barbara Marx Hubbard, another outspoken proponent of the New Age, made a bid for the 1984 Democratic vice presidential nomination.

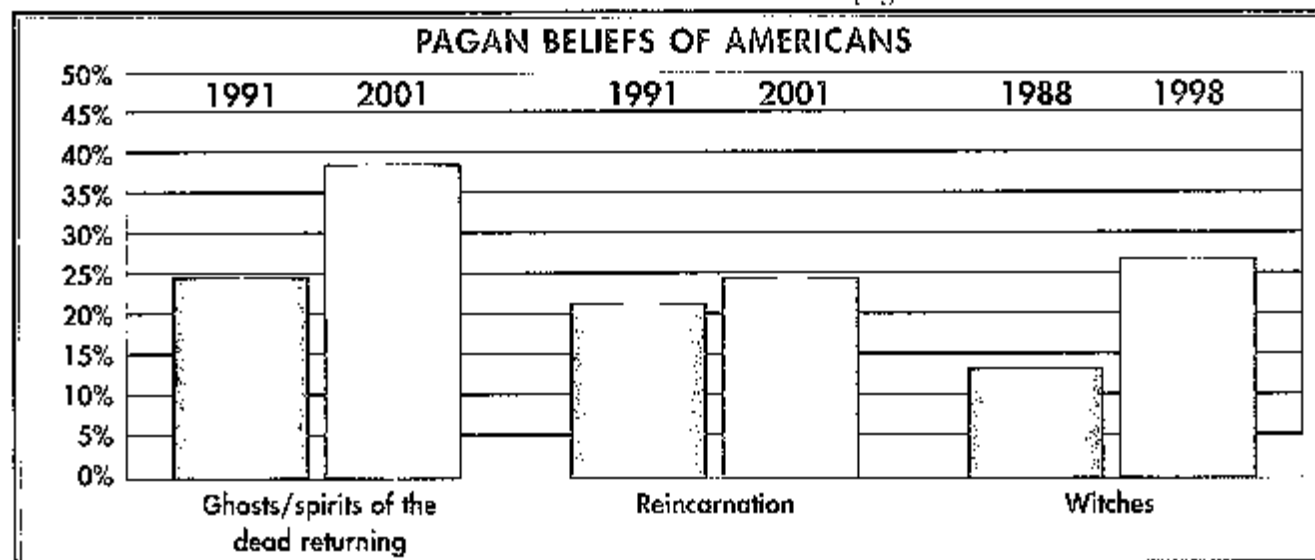
PAGANISM IN POPULAR CULTURE

A resurgence of paganism is one earmark of Cosmic Humanism, and one of the fastest growing elements of this renewed interest is Wicca, a contemporary rendition of witchcraft. As Craig S. Hawkins writes:

A threatening storm is brewing on the religious horizon: the winds of occultism are blowing ever more strongly across the land. In

the past two to three decades, America and much of Western Europe have seen a resurgence of paganism and witchcraft. Paganism is attempting a resurrection from the dead, a revival of the old gods and goddesses of pre-Christian polytheistic nature religions and mystery cults (e.g., Celtic, Norse, Greek, Egyptian, Roman, and other traditions of the Western world).¹⁰¹

Many teens and adults come to Wicca after reading *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (1979), a best-selling introduction to Wiccan teachings and rituals written by Starhawk (née Miriam Simos), a witch from California. Young people also are drawn to this worldview through books and films like *Harry Potter*¹⁰² or by the influence of popular neo-pagan oriented television shows such as *Charmed* and *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*. A recent Mori poll of 2,600 children aged 11-16 found that over 50 per cent were interested in the occult and that one in six said they were worried about what they had discovered about the supernatural. Some pollsters estimate there may be more than 750,000 adherents of Wicca and related neo-pagan faiths in the United States.¹⁰³



Hollywood, too, is a haven for Cosmic Humanist activity. Irvin Kershner, the director of George Lucas' blockbuster Star Wars episode, *The Empire Strikes Back*, was not shy about expressing his New Age worldview throughout his film. He told *Rolling Stone Magazine* that he wanted to "introduce some Zen here because I don't want the kids to walk away just feeling that everything is shoot-em-up, but that there's also a little something to think about here in terms of yourself and your surroundings."¹¹ Other movies carry Cosmic Humanist themes, such as communicating with the dead (*Sixth Sense*) and reincarnation (Robin Williams' *What Dreams May Come*). These popular films, along with numerous others, reveal the general public's increasing acceptance of paranormal phenomena. According to a 2001 Gallup Survey, the number of Americans who believe that ghosts or spirits of dead people can come back increased over the previous ten years from 25 to 38 percent, and those subscribing to reincarnation went up from 21 to 25 percent. Adults who believe in witches rose from 14 to 26 percent.¹²

But the interest in the occult does not stop with ghosts and reincarnation. Astrology is also on the rise. The July 1997 cover of *Life* blared, "Why So Many of Us Now Believe the Stars Reflect the Soul." The lead article highlighted recent polls showing the trend in which "48 percent [of Americans] say astrology is probably or definitely valid."¹³ The article goes on to recount that "the first newspaper horoscopes appeared in the '30's; now they run in the vast majority of dailies. Twenty years ago there were an estimated 1,000 professional astrologers in the United States; today there are something like 5,000. In 1968... the annual market for astrology books was around five million. Today, it is closer to 20 million." Clearly, the "age of Aquarius" is gaining steam.

CONCLUSION

Marxism and Secular Humanism share a number of similarities. The two are family—Secular Humanism the mother (humanists trace their heritage to the Greeks 400 years before Christ) and Marxism the daughter. At the heart of both worldviews lies atheism, materialism, spontaneous generation, evolution, and moral relativism. Both Karl Marx and humanist advocate and author Paul Kurtz share a similar view of the truth. Marx said it this way: "Communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism."¹⁴ And Paul Kurtz says Marx "is a humanist because he rejects theistic religion and defends atheism."¹⁵

If Marxism and Secular Humanism are in the same family, Cosmic Humanism and Secular Humanism are at least very close kin. The New Age movement is essentially a spiritualized Secular Humanism. Take the Secular Humanist's

Cosmic Humanism claims to meet man's spiritual needs—something Marxism and Secular Humanism cannot claim—but it is stuck with an impersonal, unjust god.

exaltation of self, sprinkle in some meditation, reincarnation, and anti-rationalism, and you've created the Cosmic Humanist worldview. Cosmic Humanism claims to meet man's spiritual needs—something Marxism and Secular Humanism cannot claim—but it is stuck with an impersonal, unjust god. There is little difference between claiming no god exists and claiming everything is god.

The following chapters explore key aspects of these three worldviews as well as how a Christian can respond to each. Our purpose is to equip the church



to set free those who have been captured by deceptive worldviews and to actively participate in the community, state, and nation to maintain a safe, sane, and free society.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Ankerberg, John, Craig Branch and John Weldon. *Thieves of Innocence: Protecting Our Children from New Age Teachings and Occult Practices*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993.
- Clark, David K. and Norman L. Geisler. *Apologies in the New Age: A Christian Critique of Pantheism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990.
- Kurtz, Paul, ed., *Humanist Manifestos I and II*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1975.
- _____. *Humanist Manifesto 2000. A Call for a New Planetary Humanism*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000.
- Mars, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1964.
- LaHaye, Tim and David Noebel. *Advent Siege: The Battle for Truth in the New Millennium*. Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2000.
- Noebel, David A. *Understanding the Times: The Religious Worldviews of Our Day and the Search for Truth*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994.

ENDNOTES

1. William S. Lind, et. al., *Marine Corps Gazette*, December 1994, p. 37.
2. Robert P. George, *The Clash of Orthodoxies*, (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2001) p. 5.
3. William S. Lind, et. al., p. 37.
4. Ibid.
5. Charles Francis Potter, *Humanism: A New Religion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930) p. 128.
6. Recent attempts in Alabama, Ohio and Kansas to critique the standard Neo-Darwinian view of evolution was met with howls of dissent and ridicule from academics and scientists across the U.S. and around the world. We will look in depth at the issue of God and science in chapter 5, where a worldview analysis uncovers the real debate when it comes to teaching students about the origin of life.
7. Vitz conducted a major study funded by the National Institute of Education. His findings are detailed in *Commonship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Textbooks* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1986).
8. Richard John Neuhaus, General Editor, *Democracy and the Renewal of Public Education*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 120.
9. Ibid., p. 133.
10. In 1988 the Assistant State Superintendent for Instructional Services of the State Board of Education for North Carolina appointed a committee to address the issue. They surveyed the results of six different studies and found "social studies textbooks to be seriously deficient in their treatment of religion." ("Committee on Placement of Religion in the Social Studies Curriculum," June 7, 1988 Report).
11. Robert B. Brandon, Editor, *Rorty and His Critics*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000) p. 20.
12. Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth Century America*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 57.
13. Ibid., p. 44.
14. David French, *A Season for Justice: Defending the Right of the Christian Home, Church, and School* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002), p. 190.
15. Shaena Engle, 2001 CIRP Press Release: CIRP Freedom Survey, January 28, 2002, www.geis.ucla.edu/heri/heri.html.
16. Bernard Goldberg, *Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2001), p. 57.
17. Bernard Goldberg, *Bias*, p. 58-9.
18. David B. Richardson, "Marxism in U.S. Classrooms," *U.S. News and World Report*, January 25, 1982, pp. 42-5.
19. Herbert London, "Marxism Thriving on American Campuses," *The World and I*, January 1987, p. 189.
20. Alvin J. Schmidt, *The Menace of Multiculturalism*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1997), p. 25.
21. George Anne Geyer, "Marxism Thrives on Campus," *The Denver Post*, August 29, 1989, p. B7.
22. Ibid.
23. Quoted in Tony Meia, "Feminist College President Assumes Control of Duke," *Gauntlet*, Spring, 1994, p. 6.
24. A new work by Duke University Professor Michael Hardt and Italian Professor of Political Science Antonio Negri titled *Empire* has been called "A sweeping neo-Marxist



- vision of the coming world order" and the authors referred to as the "Marx and Engels of the internet age" according to comments from the back cover of the book. Harvard University Press published the book in 2000.
25. Roger Kimball, *Tenured Radicals* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), p. xiii. To grasp what Christian students face in America's colleges and universities, you should read Kimball's book, then Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), Ronald Nash's *The Closing of the American Heart* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1990) and finally *Closing of the American Mind: Educating Morality Through Education*, by B. K. Eakman (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House Publishers, 1998).
 26. Kimball, *Tenured Radicals*, p. xiv.
 27. Alan Charles Kors and Harvey A. Silverglate, *The Shadow University: The Betrayal Of Liberty On America's Campus*. (The Free Press, 1998), www.shadowuniv.com/introduction.
 28. Terry Teachout, "They Admit It!" *National Review*, July 29, 2002, p. 46.
 29. Robert S. Alley, in an online article on Norman Lear, www.museum.wichita.edu/ethnol/learnernorman/learnernorman.htm.
 30. Ibid.
 31. David Horowitz, *People Against The American Way (The Nation's Largest Hate Group)*, http://www.gopusa.com/david-horowitz/dlh_0519.shtml, May 19, 2003. Horowitz, a former sixties Marxist radical, has written an excellent article exposing the worldview of People for the American Way.
 32. Ibid.
 33. See the ACLU's news release at www.aclu.org/ LesbianGayRights/LevbianGayRights.cfm?ID=13011&cs=41.
 34. B. K. Eakman, *Closing of the American Mind* (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House Publishers, 1998), p. 136.
 35. Jonathan Adolph, "What is New Age?" *New Age Journal*, Winter 1988, p. 11.
 36. Johanna Michaelsen, *Like Lambs to the Slaughter* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1989), p. 11.
 37. Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc., 1980), p. 23.
 38. Adolph, "What is New Age?" p. 6.
 39. Ray A. Yungen, *For Many Shall Come in My Name*. (Salent, OR: Ray Yungen, 1989), p. 34.
 40. John Randolph Price, *The Superbeings* (Austin, TX: Quarus Books, 1981), pp. 51.
 41. Craig S. Hawkins, "The Modern World of Witchcraft," *The Christian Research Journal*, Winter/Spring 1990, page 8.
 42. See "Harry Potter: Witchcraft Repacked," Jeremiah Films, P.O. Box 1710, Hemet, CA, 92346. 1-800-828-2290.
 43. It is difficult to estimate the number of Wiccans and neo-pagans because by the nature of their religious belief and practice, they are not prone to organizing beyond small groups of local adherents who usually do not advertise their existence. Estimates of their numbers in the U.S. range from 5,000 to 5 million according to the Religious Tolerance website (www.religioustolerance.org/wic_nbr.htm).
 44. *Rolling Stone*, July 24, 1980, p. 37.
 45. Gallup Report, "Americans' Belief in Psychic and Paranormal Phenomena Is up Over Last Decade," June 8, 2001. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/releases/pr010608.asp>.
 46. Kenneth Miller, "Star Struck: A Journey To the New Frontiers of the Zodiac," *Life*, July, 1997, p. 40.
 47. Marx and Engels, *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels: Collected Works*, 40 volumes (New York: International Publishers, 1976), vol. 3, p. 296.
 48. Paul Kurtz, *The Fallacy of Life* (New York: Horizon Press, 1974), p. 36.
- (1) Charles Francis Potter: From Countering Culture video (2004 Summit Ministries: Manitou Springs, CO)



SECTION II

SECULAR HUMANISM

Although Secular Humanism has extensive historical roots, its contemporary form was systematized in the 1933 *Humanist Manifesto*. Signed by numerous intellectuals, professors, and scientists, the 1933 document led to other manifestos, the most recent of which was published in the year 2000. From these documents as well as books and articles consistent with the perspective presented in the manifestos, it is clear that Secular Humanists have a well-developed worldview and are convinced theirs should shape future generations.

In chapter three, we dig among the atheistic roots of Secular Humanism to discover why atheists do not believe in God, and we come up with four specific reasons. Our role as Christians, then, becomes helping these non-believers rethink their views by offering persuasive counter-arguments to their skepticism.

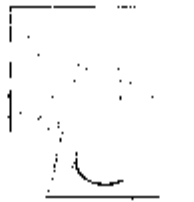
In chapter four, we explore the philosophical root of the secular worldview and how humanists answer questions related to reality and knowledge. We also note that Secular Humanism is a religious worldview, not a "neutral" one—a point of vital significance for contemporary education and politics.

Chapter five further examines how atheistic religion has infiltrated our educational system, especially where the subject of biology is concerned. Naturalistic evolution is the only viewpoint admissible in science classes, and we show this to be a religious view that contradicts the best and latest scientific evidence. It also contravenes the idea of providing a religiously "neutral" education for our children. Religion is being taught in schools, and it is the religion of Secular Humanism!

Finally, chapter six looks at the stranglehold humanists have on law and politics. We contrast secular positive law with biblical natural law and see that the first is built on sand compared with the solid foundation of God's laws which are the historical, philosophical underpinnings of the United States.



CHAPTER 3



The Theology of Secular Humanism

“Humanism is a philosophical, religious,
and moral point of view as old as human
civilization itself... What more pressing
need than to recognize in this critical age
of modern science and technology that,
if no deity will save us,
we must save ourselves?”

—PAUL KURTZ

“It’s my life. It’s now or never. I ain’t
gonna live forever. I just want to live
while I’m alive...like Frankie said,
‘I did it my way.’”

—JON BON JOVI



Through the words of one of his most popular hits, recording artist Jon Bon Jovi offers considerable insight into a Secular Humanist worldview. Similarly, in his band's signature song, "Tripping Billies," Dave Matthews encourages people to "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; we're tripping Billies."³ And both Jon and Dave are absolutely right: we answer to no one but ourselves and should seek to experience all the sensual pleasure this life has to offer if ... there is no God who holds us accountable.

But that is the question, isn't it? Is there a God who judges mankind's actions? This question lies at

Is there a God who judges mankind's actions? This question lies at the foundation of every worldview.

the foundation of every worldview, and each offers an answer for this all-important issue. What a person believes

about God has ramifications for what he or she thinks about every other aspect of life.

These popular musical expressions of man's independence from God follow naturally from a theology of atheism. By assuming there is no God and that this life is all there is, the best anyone can do is to live it "my way." These ideas, however, are not nearly as new as the music which routs them. Corliss Lamont, author of *The Philosophy of Humanism*, insists that humanism—"seeking man's fulfillment in the here and now of this world"—follows a long tradition of atheism, with proponents as far back as Democritus in ancient Greece and Lucretius in ancient Rome, continuing through to American John Dewey and Englishman Bertrand Russell in the twentieth century.

The first *Humanist Manifesto* formalized ideas reflected by Jon Bon Jovi and Dave Matthews when it

confessed, "The quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement."⁴ And according to numerous articles and books by recognized humanists—including more than fifty years of *The Humanist* magazine—the weight of evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of atheism as the theological foundation of Secular Humanism.

THEOLOGICAL BELIEFS OF SECULAR HUMANISTS

The theology of most Secular Humanists is remarkably dogmatic: the supernatural—including God, Satan, angels, demons, the souls, and conscience—does not exist. This theology is spelled out in all its certitude by various humanist leaders.

After pondering religion and the supernatural for three years, Bertrand Russell abandoned the notion of God. He later admitted, "I believed in God until I was just eighteen."⁵ Russell, one of Secular Humanism's most famous international voices, maintains that the God is a conception derived from the ancient Oriental despotisms, and therefore concluded, "I am not a Christian... I do not believe in God and in immortality; and... I do not think that Christ was the best and wisest of men, although I grant Him a very high degree of moral goodness."⁶

"As humanists we urge today, as in the past, that humans not look beyond themselves for salvation."
—*Humanist Manifesto 2000*



Many humanists, including John Dewey, Roy Wood Sellers, and Edwin H. Wilson, signed *Humanist Manifesto I* in 1933, declaring, "the time has passed for theism." Writing several years later, in 1949, Lamont insisted there is no place in the humanist worldview for God. Instead of the gods creating the world and all there is, "the cosmos, in the individualized form of human beings giving rein to their imagination, created the gods."⁶

Then, in 1973, leading humanist thinkers published *Humanist Manifesto II* in which they reiterated, "We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity." Hundreds of humanists signed this declaration of atheism, affirming, "...we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves."⁷

The *Secular Humanist Declaration* of 1980 does not diverge from the earlier views of *Manifesto I & II*. Written by Paul Kurtz, Editor-in-Chief of *Free Inquiry*, the *Declaration* contends, "Secular Humanists... reject the idea that God has intervened miraculously in history or revealed himself to a chosen few, or that he can save or redeem sinners."⁸

Always ready to reflect changing social and cultural conditions, Secular Humanists once again updated their manifestos and declaration in the year 2000. This latest expression of humanist thought, titled *Humanist Manifesto 2000: A Call for a New Planetary Humanism* (also drafted by Paul Kurtz), does not deviate from the same theological tradition: "As humanists we urge today, as in the past, that humans not look beyond themselves for salvation. We alone are responsible for our own destiny..."⁹

BERTRAND ARTHUR WILLIAM RUSSELL (1872-1970)

How do we know what we know?

The central question of epistemology, the study of knowledge, was also central to the career of mathematician and philosopher Bertrand Russell. He is considered one of the most important logicians of the 20th century, and foremost among his many works is the 3-volume *Principia Mathematica* which he co-authored with Alfred North Whitehead. Although some of his concepts have been revised since the books' publication in 1910-13, Russell's logic-based mathematics remains a foundation for much of modern math. "Russell's Paradox" is a famous conundrum of mathematical set theory he discovered early in his career as a math scholar.

Russell authored dozens of major books including *Why I Am Not a Christian* (1927), *Our Knowledge of the World* (1918), and *Marriage and Morals* (1929). In 1950, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

Strongly left-leaning in his social and political views, Russell was twice jailed for pacifist-oriented civil disobedience—once during World War I and after World War II for protesting nuclear weapons development. In 1955, he co-authored with Albert Einstein the *Russell-Einstein Manifesto* which called for the curtailment of nuclear weapons. Russell ran for the British Parliament three times although he was never elected (his grandfather, Lord John Russell had served as British Prime Minister), and he was the founding president in 1958 of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

His non-traditional views of marriage and sexuality perhaps were expressed through his personal life in that he was divorced three times, dying at the age of 97 while still married to his fourth wife. Although he traveled internationally, including spending much time in the United States, he was both born and died in Wales.

While many humanists boldly assert that God is a myth and does not really exist, others are more circumspect. One example is Isaac Asimov, the prolific



ISAAC ASIMOV

A professor of biochemistry at Boston University for much of the 1950's, Dr. Isaac Asimov achieved unparalleled acclaim for the quality and proliferation of his writing, largely because of his ability to communicate difficult scientific concepts on a popular level. He authored more than 500 books between the time of his first publication in 1939 and his death in 1992.

Best-known for his science fiction classic *Foundation* trilogy, Asimov also wrote non-fiction works in physiology, astronomy, chemistry, geography, history, math, and other diverse subjects—including his 2-volume *Asimov's Guide to the Bible*. His *Guide*, though, belies his avowed atheism and concerted efforts to influence "thinking people" away from what he considers the multifarious myths of religions of all kinds. Asimov stipulates that it is always inappropriate to believe God exists since "God" is always a premature explanation for whatever is being considered.

Asimov's anti-religious crusading in the name of science and rationality is curious in light of his family of origin. He was born in 1920 to orthodox Jewish parents in the town of Petrovichi, Russia in the Soviet Union. His parents emigrated to the United States when Asimov was three, settling in New York City. There he helped his parents run a candy shop, even while attending college. He received bachelor, master's and doctoral degrees from New York's Columbia University.

His immense abilities as a writer and communicator made Isaac Asimov an especially convincing promoter of a variety of humanistic concepts: world government, population control, and a belief in the potential for rightly-used technology to solve the problems of mankind.

science fiction writer and popularizer of modern science, who served as the director of the American Humanist Association from 1989 to 1992. Writing in *Fire Inquiry*, Asimov leaves no doubt regarding his personal belief about God, yet also makes a noteworthy admission:

I am an atheist, out and out. It took me a long time to say it. I've been an atheist for years and years, but somehow I felt it was intellectually unspectable to say one was an atheist, because it assumed knowledge that one didn't have. Somehow it was better to say one was a humanist or an agnostic. I finally decided that I'm a creature of emotion as well as reason. Emotionally I am an atheist. I don't have the evidence to prove that God doesn't exist, but I so strongly suspect he doesn't that I don't want to waste my time."

As Asimov points out, *proving* God does not exist is impossible, and thus, intellectually honest atheists find themselves in a quandary. How can one rationally claim to be an atheist if there is no absolute proof—theological, philosophical, historical, or scientific—of God's non-existence? Because of this problem, many humanists prefer to call themselves "skeptics" instead of atheists. "Skeptic" implies there is little, if any, solid evidence for God's existence; therefore, the humanist remains in unbelief unless and until better confirmation is produced. As Paul Kurtz contends in the *Secular Humanist Declaration* of 1980, "Secular Humanists may be agnostics, atheists, rationalists, or skeptics, but they find insufficient evidence for the claim that some divine purpose exists for the universe."¹ From Kurtz's comment one can construct a continuum representing the range of humanist theology, with those who do not *know* if God exists on one end (i.e., agnostics), those who do not *think* that God exists (skeptics) in the middle, and those who are *convinced* that God does not exist (atheists) at the other extreme.

Yet, no matter which label any given Secular Humanist prefers, humanist theology is based fundamentally on the denial of the existence of God and the supernatural. This rejection of a God-of-the-universe

