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IN ORDINARY HUMAN EXPERIENCE a worldview is something we look with, rather than look at, the way I put on my glasses to see not the glasses themselves, but the world beyond them. Andrew Sandlin has memorably stated that “worldviews are like pancreases: everybody has one, even if we don’t know it or think about it.” Indeed, most of the time we don’t think about it, unless it stops working properly.

In recent decades the question of worldview has increasingly become a topic of study for its own sake, and several books have been written on the worldviews discerned in popular media. In spite of this sharp spike in the rise of “worldview literature,” there are fundamental questions still going largely unasked, most significantly, the question of whether a given worldview is true, and by what standard. In other words, do the lenses accurately represent the world? Worldview analysis of pop culture is an engaging way to raise philosophical questions, but a truly meaningful examination must have a standard by which to compare one worldview to others in terms of how each makes sense of reality. An analysis of five different pairs of broken glasses holds limited use to the person whose desire is to see correctly.

Nancy Pearcey explains that every worldview has a god-concept, an ultimate reality that is the source and cause of everything else. This god-concept has implications for every aspect of life, informing how we understand ourselves, our world, and questions of our ultimate destiny. If our god-concept is not the true and living God, it might be matter, reason, the state, the self, or any number of things. Pearcey labels these things idols, and their corresponding worldviews – evolutionary materialism, rationalism, statism, etc. – are idolatrous, because they set something created in the place of God the Creator. One implication of this idolatry is immediate and inescapable: “because an idol is something in creation, something lower than God, it will always lead to a lower view of the human person.”

Once we identify the god-concept of a given a worldview, the Christian’s task is to “test the idol against the real world.” How well does the worldview of evolutionary materialism account for a father’s love for his children, for example? If a worldview cannot account for the way the world is, that worldview is too small. We will see that it is only the Christian worldview that can make sense of reality, and it begins by acknowledging our status as created beings, and the ultimate reality and authority of God as creator.

As our contributors show, a difference in worldview entails a world of difference everywhere else. Far from a purely academic inquiry, our worldview has deep, far-reaching meaning for the things we do every day, for the kind of person we become, and the kind of world we create. An idolatrous worldview will lead to further idolatry, while submission to the Word of God as the source of the one true and faithful worldview will mean light and life and flourishing (John 8:12).

IN THIS ISSUE

Douglas Wilson explains how the Christian worldview relates to education, discussing the purpose of education and the need for a Christian worldview to go beyond mere thinking to both hearing and doing.

Andrew Sandlin contrasts the Christian and antichristian worldview as they relate to marriage and sexuality. Far from repressive and outdated, the Christian sexual ethic proves itself the only one that rightly understands God’s good design for man and woman.

Joseph Boot considers philosophy as a science and shows that here too there is no possibility of neutrality, for human thinking arises from the loves and desires of the human heart. Christian philosophy self-consciously begins with a confession that God is something outside of and beyond ourselves, and only from this standpoint can we have any hope of discovering what is true.

Willem Ouweneel shows the significant impact of worldview on art, music and literature. Considering two key dates, he highlights the work of...
figures like Richard Wagner, Edouard Manet and James Joyce, and demonstrates how their artistic vision was realized in terms of their disillusion with and rebellion against the world as they understood it.

Jeffery Ventrella discusses two divergent ways of understanding and defining a human being, and demonstrates their influence on the way we approach and engage with culture. Christian public life is not primarily about what we can do, but what we are for.


2 Perhaps the most well-known examples are the ever-expanding Philosophy and Pop Culture series published by Blackwell, and the Popular Culture and Philosophy series by Open Court, which both explore the metaphysical, epistemological and ethical questions raised by Star Trek, Metallica, Batman and much more.

Worldview & Education:
A Binary Choice

It has been well said that education is really more about formation than it is about information. Information is included in education of course, as a necessary part of the package, but there is a dangerous illusion in this for Christian educators. There is also an illusion for unbelieving educators, who, when they find out that education is more than mere information think they can therefore settle for a form that is less than “just information” as well. A better name for that is ignorance.

But it must be acknowledged that in conservative Christian circles, a robust celebration of worldview can tend to drift toward a reductionistic brainthink. A Christian worldview is assumed to be a matter of extensive orthodoxy – instead of believing correct doctrines about theology proper and thinking like a pagan about everything else – the problem that worldview education seeks to address – worldview advocates sometimes settle for just thinking like a Christian about everything. But to leave out application is, ironically, to stop thinking like a Christian.

This is an understandable error, though, and started pretty early in the history of the church. The Lord’s brother James had to warn believers against the particular kind of self-deception that comes from hearing the truth without actually doing it (Jas. 1:22). Whenever someone puts up with listening to the truth, he sometimes thinks that he deserves some kind of an award for that, and frequently the award is the self-congratulatory assumption that he is somehow automatically doing what he is hearing.

So we must insist that the concept of a worldview needs to go beyond mere thinking. But as soon as we start guarding ourselves against this error, we become prone to the error of minimizing the importance of knowledge again. Martin Luther once compared human nature to the drunk who falls off one side of his donkey, and so the next time he makes sure to fall off the other side in order to keep things even and measured. He wants his imbalance to be balanced. But this careening back and forth, or lurching from one extreme to another, is antithetical to the whole idea of a biblical worldview. As my father taught me when I was young – always act, never react.

According to the teaching of the Bible, fracturing and fragmentation is something that sin brought into the world, and a reintegration of all things is what Christ came to accomplish (Eph. 1:10). But the reintegration that Christ accomplishes is not just the integration of one thought with the other thoughts, but also of all our thoughts together with the rest of how we live. In other words, a biblical worldview aims at more than just a coherent mental map; the goal is fully integrated lives. And then we want those lives to be integrated with one another, and all of them integrated into the life of the Head:

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Eph. 4:15-16).

A Worldview Wheel

On the one hand the apostle Paul tells us that knowledge puffeth up, while love buildeth up. “Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth
thoughts.” I do this by means of what I call the “worldview wheel.”

A worldview wheel has four basic spokes. A Christian worldview has each of these spokes fastened to the axle – which would be the regenerating grace of God – and all of these spokes are also fastened to the rim, which is the absolute Lordship of Christ over all things. And the point of using this metaphor is to indicate that the wheel is not mounted decoratively on the wall, or half-buried in the lawn out by the mailbox, but was rather built to roll down the road.

The first two spokes I want to address are catechesis and narrative, the two spokes that are propositional in nature. The remaining two are symbol/liturgy and lifestyle, which are the enacted or lived-out aspects of worldview.

When Christian schools (or summertime worldview conferences) emphasize the catechetical element only, what they are doing is giving the students a walking stick instead of a wheel. It is no disparagement of propositional truth to say that by itself it is not sufficient. If we hear the word without doing it, as we noted from James earlier, we really do deceive ourselves (Jas. 1:23-27).

So then, catechesis would be our dogmatic summary of what we believe, narrative would be the story of how we came to believe it, symbol, liturgy and ritual would be how we represent what we believe, and lifestyle would be how we walk it out on a late Thursday afternoon.

THE FOUR SPOKES

So let’s begin with catechesis, since that is the one we tend to emphasize in our worldview instruction. Catechesis refers to our doctrinal or dogmatic content in how we answer the basic questions about life. What is the chief end of man?
When we reply that his chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, we are answering one of the basic questions about life, and we are answering it with a proposition. The Apostles' Creed would be a condensed example of assembled catechetical truth – multiple questions are answered in that creed. The Apostles' Creed is a tight cluster of discrete propositions. So if a Christian is asked how he got here, he could reply that he believes in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. A Darwinist, asked the same question, could simply say that he believes that he descended, through an extended chain of remarkable coincidences, from the primordial goo. All these are dogmatic, catechetical answers, and they are an essential part of any worldview.

Narrative refers to the story of your people, but also would necessarily include one's own personal testimony. And it is worth noting that stories are composed of propositions, just as creeds and confessions are. In reaction to what I have sometimes called orthodusty, some have sought to throw away propositional truth, believing falsely that the propositions are somehow the source of the problem. Jesus taught with authority, and not like the scribes (Matt. 7:29), but both Jesus and the scribes used propositions. The presence of propositions was not the cause of the authority problem the scribes had. But critics of propositions as such believe that if we allow propositions any important role, the next thing you know we will be trapped by an arid scholasticism.

First, because no body is in motion unless it be put in motion, as is evident from induction. Now it has been already proved (1:2:3), that God is the First Mover, and is Himself unmoved. Therefore it is clear that God is not a body (Summa, Aquinas).

But this is like seeing a building that you don't really understand architecturally, and as a consequence swearing off bricks. Or thinking that if you dislike pancakes, you must walk away from eggs. Propositions can build any number of things.

Once there were four children whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy. This story is about something that happened to them when they were sent away from London during the war because of the air-raids (The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe).

So the constituent elements of story are propositional sentences. Understood and handled properly, propositions can be among the most exciting things you have ever experienced. Aliens have landed their space craft in the town square, and have blown city hall into atoms is a proposition.

As C.S. Lewis pointed out in his essay Funeral of a Great Myth, this element of narrative is one that the evolutionists have mastered. Speaking of the grand myth of developmental evolution, Lewis said this: "Let no one say we are an unimaginative age: neither the Greeks nor the Norsemen ever invented a better story." And evolutionists never tire of telling us their story – they tell it over and over again. If you went to look at an exhibit of exotic clams at the aquarium, there is sure to be a placard somewhere nearby telling you how many millions of years ago this clam moved into the neighborhood, and they will also tell you what the temperature of the water was at that time. They are diligent in their storytelling, and it is one of the central reasons why the evolutionary worldview has had the staying power that it has had.

The next two elements of a worldview are enacted, or lived out in some way. They are three dimensional, as well as meaningful. Now that meaning could also be expressed in propositions, but it would be much more cumbersome. Henry Van Til once said that culture was religion externalized, and it is that phenomenon we are considering here.

Symbol, ritual, or liturgy are lifestyle in shorthand. For example, the lifestyle of a faithful husband is one of dedication to one woman, and to resist all temptations from all others. This lifestyle is constant, a 24/7 kind of thing. But there are particular ritual expressions of this as well – kissing her when he leaves for work, flowers on Valentine's Day, anniversary dinners, etc.

The most obvious symbolic elements of a worldview would be things like flags, crosses, jewelry,
wedding rings, Christmas trees, fireworks, standing for the anthem at NFL games (or not), and so on. Judges wear robes for this reason, and scientists want the association of the white lab coat for symbolic reasons. Such things are a sign of authority. In a Christian school, when the students wear uniforms, this is for the sake of order and discipline, but it also makes a symbolic statement to everyone in the community.

Symbols are complex. Sometimes a set of propositions can function as catechesis and symbol both. For example, in the worship service where I serve as minister, we stand and say the Apostles’ Creed every week. Now the Creed itself is made up entirely of propositions. But the act of reciting it is a ritual, and the act of standing to say is symbolic also.

In our individualistic times, there are some Christians who are most dismissive of this element of worldview, thinking that it is somehow optional. It is actually inescapable – and potent. Suppose a parent with this fuller understanding enrolled his children in a Vacation Bible School run by Christians with a very low view of symbol and liturgy. Imagine also that he had the temerity to suggest to the pastor of that church that it might be a fine thing to do if they taught all the children to recite the Nicene Creed, first thing every morning. The pastor would explain that they don’t believe in that kind of thing, and besides, if you recite something every day it will become meaningless. Suppose then the suggestion is made that they dispense with pledging allegiance to the flag – the national flag and the Christian flag both. It would then become evident that reciting something every day does not make it meaningless at all, at least not to them.

Secularists have their symbols, just as Christians do. There are COEXIST bumper stickers, the Volvo the bumper sticker is attached to, and the self-righteous recycling bins next to the driveway the Volvo is parked in. In short, everyone knows how to signal their basic commitments, and everyone does so.

Because lifestyle encompasses absolutely everything else, we have to begin with a few distinctions. There would be first-order lifestyle issues (e.g. monogamy, polygamy, or other), second-order lifestyle choices (e.g. basic Safeway fare or all-in organic natural), and then third-order (e.g. Levi’s or Wranglers, Ford or Chevrolet).

Because of things like the third-order issues, an objection is likely to arise. Suppose that a Christian and an atheist are next door neighbors, living in the same subdivision. They both drive a Tahoe, their houses were built by the same contractor using the same materials, they both have green garden hoses in the back yard, and they both have juniper bushes in the front. While some aspects of their lifestyle are different – the Christian leaves for worship on Sunday mornings while the atheist reads the newspaper on his back porch, the Christian is married to his partner, and so on – surely we should recognize that there are significant areas where their lifestyles overlap. Wouldn’t this require us to say that the Christian and the atheist in some measure share certain aspects of their worldviews? The answer is yes, they do. There will not be an absolute divorce between them until the sky is rolled back like a scroll. Until that day, any overlap is either the result of compromises on the part of the Christians, or common grace extended by God to the unbelievers.

THE CHRISTIAN STUDENT

There are three governments among men established directly by God. Under the authority of God, the church is the Ministry of Grace and Peace. The civil magistrate is the Ministry of Justice. The family is the appointed Ministry of Health, Education, and Welfare. It is important to define all these terms biblically because justice is not what the social justice warriors maintain – justice is not a matter of affordable chocolate milk for everybody. The form of government that makes the proper functioning of these three governments possible is self-government. If a people are not moral and self-controlled, it will not be possible for the other three governments to function without falling apart or becoming tyrannical.

Children are placed in families by God, and so the parents are the ones responsible for the education of their children. "Secularists have their symbols, just as Christians do ... everyone knows how to signal their basic commitments, and everyone does so.”
So let us consider some of the different helpful ways we might categorize different worldviews. For example, in his helpful book *The Universe Next Door*, James Sire breaks the options down to nine – including things like theism, deism, naturalism, and so on. If such a list is to be criticized, we might say that some examples of genus and species wound up on the same shelf. Isn’t deism a form of theism, for example?

Peter Jones has given us another way of breaking things down, using what he calls Oneism and Twoism. There are those who acknowledge the fundamental reality of the Creator/creature divide, which means that there are two basic realities that exist – the uncreated God and the created and contingent universe. This would be Twoism. And since we have to postulate the eternity of something, the only alternative would that all that exists has always been here (Oneism). There is no God outside of what is. In this system of categorization, believers are the Twoists and unbelievers are the Oneists.

As I mentioned earlier, these taxonomies can be helpful, and at times necessary. But I would like to suggest one more system. We are talking about cataloging systems here, and not about ultimate right and wrong. But in the system I would suggest, there is really only one worldview, and adherents of this one worldview can be divided into two rival factions within that one worldview – those who are not in denial about it and those who are. Here it is:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools (Rom. 1:18–22).

ONE WORLDVIEW, TWO RESPONSES:

With all this said, we can turn to categorizing or understanding the basic worldview options out there. Now when we are categorizing different worldviews, it is basically an exercise in taxonomy. This means various systems can be helpful in varying degrees as they emphasize different things. I have sometimes wondered how much fun it would be to catalog a library by putting all the red books that are eight inches tall in one section, and all the blue books in another. This would be great fun – but perhaps cumbersome when it came time to try to find a book.

of their children. Provided we are using the word *worldview* in the robust sense described above, they are the ones who will make the choices that provide their children with all four spokes of the wheel. Now it is certainly lawful for Christians to come together to establish schools, but they are to function as a servant to parents who are doing their job, taking their responsibilities seriously. The school is not to be a replacement for parents, and a well-run school is going to establish its procedures in order to be attractive to parents who are interested in providing a full-orbed worldview to their children. They will want parents who do not want to farm the basic responsibility for their children out.

When this is not happening, we have the explanation for why many Christian schools find themselves functioning just like the government schools, only with extra tuition payments. They attract parents who want someone else to do it, which is to say, parents who have not taken full responsibility. They put a certain amount of Christianity into the Bible class, and also chapel, and there is a cross on the brochures. So you have a dollop of catechesis, and a smidgen of symbol. But in the meantime, there is a torrent of the secular worldview pouring into the kids’ lives by means of their extracurricular activities and their ingestion of the world’s catechesis and narrative by means of movies, books, videos, playlists, and so on.

“*It is certainly lawful for Christians to come together to establish schools, but they are to function as a servant to parents who are doing their job, taking their responsibilities seriously.*”
Who clearly sees God’s “invisible things?” Who understands from the things created that God is eternally powerful? Who understands His Godhead? The answer Paul gives is “all of us.” Absolutely everyone. All of us share this worldview, and we share it at the profoundest level possible—the level that ensures that all of us are without excuse. The word rendered hold in verse 18 is katecho, and can be rendered as restrain.

Returning to my earlier illustration, it is as though we all have the same worldview wheel, but some want to make it roll down the road in the wrong direction. Or they have the wheel, which they are constantly trying to break. But reality has one pretty strong feature, and that is that it is not fragile or brittle.

It is clear that knowledge of God is actually in the hands of the unbelievers as well as the believers. But picture this knowledge as a giant, over-inflated beach ball, and we are all standing in the pool in water that is waist high. The unbelievers have the task of holding their beach ball under the surface of the water, all while loudly pretending that they don't have a beach ball. But they give themselves away in that there are beads of sweat on their foreheads, and their arms are quivering. The job of apologists and evangelists is to poke at their quivering arms.

Despite this knowledge, unregenerate men deny they have it. That is, they deny awareness of God when they are talking to us. And if what they were saying were true, then at the last day it would not be the case that they are “without excuse.” If they honestly and sincerely did not know if there was a God, and if their pursuit of their lusts was conscientious in every respect, how could God judge the world?

CONCLUSION

And so we must come to the conclusion that worldview education is an all-encompassing affair. No aspect of human existence is left outside of it. The greatest commandment given in Scripture, according to the Lord Jesus (Matt. 22:37-40), is the commandment found in the early part of Deuteronomy.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates (Deut. 6:4–9).

It is clear that knowledge of God is actually in the hands of the unbelievers as well as the believers. But picture this knowledge as a giant, over-inflated beach ball, and we are all standing in the pool in water that is waist high. The unbelievers have the task of holding their beach ball under the surface of the water, all while loudly pretending that they don't have a beach ball. But they give themselves away in that there are beads of sweat on their foreheads, and their arms are quivering. The job of apologists and evangelists is not to get them to go buy a beach ball, but rather—in the friendliest manner possible—to poke at their quivering arms.

Despite this knowledge, unregenerate men deny they have it. That is, they deny awareness of God when they are talking to us. And if what they were saying were true, then at the last day it would not be the case that they are “without excuse.” If they honestly and sincerely did not know if there was a God, and if their pursuit of their lusts was conscientious in every respect, how could God judge the world?

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The Meaning of Marriage: TWO VIEWS

As Herman Bavinck once memorably said, “the history of the human race begins with a wedding.” If we’re under the impression that marriage is a casual, carefree legal arrangement, we’d do well to ponder that fact. Every human, with rare exception, was created for marriage. The creation of man and woman is inextricably linked to marriage. To be created as human is (in most cases) to be created for marriage.

The Bible communicates the Christian meaning of marriage, but the world is at war with the Bible and the God who wrote it. Not surprisingly, therefore, there are two views of marriage, one standing in alignment with the biblical meaning, and one standing opposed to it.

THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF MARRIAGE

God created the race of man – male and female – in his own image (Gen. 1:27). A single individual wouldn’t have fully reflected that image. Man and woman both, in complement, comprehensively reflect God’s image. In marriage, humanity most spectacularly images God. Adam must have Eve; Eve must have Adam. Together they embody and exhibit the divine image as fully as a creature can. The Christian meaning of marriage can be expressed in five assertions: Marriage is (1) communion; marriage is (2) a covenant; marriage is (3) companionship; marriage is (4) community, and marriage is (5) cosmology.

COMMUNION

The Trinity — God the Father, Son and Spirit, God as one nature in three persons — enjoy infinite, eternal, blissful communion. That communion is so indescribably joyous, that they decided to share it (cf. John 17). God is not stingy. That’s why he created man and woman. The eternal communion of the triune God expands outward to man in time and history. Man and woman now share in the communal life of the triune God.

But communion with God wasn’t sufficient for Adam. It was not good for the man to be alone. The man needed the woman. To revise novelist Tom Wolfe, a man without a woman is a man in half.

So the male and female don’t each commune only with God. They commune with one another. Marriage is the co-mingling of faith, love, hope, dreams, children, possessions, and lives. St. Paul tells us that just as the church is mystically united to Jesus, so the husband is mystically united to his wife (Eph. 5). There is an ontological union in marriage whose mystical depths none of us can fully grasp. As the woman and man join in marriage, they become bone of bone and flesh of flesh; in some mysterious way they become one being before the Lord. This is a crucial part of the sexual union, of intercourse, which our era trivializes, but which is glorious and holy and pure in the sight of God. It is to be reserved for marriage, because only in marriage is the mystical union it creates legitimate.

COVENANT

Second, marriage is a covenant. Malachi the prophet chides the Jewish husbands for abandoning the wife of their youth, the wife of their covenant (2:14). We of the secular West have largely lost any sense of our idea of covenant. In the ancient world a covenant was a sacred bond secured by an oath, made before witnesses. It was almost always a self-maledictory oath, one that said, “I’m willing for God to impose severe judgment on me if I break my vow.” That’s how serious it was.
In marriage, you bind yourselves to live together as husband and wife (and also, in the ordinary way of things, father and mother) for your entire life. In an age that prizes autonomy, that lusted for independence, and that worships the self — you say solemnly today, “I’m giving up myself for someone else, all the days of my life.” Marriage is a covenant — a lifelong covenant that you break at your own peril.

COMMUNITY

Fourth, marriage is community. Since God in trune perfection is a community, and since man and woman in marriage fully display God’s image, marriage is a community.

The entrance of sin into the world didn’t erase that community. God’s objective is to redeem that community, and all communities. The community of marriage is an integral part of the community of redemption. The apostle Paul wrote that the husband and wife symbolize Christ and his church. Just as the husband lays down his very life for his wife, so our Lord laid down his life for the church. That community, the bride, is washed in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, the groom. All who trust in him by faith become part of that community, the church. The church submits to her Lord, as the bride submits to the groom. The groom loves and cherishes the bride, as Jesus Christ loves and cherishes his church (Eph. 5:22-33).

We live in times that champion radical individual autonomy. It always ends in loneliness, alienation and despair. Why? Because humanity was created for loving, self-sacrificial community, not for radical individual autonomy.

In the church, and in the wider Christian community, the community of marriage finds its fullest fulfillment. The church loves and nourishes and encourages and corrects and disciples the marriages in its midst. Just as man and woman were not designed to be alone, so marriages weren’t designed to be alone. The Christian community is God’s great sustenance and bulwark for marriage. Marriage is community — and is itself designed for community.

COSMOLOGY

Finally, marriage, the union of man and woman before God, is woven into the creational cosmos. It’s every bit God’s ordinance that the physical laws of gravity and propul-
The Meaning of Marriage

The modern meaning of marriage

Our surrounding culture has a markedly different meaning of marriage. You and I are living within the most momentous revolution in history. The revolution to vanquish all revolutions wasn’t the French or Russian or Chinese Revolutions. It isn’t, in fact, a political revolution at all, though it has vast political repercussions. It’s a social and psychological and even spiritual revolution. It isn’t chiefly about restructuring politics; it’s about transforming what it means to be a person, and therefore what it means to live within and be a society. There has been nothing like it since the Fall. It’s a totalizing revolution. Al Mohler writes of it:

This is a revolution of ideas — one that is transforming the entire moral structure of meaning and life…. This revolution, like all revolutions, takes few prisoners. In other words, it demands total acceptance of its revolutionary claims and the affirmation of its aims.

What is this revolution? It’s the Sexual Revolution. It has several precedents throughout history, but none that could be labeled a full-fledged revolution. This revolution was a cultural revolution launched in the West in the 1960s. It’s nowhere near completed; like all revolutions, it presses relentlessly for ever more radical transformation. This revolution is the antithesis of Christian. It’s not merely a deviation from biblical faith; it’s a purposeful assault on the Bible. It views traditional Christian sexual ethics, the ethics that had helped shape Western culture, as retrogressive and stifling and the enemy of The Good Life. Its goal is to treat sex as individual recreation, an end in itself. If sex is an end in itself, boundaries around sex must be torn down as long as all participants consent to the sexual act. Therefore, almost every form of adult consensual sex must be normalized. Mary Eberstadt gives the best definition of the Sexual Revolution I’ve encountered: “[T]he ongoing de-stigmatization of all varieties of nonmarital sexual activity, accompanied by a sharp rise in such sexual activity, in diverse societies around the world (most notably, in the most advanced).”

As a divine ordinance, it’s calculated to contribute to the smooth, organic existence of the cosmos. To our first parents God gave what we call the cultural mandate: to steward the rest of creation for God’s glory. Man and woman are God’s deputies in this world, but not as separate, autonomous creatures. Rather, it is man and woman in marriage that fulfill (despite the effects of sin) God’s plan to steward this splendidous, awe-inspiring creation to glorify him. This is why marriage is a permanent component of cosmology. Our world was created to be stewarded by humanity in the ordinance of marriage: the man and woman united in oath-bound covenant before the triune God.

And this is equally why the assault on marriage assaults the created order itself. To preserve and perpetuate and promote marriage is to preserve and perpetuate and promote the world itself. The simple word of “yes” or “no” by the bride at the altar not only shapes and reshapes human history. It also, and more importantly, cultivates and nurtures and perpetuates the very cosmos itself.

The married man and woman cultivate the cosmos for God’s glory; and without marriage, the cultivation of the cosmos would finally fail. (This is why, by the way, despite the blistering assaults on it, marriage will not finally fail.)

It is for this reason that the most momentous events occur not in the classrooms of the world’s most prestigious colleges, the ivory halls of government edifices, or in the opulent boardrooms of high finance, but in the simple, solemn, sacred service before God known as a wedding. At every wedding, we are witnessing a world historical event.

This, in summary, is the Christian meaning of marriage.
Today we live in the war zone between the Sexual Revolution and Christian sexual norms. More broadly, between the Christian meaning of marriage and the modern meaning of marriage. What are the leading fronts in that war?

**LEADING FRONTS IN THE WAR**

**Sex and creation**

First, since God created man as (sexual) male and woman as (sexual) female, sex is grounded in a creational, not a cultural, reality. We know that God created nature: it is his handiwork.

God does not directly create culture. Culture is a human construction. Better: it is a human reconstruction of the created world (material or immaterial) from the hand of God. Human sexuality is an example of creation, not culture. In this sense sexuality is ontological. Ontology has to do with “being.” Man was created as a sexual being. Sex isn’t therefore a development of his ingenuity or intellect or diligence (or biological evolution); it’s not a cultural or social construction. Sex (male or female) is hardwired into humanity’s very being. Man can no more replace his or her sex than he can replace his or her mind or conscience. Of course, humans can tamper with sex, mind, conscience, and many other creational realities. After all, what is sin, but a perversion of God’s good creation? Transgender operations can tamper with the physical traits of God-created human sexuality. But they never alter ontology: “Drive out Nature with a pitchfork, she will come back every time” (Horace). Just as man can efface but never erase conscience (Rom. 2:15), so he can modify sex bodily, but not ontologically.

Moderns at war with the Christian meaning of marriage often see sex as culture, not creation. Sex is engineered reality; you can make sexes just as you can make video games or pecan pies. The term “gender” is deployed to denote a species of sexuality that each of us creates and changes almost at will. We are all sexual artists, proving “the unlimited malleability of human sexuality.” Ever since humanity’s primal sin of rebellion against God’s order, men and women have bumped up against the constraints of creation and sought to burst through them. “Gender as social construction” is one such striking attempt. Homosexuality, female military combatants, and sex-reassignment surgery are all modern examples of opposition to the Christian understanding of marriage. Rod Dreher is quite right, therefore, that gay marriage is not just a social revolution but also a cosmological one. It is man’s attempt to reverse- and re-engineer God’s creation.

The Bible takes it as a given that humanity as male and female are interdependent but distinct as creational (ontological) realities, in which humanity should delight and for whose gift they should worship God. This is the antithesis of the Sexual Revolution worldview.

**Sex and intimacy**

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed,” writes Moses (Gen. 2:24–25). Only after they sinned did Adam and Eve experience shame at their nakedness (Gen. 3:7–11). They tried to shield themselves both from God and from each other. The nakedness of marriage in Eden exhibited and enhanced the intimacy of a man and woman who love each other enough not to fear sharing their deepest secrets. They have nothing to hide. Even after the Fall, the only relation of a man and a woman in which God permits nakedness is marriage (Lev. 18:5–20). Sin disrupted the intimacy of the human race with one another, but it has been restored in marriage.

The godly husband learns over time how destructive is the brooding, individualistic male held up as normative in the modern world. He learns that it is not good for man to be alone — it’s positively bad, in fact. The wife by her very nature furnishes the husband a spiritual, emotional, and psychological completion — he gets from his wife things that he can get only from her, and the most vital is human intimacy and its comforts and security that no man was designed to be without.
In marriage, humanity most spectacularly images God. In the words of James B. DeYoung:

... God could have made a thousand males for Adam, yet He would not have fully achieved His own image and its internal diversity. Without that full-orbed picture, His own being would have gone unknown and unknowable. Only a woman, not another man, could complete the divine design for humankind.11

Adam must have Eve; Eve must have Adam. Together – and only together – they embody and exhibit the divine image as fully as a creature can. They are made for intimacy.

The antichristian view of marriage purges intimacy from sex and replaces it with power: the physical power of the male to coerce sex, and the emotional power of the woman to trade sex for something else she actually wants. Sinful men objectify women, and sinful women objectify sex.

Since almost the beginning, sinful humans have commodified sex in the form of (for example) prostitution: men want pleasure, and women want money, without intimacy. Both are a perversion of the Christian meaning of marriage. Anything that a good God can make, a sinful man can pervert. The problem is that God has not constructed humanity with the capacity for sex without intimacy. Paul warns, “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, ‘The two will become one flesh’” (1 Cor. 6:15–16). Sex creates a one-flesh intimacy, and no matter how casual and mercenary the intentions of its recreational practitioners may be, they carry that intimacy and the subsequent relational brokenness of it wherever they go. This is equally a striking warning against premarital sex, and the notion that casual sex has no lasting effects, that one may later settle down and marry with no lingering implications of previous sexual encounters. There is plenty of sex without intended intimacy; there is never sex without actual intimacy, for good or for ill. Antichristian sexuality may promise pleasure without both the blessings and burdens of intimacy, but this promise arrays itself against human ontology, which, as God’s design for man, always gets its revenge.

The reputation of virile young male sexual wolves on campus looking for female conquests that fit into their general aspirations for success and the good life has lately been paralleled by ambitious young female collegians:

It is by now pretty well understood that traditional dating in college has mostly gone the way of the landline, replaced by “hooking up”—an ambiguous term that can signify anything from making out to oral sex to intercourse—without the emotional entanglement of a relationship.

Until recently, those who studied the rise of hookup culture had generally assumed that it was driven by men, and that women were reluctant participants, more interested in romance than in casual sexual encounters. But there is an increasing realization that young women are propelling it, too.

Hanna Rosin, in her recent book, “The End of Men,” argues that hooking up is a functional strategy for today’s hard-charging and ambitious young women, allowing them to have enjoyable sex lives while focusing most of their energy on academic and professional goals.12

Since the commodification of sex at the heart of the sexual revolution, men have objectified women by trying to sever intimacy from sex. Now women are returning the favor.

Recent assaults on the Christian meaning of marriage are also driven by assisted reproductive technologies. One leading example is surrogacy, in which a woman carries in her womb another woman’s child. This act severs intimacy from fruitfulness. Behind it is often the assumption
that children are a human right and not God’s gift to be delivered in his prescribed manner. Medical technologies that protect and enhance human life as God intended are a welcome gift at his hands. But any reproductive technology that subverts the Christian meaning of marriage not only violates God’s moral law but also injures the human condition, no matter how appealing it may be in the short term. Same-sex “marriage,” in particular, has an inextricable link with artificial reproductive technologies, since “marriage equality” necessitates the equal right and capacity to reproduce biological offspring. Since this cannot happen in a homosexual relationship according to God’s creation ordinance, it must happen artificially. The sexual revolutionaries simply cannot reach their desired cultural destination without these technologies.

Sexual intimacy may not be thrown out the window in an effort to get otherwise unavailable children. Children are God’s gift — but they must be received in his way.

Sex and complementarity

Man and woman are both made in God’s image, but each is distinctive in ways that correspond to — complement — each other. God fashioned woman to be different from man in the very ways that correspond to his inherent male limitations. Quite literally, Genesis teaches us that when God brought Eve to Adam, he met his match. God created woman to match man. He created her to be man’s precise counterpart — to fulfill exactly those areas in which God created man lacking. In short, God created man not to survive without his counterpart, the woman. God created man incomplete. Adam was created good, like the rest of creation. He was not, however, created fully fulfilled in himself. Just as creation was created good but needed man and woman’s loving cultivation, so the man was created good, but needed the woman as counterpart. The sexual differences between men and women rooted in the creation order highlight God’s intention that neither man nor woman was created to be alone.

We complementarians are sometimes accused of embracing the superiority of men. That charge is frankly, and ironically, false. If anything, we recognize the superiority of women in most matters of life. I’m reminded of the mother who asked her daughter what she learned in Sunday school. The young girl replied, “God made Adam, and then said, ‘I think I can do better.’” To argue against sexual equality is not to argue for across-the-board superiority or inferiority. It is to argue for both superiority and inferiority, and for both men and women, one or the other, depending on the situation.

Modern sexual egalitarianism does not succeed in erasing these differences; after all, fighting creation is fighting God. Sexual egalitarianism only succeeds in frustrating men and women: it disrupts the creation order that God intended for both men’s and women’s enjoyment.

Same-sex “marriage” is a particular culprit of leftist political utopianism. Why? Since the actual (in distinction from stated) goal of prominent same-sex “marriage” advocates is the abolition of marriage, which is a social “buffer” against naked state power, they want the state to gain unhampered social authority. Far from assuring individual liberty, same-sex “marriage” undermines the very institution (the family) that guards against state encroachment — a situation that prevails whenever competing institutions are conquered by radical social engineering. For this reason, it is counterintuitive when libertarians support same-sex “marriage.” Same-sex “marriage” doesn’t contract state power and intrusion, it expands the size and scope of the state.

The radical antichristian meaning of marriage links promiscuity, premarital sex, radical feminism, homosexuality, and same-sex marriage. Each in its own way destroys God-established hierarchies. Promiscuity erodes the sanctity of the family. Premarital sex assaults the exclusiveness of the marriage bed. Radical feminism degrades women by leveling the divinely-established noble female calling highlighted in the differences between men and women. Homosexuality abolishes altogether either the male or the female in the sexual union. Same-sex marriage legally codifies this radical, God-defying egalitarianism by sim-
ply redefining — that is, rescinding — marriage. Each of these acts subverts divine hierarchies given for humanity’s flourishing under God’s glory.

CONCLUSION

Imagine an architect who thought he could use word processing software to create a highly technical architectural schematic. No matter how hard he tried, he would fail, because the word processor was never designed to create architectural schematics. The software writer had nothing like architectural design in mind when he devised the program. He didn’t even include the basic digital building blocks by which one could alter the word processor to make it an architectural design program. People, even talented, well-intentioned people, who try to use it for something other than processing words, are doomed to failure.

Similarly, human sexuality is a vital aspect of God’s design for humanity. God designed sexuality to be loving, intimate, sacrificial, enjoyable, and productive (literally). It was designed to be what we nowadays term heterosexual. Intercourse was designed exclusively for marriage. We are aware of this sexual design not merely by deduction from the created personhood but chiefly by reading God’s revelation in the Bible. God tells us, and shows us, what his design was.

Contrary to much of what we hear today, Christian sexual ethics are not obsolete and can never become obsolete in God’s created world because they’re a part of his created reality. This sexual design could be abolished as easily as God’s entire creation could be abolished. The antichristian sexual worldview so pervasive in Western culture, therefore, is doomed to fail in its attempt to alter humanity’s sexuality. It is not doomed to failure, however, in creating widespread psychological depression, wrecked marriages, murdered pre-born children, sexual addictions, the objectification of women, the emasculation of men, the abuse of children, the reduction of childbearing, and the rootlessness of teenagers and young adults. Each of these is a bitter — and palpable — fruit of modern man’s rebellious quest to throw off the alleged repression of Christian sexual ethics.

We in Western culture have lived a good many years now under the cultural and legal imposition of this great liberation project. The tree was planted, it has matured, and its harvests confront us. The bitter fruit of those harvests now surround us — in our families, churches, schools, politics, hospitals, boardrooms, courtrooms, and therapists’ offices.

Insanity, it has been said, consists of doing the same thing and expecting different results. We live in a sexually insane culture. As spiritually and psychologically painful as it will be to turn back from our socially habituated insanity, only by a sane recovery of Christian sexual ethics can Western culture expect a cure to the deep maladies that presently infect us.

“Christian sexual ethics are not obsolete and can never become obsolete in God’s created world because they’re a part of his created reality.”

5 Mary Eberstadt, Adam and Eve After the Pill (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 12.
8 Theodore Dalrymple, “All Sex, All the Time,” Our Culture, What’s Left of It (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2005), 248.
10 Not all men were designed by God to be married, but those who were not require a special
grace from God to compensate for the lack of intimacy of marriage (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:7).


15 Adoption, which the Bible permits (Ex. 2:10; Est. 2:7), is in a different category altogether. It does not intentionally sever intimacy from fruitfulness. It ameliorates an already broken situation.

16 Marvin R. Wilson, *Father Abraham* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 201.

WORLDVIEW and a CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY of HISTORY

JOSSEPH BOOT

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IN POPULAR CULTURE THE word philosophy is used loosely, defined in diverse ways and applied to many different things – sports, music, gardening, education, cooking, and ‘life.’ However, traditionally the term has been used in a more careful and comprehensive sense to refer to a science dealing with the boundaries of truth, knowledge and experience and the way various aspects of our experience relate to each other. This understanding better reflects the etymology of the word, which brings together two Greek words meaning love (philos) and wisdom (sophia) – philosophy is therefore meant to be concerned with the pursuit of wisdom.

In many respects the science of philosophy has fallen into disfavor in our present culture. In large part this is due not only to a widespread cultural disinterest in adult conversation about ultimate issues that shape the human condition, but to an exhaustion with the apparent insolubility of age-old questions of truth and knowledge that the rationalistic Enlightenment project had claimed to be able to solve, but which failed to resolve in any satisfactory way. As Danie Strauss explains:

During the age of Enlightenment (the 18th century), faith in the possibilities of conceptional rationality dominated the scene. It was believed that human reason will be able to unravel all the secrets of nature and that humankind will be set on a path of infinite progress.¹

The disillusionment with Enlightenment hopes of universal progress led to the reactionary rise of historicism, an ideology concerned with historical reality in its individuality and uniqueness over against the alleged universals of human reason. This led on, via Romanticism, to a relativistic era of postmodernity with its skepticism in regard to ‘metanarratives’ – totalizing rational accounts of reality – which has now given way to a more general indifference, a lazy ideological group-think and an intellectual pragmatism when it comes to the important questions of human life. The concern of our age is increasingly less with what is actually and objectively true (for this cannot finally be known in the unbeliever’s view) but only with what appears to work – an instrumentalism that regards all the sciences as simply tools for achieving particular chosen ends. This has had the effect of leaving many of the traditional questions of philosophy out in the cold – though not surprisingly both lazy relativism and instrumentalism presuppose very specific philosophical perspectives.

CHRISTIANITY AND PHILOSOPHY

In the contemporary Christian context, philosophy is often viewed with some suspicion because it has been regularly seen as the non-Christian alternative to theology and therefore a dangerous field of vain speculations. Proponents of this attitude sometimes appeal to Colossians 2:8 where the apostle Paul powerfully warns believers, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world and not according to Christ.”

It is certainly true that some have sought to misuse philosophy as a substitute for theology, and there is no question that the history of Western philosophy includes much vain speculation and empty deceit. But the error and confusion within unbelieving philosophy does not absolve the Christian of responsibility for developing a Christian and biblical approach to
the questions of philosophy. Indeed, we should consider that Paul is not condemning the science of philosophy as such, anymore than he condemns the science of theology, politics or chemistry in his letters. What Paul is concerned to warn against is philosophical activity carried on in terms of an apostate worldview; a philosophy developed according to the ‘tradition of men’ and ‘the basic principles of the world’ and ‘not according to Christ’ in whom dwells all the fullness of the godhead bodily and who is head over all principality and power. Now if philosophy, theology, biology, economics or any other science can be carried on in terms of the basic principles of the world, that is in terms of unbelief, then it seems obvious that they can, in fact, also be pursued ‘according to Christ’ – which is to say, according to the view of reality given to us in the Word of God.

To pursue the questions of philosophy according to the ‘principles of the world’ is essentially to carry the task on from an immanence standpoint rather than being rooted in Christ. To look at things from the perspective of pure immanence is literally to remain inside them; everything must be reasoned about and accounted for purely within the boundaries of so-called rational thinking, without reference to anything that goes beyond the grasp of purely abstract human reasoning – it rests solely on human ideas. By contrast, the Christian standpoint looks at nothing in creation purely from ‘within’ the boundary of human abstraction and speculation, from the perspective of a supposedly independent rational thinking. Instead the believer’s starting point is confessional: “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith as you have been taught … For in Him dwells all the fullness of the godhead bodily, and you are complete in him” (Col. 2:6,9). In other words, the Christian starting point is a transcendence standpoint. This standpoint goes beyond our rational thinking to the religious heart, ultimately referring us back to Christ, the living Word and the creator of all things.

The result of this distinction between a Christian and non-Christian approach to philosophy – to knowledge, truth and experience (i.e. immanence or transcendence) – means that there is in fact no ‘neutral’ way of doing philosophy any more than there is a neutral way to approach theology – you can come to it as either a believer or an unbeliever. As such a pre-theoretical commitment to either the absolute autonomy of thought or the created and dependent character of human thinking is inescapable. The Christian must be committed to a scripturally-directed approach to philosophy. A purely ‘rational’ thinking independent of any belief commitment simply does not exist.

**“What Paul is concerned to warn against is philosophical activity carried on in terms of an apostate worldview; a philosophy developed according to the ‘tradition of men’.”**

**THE ROOT AND DIRECTION OF THOUGHT**

The reason for the impossibility of neutrality in philosophy is clear. When as human beings we do any thinking and reflecting at all, the self-hood (or in biblical language our heart) is the root from which that thinking arises. The person who acts, speaks, thinks, feels and believes is not identical with their speech-act, thought-act or act of feeling. The person we know as “I” who acts, feels, speaks and thinks cannot be directly identified with any mode of expression of one’s self-hood. This means that our self-hood (our heart) transcends even philosophical thinking. As a result we cannot grasp or comprehend this centre of our being with our theoretical thinking because the heart of man transcends his own reasoning – it is from his heart that he thinks! The natural limitations of conceptual thought make it impossible for it to fully capture the self. The Dutch philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd put the problem this way:

> How would it ever be possible to find within theoretical thought, which is only a temporal function of human existence, an autonomous concentration point that transcends the temporal diversity of meaning?

To try and illustrate with a word picture, the diverse branches of our thinking do not transcend the tree of thought in the temporal world – the branches are neither the root, source of life, nor ultimate environment of the tree. The branches of a tree are not identical with the soil from which the tree sprouts. The tree is planted in that which
is beyond itself, just as our theoretical thought is the outgrowth of the heart which transcends it.

This leads us to the insight that what gives direction to our thinking is something that rises above and goes before all our philosophizing – that is, the spiritual condition of our hearts and our view of the world that arises from this religious situation. Thus the non-Christian philosopher who believes in the self-sufficiency of his or her thinking simply takes for granted (i.e. believes religiously), that their thinking is self-sufficient – yet this idea is not something that they have proven directly! It follows that we then have an immediate violation of the religious boundary that immanence thinking, ‘according to the tradition of men,’ has set up for itself – that philosophy can and must be solely grounded in rational thinking and demonstration itself. The scripturally-directed conclusion we reach then is that philosophizing has a pre-philosophical starting point that transcends philosophy. Accordingly, every philosophy is really transcendence philosophy, even when it pretends to be otherwise. All thinking really begins in something beyond itself.

**WHERE TO STAND?**

When I was growing up I lived in Devizes, a town famous for being home to one of the longest runs of canal locks in Europe. We walked and played a lot by the canal as children and it was not an uncommon sight to see people on small boats or barges with barge poles being used against the canal bank to either slow down, speed up, or steer the vessel. Now imagine the non-Christian philosopher, Dr. Immanence who, according to the principles of the world, believes his philosophical thinking is sufficient to itself. He is like a man stood in a canal barge with his barge pole in hand. But instead of placing the pole on the firm canal bank (outside his boat) to move, he pushes the pole against the bottom of his own boat. He remains purely ‘inside’ (immanent within) his own vessel. In such a hopeless situation no progress of any kind can be made, for he is not using what is beyond him to move forward. To make headway one needs a fixed point outside oneself. Archimedes could certainly not have imagined raising the earth with one of his famous levers without both a fixed point beyond earth and a lever to do the raising! As Kalsbeek has pointed out:

> Philosophical thinking also needs a fixed point, an Archimedean point of reference, from which to proceed and upon which to base its ultimate support. The question is: where will the point of support be found? That is, within philosophical thinking (immanent) or outside its boundaries (transcendent)?

We have noted already that even when there is a pretense to purely immanence thinking (a rationalistic boundary within philosophic thought), and to a ‘neutral’ scientific approach, the reality is that important beliefs about the nature of life and thought are being presupposed in a religious way. The Archimedean point is being sought inside man’s own thought activity and this taking of a position regarding the ultimate reference point is fundamentally a religious activity. In short, undergirding the philosophies we encounter are in fact religious worldviews that are typically smuggled in uncritically rather than being acknowledged – the science of philosophy is never neutral. It is here we encounter the important relationship between worldview and philosophy.

**WORLD WITH A VIEW**

The foundational matter of worldview is very important for every Christian to think through to some degree. Without it, our thinking as believers remains shallow and superficial and our apologetics fragile and unconvincing. In all too often seeing our faith as essentially a matter of church life, we regularly fail to see the relevance of the teaching of scripture for the totality of life in the world – including the work of philosophy. Abraham Kuyper made a powerful contribution to Christian thought when he helped unpack the implications of a truly evangelical vision of the gospel as it emerged from the reformation:

> Calvinism did not stop at church-order,
but expanded in a life-system, and did not exhaust its energy in dogmatical construction, but created a life-and world-view, and such a one as was, and still is, able to fit itself to the needs of every stage of human development, in every department of life.

Speaking of a world-and-life-view is simply a helpful way to understand and describe the actual character of human thinking and knowing. As we live in the world and confront various tasks, decisions, challenges and opportunities each day, and when we deal with life questions both big and small, we do so nurturing (consciously or otherwise) a particular perspective on the world, irrespective of our interest (or lack of interest) in the formal questions of philosophy. Everyone has a view of life and the world – we all believe certain things without having ‘scientifically’ analyzed those beliefs – whether or not a person has reflected on philosophical and religious matters in a serious fashion. More specifically when we come to analyze created reality and reflect upon it in a more theoretical way, a little thought makes us aware that we do not come as blank slates nor as neutral, autonomous observers of ‘bare facts,’ but we come as religious human beings directed by an ethos rooted in our hearts. Moreover, we are conscious that we are conditioned beings, not incontingent or self-explanatory, fully embedded in created reality and shaped by our social and cultural history. Functioning in some measure like a set of lenses then, our world-and-life-view is an interconnected set of beliefs and assumptions through which we look at life and the world, which in turn shapes our approach to philosophical matters, informing what kind of philosophy we will embrace or deem adequate or acceptable. Our worldview is that which goes before the particular philosophy we espouse.

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Having briefly discussed the peculiar character of philosophical thinking, the impossibility of neutrality, and the connection between worldview and philosophy, I want to narrow the field of consideration to an area in philosophy that does remain of popular interest: the religious connection between worldview and philosophy is perhaps nowhere more obviously on display than in the philosophy of history.

It is my contention that unbelieving worldviews, if consistently worked out, lead to the development of philosophies that render life and history ultimately meaningless. This must lead either to an incoherent effort at facing despair and absurdity or an attempt to use philosophy to salvage a ‘meaning’ for history that is the fiat creation of man. Because in the non-believer’s worldview there is no living, relational and personal God, there is no creation as such because there is no design plan, no sovereign Lord, and no divine will and purpose. From a strictly human standpoint, all is reduced to vanity where the ebb and flow of history (formative cultural action) is rendered ultimately absurd. By contrast the Christian view of creation and historical development is summed up by Calvin Seerveld:

“The totality of creation’s meaning lies singly in Jesus Christ and his body...; this idea that the meaning of individual and universe, lies beyond both in the Son of God, that everything is meaning-less, aim-less, vain unless it be set in Jesus Christ, that the crown of creation, humanity, because justly commanded by God to love the Lord with all our heart... that humanity is meaning-full only if at work in the covenantal community of believers serving the realization of God’s plan, re-creation, reconciliation of all to God through Christ: it is this idea... [which shows] concretely rather than stated abstractly that the struggle of history is between a newborn civitas Dei and the age-old dragons, civitates mundi.”

It is this struggle in which philosophy is inescapably engaged. Evidently here, worldview and philosophy are intimately related. All philosophy is carried out in terms of one religious worldview or another – Seerveld articulates the biblical view. As such our philosophy of history will either be according to Christ, or according to the principles of the world.
Whilst we noted that many of the traditional questions of philosophy appear of little interest to people today, it is fascinating to observe that our revolutionary culture, still living off the kinetic energy of a Christian past, remains concerned with the future and what the future should be. To be interested in the shape of the future also means having some concern with interpreting past and present in human experience and assigning some kind of significance to them. And so, perhaps because of the instrumentalist mood of our time, one area of philosophy that remains very influential (whether we realise it or not) and still commands interest despite its problematics, is the philosophy of history. In line with the motivations of Karl Marx, this contemporary interest is driven not so much by a desire to understand the world as a given, but to change it.

THAT'S HISTORY

Speaking out of his underlying worldview, the neo-pagan Goethe, who was decidedly non-Christian and hostile to Christian doctrine, said that history is “the most absurd of all things,” a “web of nonsense for the higher thinker.”

We have seen that if no creator God stands behind history, governing all things in terms of his sovereign purpose and providence, then indeed from a purely immanent, human standpoint, man looks at history and is confronted by what appears absurd. Pushed to consistency with his apostate worldview, in an unbelieving philosophy of history, man is fatally immersed in historical time, the non-intelligibility of past and present, including all cultures and individuals (who are all historically unique and ‘other’) surrounds him. In short, there is no fixed bank outside of the boat of historical flux – no place to stand beyond constant change that can serve as a transcendent referent.

Since in the revolutionary secular mind everything in human life is subject to this constant change, even moral standards, law and judicial principles are reduced to the historical in a state of constant flux. But here we have a problem. If everything simply is history (stuff that happened), then there is nothing left in the world that can have a history – because history, law, morality, science, art, indeed all human thought, become identical. That is to say, if art is (only) history, how can we have a history of art? We cannot equate all of reality with just one of its aspects. That is to return to the error of historicism. Historical events are those that act formatively in world history. Events become significant only in connection with their impact on human culture. A historian therefore needs a criterion for distinguishing the historical aspect of reality (the way in which we experience certain events as historical) from all the other aspects – such as the physical, biological, aesthetic or logical. The problem with this historicism is that, without the doctrine of creation, it lacks a valid criterion, because the historical aspect of our experience and all reality are one and the same.

If all phenomena are nothing but ‘history,’ we can only have an absolute relativism; valid distinctions and any value judgements are impossible. The historicism of the modern secular world negates history because it fails to see that constancy and change are inseparable. Change can only be detected in human experience on the basis that something beyond change is constant. To deny an element in life that is constant (like human identity, moral law etc.) is actually to deny change and all history. There must be a criterion that cannot be reduced to historical change for a philosophy of history to be possible.

Of course, it is impossible for apostate men to live with the absurdity to which this idolatry of absolutizing historical change drives them. Radical relativism is self-defeating. As a result, in the West, philosophers have often sought to escape the problem of total immersion in historical time by borrowing elements from a Christian understanding and philosophy of history. History must be salvaged from its absurdity to move in a purposeful direction toward a particular chosen end. The purpose and will of man must be imposed upon the constant change all around them, whilst historical actions and reactions are accounted for solely in terms of various material, social, and economic forces. ‘Nature’ may be deterministic, but somehow man must be made to transcend the flux of fate to have a history. Religious belief in an absolute
human freedom thus struggles against the opposite pole in the religious worldview of the modern age – the determinism of nature powerfully set forth in the doctrine of evolution.

The very concept of history as we know it really owes its origin to a biblical view of the world. The endless cycles of recurrence for the Greeks and the nihilism of Eastern philosophy could not have given us the idea of historical progress and direction that still shapes the mind of the modern West. As Hermann Cohen has suggested:

The concept of history is a product of prophetism…. What Greek intellectualism could not produce, prophetism has achieved. In Greek consciousness, historein is equivalent to inquiry, narration, and knowledge. To the Greeks history remains something we can know because it is a matter of fact [factum], that is, of the past. The prophet, however, is a seer and not a scholar; his prophetic vision has created our concept of history as being essentially of the future…. For this new future ‘the creator of heaven and earth’ is not sufficient. He has to create ‘a new heaven and a new earth.’ In this transformation the idea of progress is implied. Instead of a golden age in the mythological past, the true historical existence on earth is constituted by an eschatological future.7

The current cultural concern with a universal history, with progress toward a better, or ‘more equal’ or ‘more just’ world is clearly borrowed from our Christian past, from the prophetic, messianic vision of Scripture. What shapes our cultural vision today in the West is a philosophy of history that tries to secularize biblical ideas to avoid falling back into the fatalistic cyclic motion for history found in antiquity.

It seems the only choice remains either eschatological direction or cyclic motion. However, if man wants an actual history and therefore a future, whilst rejecting the messiah and his prophets, then the apostate philosophers must themselves create the new heaven and new earth in which ‘righteousness’ dwells. The contemporary view of history then is a bastardization, a hybrid attempt to synthesize a pagan and Christian view by immanentizing creation, incarnation and consummation – these must now happen ‘from within’ history rather than being from beyond history in the person of Christ. Man must somehow transcend himself (to avoid radical historicism), recreate himself, incarnate his idea and messianic vision and bring his prophecy to consummation by his own political power.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF HISTORY

To better understand how the non-Christian thinking of the modern West is so dependent on a scripturally-derived philosophy of history, we need to understand something of what Scripture teaches about history.

From the beginning of Genesis and the cultural mandate given to human beings to rule and subdue by bringing out the potentialities of the earth, cultivating creation in terms of the kingdom purposes of God (Gen. 1:28), we find that the essence of the historical aspect of human experience is free, formative control. That is, the way we experience the historical-cultural aspect of human life is in the constant struggle for the control of historical development. We are all part of that struggle every day. The way in which unbelief has distorted the original biblical calling to formative control within cultural history is critical to understanding the purpose of a Christian philosophy of history – as well as a redemptive and prophetic calling for philosophy.

The scriptural perspective concerns a direction for history grounded in Christ as the root of all things (John 1:1-14). It is Christ, the living Word, who created, sustains and governs all things – for from him and through him and to him are all things (Rom. 11:36). Creation is therefore a concrete manifestation of his Word. The biblical worldview tells us of this good creation that fell into ruin due to sin, subsequently being subject to God’s curse and thus placed in a temporary bondage to decay (Rom. 8:19-22). However, according to the messianic covenant

“The very concept of history as we know it really owes its origin to a biblical view of the world.”
promise of God, from beyond history, the last Adam, the true man and truly obedient Son is incarnate in the world, invading in the flesh the history that he governs. Christ Jesus is made manifest at the right time for our redemption and the reconciliation of all things to God. His power and authority to restore all things to the Father, renewing all that had been distorted by sin, was unveiled through the power of his Word; a Word which not only pronounced forgiveness of sins, but worked the healing of disease, the calming of waves and storm, the creation of new wine and the raising of the dead. These signs pointed to the eschatological character of history which culminates in the renewal of heaven and earth.

By his vicarious death, resurrection from the grave, ascension and session at the right hand of God the Father, now in the place of total authority, the court of Christ’s judgment is in session, for he must reign until he places all his enemies under his feet; the last enemy to be defeated is death (1 Cor. 15:25-26). Now his rule and reign is declared by his redeemed people in the gospel of the kingdom, and as new creatures, we pray and work for that kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. At a time only known to God the Father, the last Adam and Lord of all creation shall return to consummate his kingdom purposes and release creation from its bondage to corruption, a liberation that will coincide with the resurrection of the body. The renewed earth will be as real as this one, as the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven into the earth and God’s makes his dwelling with men.

This scriptural historical expectation forms the foundation of a Christian philosophy of history. Creation is broken and sin and injustice continue to do their worst. Man feels alienated from God, man, the creation and his proper calling due to sin, but in Christ he is restored to his calling where the reality of regeneration and the assurance of final, total restoration urge him on to cultural action in terms of the kingdom of God. It is easy to now see how secularized copies of the Christian vision of history which ape the biblical view have gained cultural force.

**The Legacy of Marx and the Idea of Progress**

In humanistic philosophy built on a worldview of unbelief, the focal point of ‘being’ is man, not God. An apostate anthropology (view or doctrine of man) with man as the centre of all things is closely linked to a philosophy of history that dominates in the modern West. This philosophy of history no longer sees man under an absolute control of unchanging reason and a natural morality as earlier forms of rationalism had done. Instead there is at work a new ‘law idea’ in which human beings, in the progress of history, are becoming increasingly ‘self-conscious’ of their freedom. For influential Western philosophers like Hegel and other thinkers of the tradition of German Idealism, it was the divine (absolute spirit, i.e. god) that was becoming self-conscious through incarnating itself in man in the process of history – in that sense God potentially existed as man became self-conscious of his freedom.

In this line, the most consistent and culturally influential example of a philosophy of history that seeks to rob Christian resources whilst assaulting Christianity is Marxism, a vision that is very much with us today in a variety of guises and modifications, including what is called progressivism or cultural Marxism. Marx was enthralled in his early career by German Idealism, but it was not concrete or radical enough for him. Marx wanted revolutionary social change.

Marx thus sought to absorb all history into an economic process which he taught was moving toward a final world revolution and renovation. He believed that he was realising the unity of reason and reality, of essence and existence – the rational was the real and had to be
concretized. The philosophy which could meet the need of the hour had to be worldly, political, economic, a new kingdom of God. Seeing mankind as essentially enslaved to a capitalistic mode of production, Marx was clearly preaching regeneration, liberation and salvation. Karl Lowith has asked, “if Marx ever realized the human, moral, and religious implications of his postulate: to create a new world by creating new men, a new kind of man.”10 Unlike the grace and mercy we find in God’s salvation in Jesus Christ, it is hard to see Marx’s liberationist vision of regeneration for the proletariat as being motivated by love, grace or compassion, because “Marx sees in the proletariat the world-historical instrument for achieving the eschatological aim of all history by a world revolution.”11 As such, for Marx, history is a struggle not between the city of God and the earthly city of man seen in Scripture, between the kingdoms of darkness and light, but between the oppressors and the oppressed. Marx’s new man was an ideal abstraction. All society must be liberated whether people realise and want it or not, and the ‘oppressed class’ are simply a means to that end.

We are thus given by Marxism and the neo-Marxist philosophy that dominates the political class in the modern West a humanistic philosophy of history, where history is understood as an inescapable fate or destiny toward liberation, and yet man is somehow free to remake himself – the paradox of the freedom of necessity. Zuidema points out that this is:

…the secularisation of the biblical revelation of the providential guidance of God in history. In this philosophy of history the idea of a history-creating man and mankind, embodied in the proletariat, is a historicistic secularization of the biblical revelation of the liberation through Christ, the lamb of God and king of kings.12

This all makes the Marxist and neo-Marxist vision of history a profoundly religious enterprise. Without adequate ground, Marx and his contemporary disciples see exploitation and oppression under every rock, even though they lack an objective criterion for such an ethical judgment in their atheistic worldview. But this does not dampen their righteous indignation. As Lowith notes, “The Communist Manifesto is, first of all, a prophetic document, a judgment and a call to action.”13

In Marx’s own words, “We reclaim the whole content of history, but we do not see in it a revelation of God but only of man.”14 Consequently the Marxist vision is transparently a secularized, atheistic messianism, a view of history born out of the religious root of Marx’s own being as an anti-religious and even anti-Semitic Jew. Whilst assailing the supposedly mythological Christianity, he borrows its categories of thought. His is an eschatological faith that apes the Christian philosophy of history in order to give it formative cultural power. And so Marx’s criticism of thinkers like Hegel was that although he asserted the autonomy of man’s reason, he failed to apply it and realize it in history. True philosophy must emancipate and deliver man from all his idols.

**THE MODERN PROGRESSIVES**

This spirit of the age, characterized by constant change and a lack of any abiding standard, sheds light on our cultural moment where every basic assumption about creation order in the West is being challenged, from human identity as male and female to the nature of marriage, family and sexuality. Although the focus of Marx’s philosophy of history was economic materialism, he well understood that you cannot have social revolution without a sexual revolution. Since he thought of social conditions as determining people’s thinking, his concern was to change those conditions, and the Christian concept of family was for him at the root of oppression, exploitation and the ‘evil’ of private property. Above all it was at the root of the religious opiate of the people – the myth of God. He wrote, “once the earthly family is discovered to be the secret of the holy family, the former must then itself be theoretically criticized and radically changed in practice.”15

“Marx’s new man was an ideal abstraction. All society must be liberated whether people realise and want it or not, and the ‘oppressed class’ are simply a means to that end.”
The contemporary mantra, following Marx, continues to divide the world into oppressors and oppressed, and the newly-expanded categories of people said to be victims of oppression are not simply the wage-laborers, but all those ‘victimized’ by the Christian morality and social order of the past – like marriage, monogamy, one man with one woman. In addition, since the origins of ‘Christendom’ are conceived of as European and white, every other people group, religion and color are likewise victims of the oppressive white Christian man and his middle-class family. All history (especially Western imperial history) must now be interpreted through this illusory grid and immediate revolutionary action taken to implement the social changes necessary to either convert or oppress the oppressor, casting them into the immanent hell first of social and cultural ostracism, and then if necessary of criminal sanction. For neo-Marxism, justice being social, guilt must be also, so the individual character and behavior of the oppressors is irrelevant. Following Marx, they belong to a condemned class that has a secret history and intention not revealed by their actual words and convictions. This is because the modern spirit views culture in terms of unending historical development, rejecting all the constant, creational structures that make this development possible.... As a result it has no reliable standard for distinguishing reactionary and progressive tendencies in historical development. It faces the problems of the “new age” without principles, without criteria.16

As such the popular slogans about freedom, democracy, rights, inclusion and tolerance have no reliable or lasting value. These mantras are merely empty shouts to overturn all existing order in the hope that from such a demolition of previous security, a radical and autonomous freedom will emerge where man is no longer troubled by conflict or a deep sense of alienation.

**THE CHRISTIAN PROPHETIC RESPONSE**

The Marxist and neo-Marxist philosophy of history has had a powerful and enduring formative influence around the globe in various permutations, and continues to deeply inform not only the Western academy but public law and policy in Western nations. There is no accounting for this influence without seeing that Marx understood biblical eschatology better than many Christians and sought, with immanence thinking, to radically secularize a scriptural view of man and his historical calling in terms of cultural formation. Marxism’s strength comes from its aping of Christian thinking and still represents the only consistent humanistic/atheistic alternative to the philosophy of meaningless cycles of recurrence in the ancient world, or a robustly biblical standpoint. Just as the myth of spontaneous generation through a form of Darwinian development gave the humanist an alternate creation account to latch onto to find some kind of intellectual coherence and fulfillment without the God of Scripture, so permutations of Marxism remain the only alternative for those culture shapers seeking a view of history and social order that can salvage an immanent ‘meaning’ from the abyss of time.

The difficulty for the average Christian in responding to the neo-Marxist worldview is that they do not have a robustly scriptural worldview with which to respond. This is a problem because the encounter requires “the complete spiritual armor of the Christian religion.”17 The deficit is rooted in the loss of a truly Christian understanding of a historical and cultural calling. I can agree with Karl Lowith that man needs redemption in history, from beyond history and as such, “there has never been and never will be an immanent solution to the problem of history, for man’s historical experience is one of steady failure.”18 Scripture makes plain that sinful man in rebellion against God is confronted with thorns, thistles and frustration in his cultural labors within history. He cannot by himself overcome his sin-driven alienation from God, his true calling, the world and others. By his own power he cannot remake himself or the world, but can only be remade in Jesus
Christ, the root of all things. There can only be a transcendent solution to the problem of history, by the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension and kingdom rule of the man Jesus Christ. Only in the providence and sovereignty of God can we face the future and rest secure in his promise of restoration and renewal for all things by the Man he has appointed. Man’s historical experience in trying to effect his own salvation may be doomed to fail, but this does not mean that the history of the gospel in the world as it transforms people and nations is one of steady failure.

The scriptural view of history is that the Son is not simply saving individual souls, but is inheriting the nations (Ps. 2:8). Does not God declare that Egypt is his people and Assyria his handiwork (Is. 19:24-25)? And does not righteousness exalt a nation, and sin prove a reproach to any people (Prov. 4:34)? Is not the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus himself a direction to disciple and teach nations and peoples (Matt. 28:18-20)? Is it not the case that the nations will bring their treasures to him and serve him (Ps. 72:10-11)?

In light of these promises, the scriptural reality is that “of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end” (Is. 9:7); that everything is placed under Christ’s feet and under his control in this age and the one to come (Heb. 2:8; Eph. 1:20-23). All thought and action, and therefore the direction of historical development, is thus carried out in terms of either apostasy or faithfulness.

In responding to the Marxist and neo-Marxist vision of our age, Christians have tended to retreat from the cultural conflict. Culture and history are often seen as matters of pious indifference and resignation because of their incalculability. On the restless sea of history, what practical difference does it make whether people in our culture feel in the hands of a righteous God or feel in the grip of chance and fate – after all, the kingdom of God is not of this world and everything is going to be destroyed anyway?

We have likewise understood the drive for gain or progress and power as inherently unchristian. Lowith correctly sees both the idea of a Christian philosophy of history (i.e. the progress of the kingdom of God in the earth) and the secular transformation of it as giving us the modern world, the ideal of modern science, and finally a secular attempt to create a kingdom of God without God. And it is certainly true that sin perverts the dominion mandate into domination, and secularizes the call to spread the gospel of the kingdom into a humanistic presumption to create a better world in the image of man and save the non-Western nations from themselves. But the Christian desire to distance the faith from imperialistic presumption or unrestrained domination has led to the collapse of a proper understanding of the cultural mandate and historical calling of God’s people as found in the biblical revelation. It has promoted a pious retreat into a kingdom not of this world, a world in which the Christian church is not even an historical people in the true sense, and the judgments of God not active in history to bless and curse. In the face of Marxism and neo-Marxism we are left with a pie-in-the-sky Christianity, surrendering culture to the enemies of Christ.

Moreover, because of the influence of strains of Marxism in the church, Christians have become suspicious of power itself. Dooyeweerd’s insight here is critical for a Christian philosophy of history and so I will quote it at length:

“Many equate power with brute force. Today, many Christians, misled by this identification, consider it un-Christain to strive for the consolidation of power in organisations that aim at applying Christian principles to society. They believe that power may play no part among Christians … Christians may speak of love and justice with an unburdened conscience, but as soon as power comes into their purview they have probably lent their ears to the devil. Such opinions indicate that the creation motive of the Christian religion has retreated from the worldview of these Christians. As a result [they] can no longer understand humankind’s fall and redemption through Jesus Christ in its full scriptural significance. The unbiblical impact

“The scriptural view of history is that the Son is not simply saving individual souls, but is inheriting the nations (Ps. 2:8)”
of their view becomes apparent when we recall that God reveals himself as the creator in the original fullness of power. God is almighty. At creation God charged humankind with the cultural mandate: subdue the earth and have dominion over it…. Because of the fall, the position of power to which God called humankind in the development of culture became directed toward apostasy. But Christ Jesus, the redeemer, revealed himself as the possessor of power in the full sense of the word: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me,” says the risen Lord. He charged his apostles to proclaim the power of the gospel among all nations…; power is not brute force. It is rooted in creation and contains nothing demonic…. Only sin can place power in the service of the demonic…. Insofar as power has been entrusted to human beings as creatures, it is always cultural. It implies a historical calling and task of formation for which the bearer of power is responsible and of which she must give account.19

In this then Marx was right: formation never takes place without a struggle. But that struggle is not between oppressors and oppressed, but between true and false worship, obedience and disobedience, covenantal faithfulness or apostasy, the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. All historical formation requires power and as a result, it never takes place without a cultural struggle. Christians are in history, in the midst of this great struggle against the spirit of revolution which is directed against God and his creation order. Revolution seeks to completely overcome the power of norms and tradition. We see this spirit at work in our own time as the attempt is being made to supplant normative sexuality, marriage and family as a way of remaking man and re-engineering society. If tradition is completely overcome, culture will be destroyed. However, “humankind cannot overturn the creation order, which binds historical development to abiding norms. The creature cannot create in the true sense of the word. Humankind cannot create a genuine culture while completely destroying the past.”20

In the Christian view then, because all authority and power belong to Jesus Christ, and because of his kingdom at work in and through his people in history, progress is possible – and a Christian philosophy of history is possible. Without both constancy (God’s abiding norms) and change (culture reforming or rebelling against God), how could we even have such a thing as history? The fact of creation and God’s law-word for creation means that progress can be made for God’s kingdom. Surely every Christian should be able to look at the reforms of William Wilberforce in England and recognize cultural progress in continuity with God’s norms, and see the power of God’s kingdom at work in the world.

Lowith rightly noted that modern historical consciousness, especially as seen in Marxism, derives its eschatological outlook from Christianity by opening up history to the idea of future fulfillment. However, Lowith, along with many Christians today, does not see that future fulfilment progressively happening within historical existence. Here is where the Christian gives up all his ground in culture because Marxism does see a secular dominion mandate and fulfillment in history. This is the critical error amongst Christians, for although the kingdom of Christ is not of this world in the sense that its source and power are not immanent within purely human historical action, the kingdom of Christ is very much a historical reality within the world and this creation and will find its fulfillment in history with the consummation and renewal of all things.

CONCLUSION: PHILOSOPHY AS PROPHECY

A Christian philosophy of history then, undergirded by a scriptural worldview, is eschatological and prophetic. Truly Christian thought will war against the false prophecy of humanistic philosophies of history, in terms of the Word of
God. Not all of us are called to do philosophical and apologetic work, of course, but all Christians need a scriptural philosophy of history to do battle with and developing this is part of our covenantal walk with God as we prepare to pass on to the next generation what we have inherited and built upon. This is how history under God’s sovereign government moves forward.

Thinking about Christian philosophy as a form of prophesying reminds us of the force of the older Testament prophetic message. As Evan Runner notes:

Old Testament prophecy aims to establish the supremacy of Jehovah, binding man and all creation to the Law-word of God. It views detailed events in their relation to the divine plan, which has for its purpose the absolute establishment of the supremacy and glory of Jehovah in Israel and eventually on the entire earth. This involves the Messianic prophecies: the person of the Messiah and the coming of the Kingdom of God. 

Clearly then the philosophical task, like every other task, must be carried out in the light of scriptural prophecy, “for we who wish to work at our philosophical task in the light of the witness of Jesus – we are prophets.” As Christians we must not allow forms of Marxism, with its false prophecy, to go unchallenged and run the field of culture. To do so is to abandon our calling in the kingdom of Christ. Scripture teaches us that all things in creation are constantly related to God, for all things are from, through and unto God – not least man himself – and as the redeemed in Christ we are to direct all things toward his glory. Because in a sinful and fallen world man has dislocated his thinking from God and seeks to alienate creation from him, Christian philosophy will see that the real need in human thinking is to be reconciled and bound to the Law-word of God.

This need places the question of worldview and philosophical work in its proper context, for we are not, in the first place, apologists or philosophers, academics, scholars or anything else. As Christians, “we are prophets and...our being engaged in philosophical work, must be understood as a moment of our lives as prophets. We may not, we cannot actually, separate our philosophical task from our prophetic calling.”

That grace and power at work in us by the Holy Spirit will bring about a passion in our being for the supremacy of the Word of God to be made manifest in our individual lives, our families, societies and nations. This passion wrought by the Holy Spirit points to the true direction of history. For we must come to see the Word of God as the “only power to sustain us, to heal us, to renew us, to liberate us, to bring the whole of creation to its intended fulfillment.”

What specifically then is happening when in philosophic and apologetic thinking and work we set forth the Word of God?

[We are prophetically – thus not by our own wisdom or in our own strength, but in the power of the Holy Spirit – to bring to the light in our critical analyses, the spirit of the lie, of suppression and distortion that is at work in the world, however many traces of the truth may be found therein, and at the same time to point to the gracious revelation of the Way, the Truth and the Life and the age-old community of the Truth and fellowship in the Way, and the Life, the church of Jesus Christ.... It is in the Church of God that the community of scholars is born and flourishes, nowhere else.... As Christians engaged in our philosophical task, we are to go on the offensive to extend God's prophecy to the ends of the earth, to all the nations of the world, and, in pushing outward, always... putting to the test the spirits that are at work everywhere in the world, confident that He who is in us, and who by His Spirit binds us together in the bonds of love, is greater than he that is in the world, and that our Lord's intention is, as He has told us, the establishment of His supremacy over all His creation and the fulfilment of the creation design.]"
It is in this hope, this sense of vocation, and in this scriptural vision for history that Christians today must root themselves, prophetically expounding the Christian philosophy of history against the lie. And we must do so in view of the note of victory that characterizes Jesus’ witness to the truth and that of all biblical prophecy. For though the founding thinkers of the world, with their humanistic ‘isms,’ false prophecy, and distorted eschatology come and go, “God’s plan will be carried out. His Kingdom will triumph.”

3 L. Kalsbeek, Contours of a Christian Philosophy: An Introduction to Herman Dooyeweerd’s Thought (Toronto: Wedge, 1975), 56.
4 Abraham Kuyper, Lectures on Calvinism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 171
9 Lowith, Meaning in History, 33.
10 Lowith, Meaning in History, 36.
11 Lowith, Meaning in History, 37.
12 Zuidema, Communication, 117.
13 Lowith, Meaning in History, 43.
17 Dooyeweerd, Roots, 67.
18 Lowith, Meaning in History, 191.
19 Dooyeweerd, Roots, 68-69.
20 Dooyeweerd, Roots, 73
22 Runner, Walking, 503.
23 Runner, Walking, 507.
24 Runner, Walking, 516.
25 Runner, Walking, 508.
26 Runner, Walking, 506.
The Dutch psychology professor Jan Hendrik van den Berg (1914–2012) was the inventor of a new branch of science, which he called metabletics, the science of change (or, historical phenomenology). Times change, but people change, too. Psychologically speaking, we are very different people than those who lived in, for instance, the nineteenth century. According to metabletics, such changes are often quite drastic, and they take place in very different fields: family relationships, mathematics, physics, biology, psychology, philosophy, architecture, spirituality, the arts, and so on. Sometimes, such changes can even be pinpointed to a single year. Besides making only longitudinal sections of history, each time focusing on one subject (e.g., the history of music), it is also valuable to focus on cross-sections of history, in a number of diverse fields. In this way, the connection between the arts and reigning worldviews, as well as developments in many other fields of culture, will become visible. In this article, I wish to focus on two such “key years:” 1859 and 1905.

THE TRIO OF 1859

American historian and philosopher Will Durant has argued that 1859 can be viewed as a turning-point in the intellectual development of Western civilization, and even as the starting-point of modern thought. He was thinking especially of Charles Darwin and his book On the Origin of Species. Darwin’s ideas became the dominant philosophy in England in the last decades of the nineteenth century because he seemed to offer an encompassing explanation for the struggle of life and the survival of the fittest, even within human history.

Another man was also active in England at the time: Karl Marx. In London, he made a thorough study of state economy. In the very year of Darwin’s book, Marx published his Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (“Criticism of Political Economy”), which was later largely included in his main work, Das Kapital (“Capital”) Vol. I, published in 1867. Marx’ materialistic and historicist work was the astonishing counterpart of Darwin’s book. No wonder: he had read Darwin with immense enthusiasm. What “natural selection” was for Darwin, “social evolution” was for Marx. In both views, it was not the individual who counted but only the “species” and the (social) “class,” respectively. In both views, a rigid natural law rules over biotic and historical development.

French-American historian Jacques Barzun added a third name to those of Darwin and Marx, another great cultural mind who finished his main work in 1859: the composer Richard Wagner, forerunner of atonal music. Wagner was also an amateur philosopher: in 1859, his restless mind had imbibed the ideas of his time, including racialism, Ludwig Feuerbach’s materialism, and Mikhail Bakunin’s anarchism. This queer mixture of ideas strengthened his main conviction that he was building the “art work” of the future. His views were not only expressed in the self-made texts of his operas but also in the music itself, especially in the use of the Leitmotiv. This is a short musical theme that represents a certain person, idea or subject, and at appropriate moments pops up in the music. The first really new work of art, the revolutionary5 musical drama, was the opera Tristan und Isolde (1859). Wagner reduced the ancient story to a concise theme: the elevation of love, emerging in the famous Liebestod (“love death”), the experience of a passion that is fulfilled only in demise.

Barzun argued that Darwin, Marx and Wagner, in astonishing unity, brought to expression one
common thought, totally independent from each other, but at the very same time. They also had the same negative attitude toward their immediate predecessors and contemporaries, and all three managed to convince their peers of their originality. Indeed, Wagner’s Tristan is a milestone in musical history. “Before and after the Tristan” became a slogan equally characteristic as “Before and after the Origin” and “Before and after the Critique.” That is, before and after 1859. The Tristan exhibited for the first time that peculiar picture of the “infinite melody,” the “ever-moving chromatics.” It is a kind of “dialectic” in its own right, of increasing and decreasing tensions. Indeed, Wagnerians have always argued that this music is “revolutionary,” that art develops in a “biological” way; that melodies “grow” from “root” tones, accords and motifs; that musical ideas express natural-scientific facts and laws, and so on. This biotic-evolutionary element comes to expression in the story as well. In the shape that Wagner gave it, the story has little to do with romantic love, and far more with biological love. As it has been said of the Tristan: sex is the return, the complete oblivion, no tenderness, no awareness of the other, but only the ardent, impersonal longing for total destruction. The second act of Tristan und Isolde celebrates the biological act, purely in tones. Moreover, the passion is not that of the lovers themselves; it is a natural force, symbolized by a magical potion, one that seizes them and finishes in destroying them.

Barzun emphasized that the one concept that Darwin, Marx and Wagner have in common is “evolution,” in the sense of a completely absolute principle, the first cause behind all changes and all existing things. Unlike Wagner, Baudelaire rejected the earlier period of Romanticism. He did not seek harmony or idealization, but that which was queer, ugly, fearsome, hysterical. This is Wagner’s world of love and death, Darwin’s and Marx’s world of the struggle for life – nature red in tooth and claw. Baudelaire wished to penetrate what he saw as the subconscious, erotic, morbid layers of the mind. It is this subconscious that, in his view, produces fleurs du mal, “flowers of evil.” One of the poems in this work, Les Litanies de Satan, is a prayer to Satan. In 1859 he published a translation of a work by Edgar Allen Poe, which he called “the first manifestation of the theory of pure poetry,” as he would work out himself; 1858 and 1860

follows the development of races and nations, and which in the end brings about the unification of the arts into one popular synthesis of sociological significance. Especially in Wagner’s opera cycle, Der Ring des Nibelungen (“The Ring of the Nibelung”), we see the announcement of the future superman, the fall of the ancient gods through the curse of the gold (cf. Marx) and the triumph of nationalism in one long history of desire, deceit, and destruction. All three express the message of the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest: Darwin in his theory of natural selection, Marx in his theory of class warfare, and Wagner in his principle of the Leitmotiv.

BAUDELAIRE AND MANET

Besides Wagner, I mention two other giants of art from the same period. First, the French poet Charles Baudelaire. He greatly admired Wagner; just as the latter was a pioneer of modern music, Baudelaire was a pioneer of Western poetry and of the independence of art in general. At a very early stage, Baudelaire was dominated by a rebellious nature and a tendency to bitter loneliness, seeking his “artificial paradises,” as he himself called them, in eroticism, drugs, and alcohol. He practiced self-harm, as well as sadism and Satanism. In a sense, he was an embodied prototype of modern man, who has lost God and, in his misery, keeps searching for the infinite.

Like Wagner, Baudelaire rejected the earlier period of Romanticism. He did not seek harmony or idealization, but that which was queer, ugly, fearsome, hysterical. This is Wagner’s world of love and death, Darwin’s and Marx’s world of the struggle for life – nature red in tooth and claw. Baudelaire wished to penetrate what he saw as the subconscious, erotic, morbid layers of the mind. It is this subconscious that, in his view, produces fleurs du mal, “flowers of evil.” One of the poems in this work, Les Litanies de Satan, is a prayer to Satan. In 1859 he published a translation of a work by Edgar Allen Poe, which he called “the first manifestation of the theory of pure poetry,” as he would work out himself; 1858 and 1860
were the years of the first and second appearance of his main work: *Les fleurs du mal*, in which the human road of suffering is painted: suffocation, boredom, displeasure, followed by the flight into sex and drugs. However, poetry was depicted as the key to a different, ideal world after the model of Darwin, Marx and Wagner.

In 1858 or ’59, Baudelaire became friends with one of the greatest painters of the nineteenth century, Edouard Manet. Manet was for painting what Wagner was for music, and Baudelaire for poetry: a pioneer of modern art. Henri Matisse called Manet the “first great modern artist.” When Manet complained to Baudelaire that he was offended from all sides, the latter replied, “do you think you are the first who is in such a position?” — and quoted Wagner as an example of someone suffering for his art. The man Manet not only stood on the boundary of the Romantic and Modern worlds, but united these two worlds in himself: faithful husband and flirt, pious Catholic and skeptical humanist; belligerent socialist and conformist bourgeois. In this cleft figure, Manet, who came from a highly civilized, religious background, was gradually overcome by this spirit of rebellion.

In 1859, the works of the painter Francisco Goya were published, which made a deep impression on Manet and Baudelaire. In the same year, Manet made his first really realistic painting, of which it is said that it exhibits entirely the influence of Baudelaire: *Le buveur d’absinthe* (“The Absinthe Drinker”). This painting was refused by the jury of the Salon, an annual Paris exposition, of 1859. The reason was apparently that the painting did not, as had been the case with all earlier art, contained a “message,” but depicted raw reality itself. This shocked contemporary viewers. In Manet’s painting, they did not see a world of loveliness, beauty and harmony, that exists despite the presence of suffering and death. Rather, they looked into the mirror; they saw one of them, a person addicted to alcohol, depicted in a candid, honest way. This caused pain, even indignation. But it was the “real” world, at least the world of Darwin and Marx, the world of the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest.

It is interesting that people were receptive to such ideas in nature and in the natural sciences, and therefore they hailed Darwin. But they were not prepared for the enormous consequences that his doctrine would have for human history and society — Marx saw that! — and even for the noblest feelings, the deepest layers of the mind — Wagner, Baudelaire and Manet saw that! In 1859, not only a new view of nature and life, but a new vision of humanity was born. Wagner, Baudelaire and Manet suffered intensely because they had lost God, and in their work, they heralded a new world in which most people would have lost God as well. In 1859, people were not yet prepared to face these consequences.
HOMO DISSONANS (1905)

What Darwin, Marx, Wagner, Baudelaire and Manet represented for the major worldview shift of 1859, seven others characterized for another key year: 1905. These were Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, Arnold Schoenberg, Franz Kafka, Marcel Proust, James Joyce, and Pablo Picasso. Leaving Einstein (who in 1905 launched his theory of relativity) here aside, I mention Freud as a pioneer of a totally new kind of psychology, entirely along the lines of Darwinism and materialism. Here, as in 1859, sexual longings were thought to be essential. Besides other important works, Freud published in 1905 his *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* (“Three Treatises on Sexual Theory”), in which he dealt with sexual aberrations and infantile sexuality. The disgrace that this work brought him was enormous. People were outraged over his view that humans have sexual drives already in their early childhood, and that these correspond with certain sexual perversities in adulthood. The correspondences with Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* are striking: the interest for the mythical, the role of both the libido (sex drive) and the death drive, the dominating mother (of Isolde), and especially the Oedipus complex (the involuntary struggle between Tristan and king Marke, who in the original legend was Tristan’s father).

The popularity of Freud’s views in later years was due to their enormous attractiveness in an increasingly secularized worldview. Daniel Stafford-Clark wrote of Freud that his name would always be placed on one line with that of Darwin, Copernicus, Newton, Marx and Einstein by indicating a new way of looking at the significance of human life and society.11 To put it more negatively, Freud, more than any other thinker, was responsible for depreciating the ideas of moral guilt and personal responsibility. Darwin put the blame on chance and natural selection, Marx on social and economic factors, Freud on environment, parents and society. Nobody is “responsible” anymore; we are all just trying to stay alive, at the mercy of natural and social powers that are beyond us.

THE ARTS OF 1905

Barzun wrote about the trio Darwin, Marx and Wagner, who all three published a main work in 1859. Such a book could be easily written about another trio, strictly corresponding with the earlier trio: Freud with Darwin, Lenin with Marx, and Schoenberg with Wagner. In music, Wagner pointed the way to atonal music, a direction Schoenberg’s music took from 1905 onward. Not only did he sacrifice melody, but also traditional harmony, on the altar of “renewal,” and purposely introduced “false” notes, a deliberate ugliness. This represented nothing less than an attempt to destroy the world of order and beauty, just like Freud, at the same time, attacked ethics and religion, and Lenin the bourgeois order. They laid the foundation for the *homo dissonans*, and Einstein not only “destroyed” the classical Newtonian physical order, but his theories led to atomic bombs that can quite literally destroy our entire inhabited world.

Around 1905, Einstein and Lenin were active in Switzerland, while Freud and Schoenberg lived in Vienna. In the bars of the Austrian capital, a new culture was envisioned. There, the basis was also laid for a new music, worked out by Schoenberg and his pupils and later collaborators, Alban Berg and Anton Webern. Early in his career he called his compositions “post- Tristanesque,” but by 1903 he had abandoned this phase. As Freud in 1905 falsified humanity, and Lenin society (it was the year of the first, and failed, Russian revolution), Schoenberg drove music to the outer limits of chaos. In the summer of 1905, he completed his first string quartet (Opus 7), which was his first attempt at “absolute” music. He continued in this vein with his Chamber symphony (Opus 9) in 1906, and further.

Critical reception of these pieces was abominable. We are reminded of Manet in France, and Freud in Vienna. Gustav Mahler said of Schoenberg, “Why do I actually still write symphonies if this is to be the music of the future?” And Richard Strauss, the other giant composer of that time, wrote, “Only the madmen’s doctor can still help poor Schoenberg. He can better go shoveling snow than scratching music paper.”12
Van den Berg said that, in Schoenberg’s music, we hear what happened in those first years of the twentieth century: we hear the first cars stutter. The top-heavy, self-satisfied faith in progress, characteristic of the nineteenth century, is giving way to the strange, cruel, bloody, but also new and vivid, twentieth century. Schoenberg shows us the twentieth century, and tells us: undergo it, consume it.

Dissonance had not been forbidden in earlier music, but it was expected that the tension, the dissatisfaction that was created, would be “resolved” in the following consonant. This tonal music was proper to the previous centuries, when the world was understood to be a creation of God, a harmonious cosmos. Life still had stability, direction, a ground on which one could always fall back. This is the “ground-tone” on which the tonal scale is based. Although secularization had been in ascendency in the nineteenth century, there was still a certain understanding of order and harmony to the world. This was Romanticism. But it did not fit anymore in the disillusionment, irrationality, pessimism and destruction of the twentieth century. In this respect, Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt saw a direct connection between Schoenberg, Freud, and the prose of Marcel Proust and James Joyce. All three literary writers exhibit a similar depressing, morbid spirit in their stories and novels. Kafka began with Beschreibung eines Kampfes (“Description of a Struggle,” 1904/1905) and Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande (“Marriage Preparations in the Countryside,” 1905 of 1906). He is perhaps best known for Das Urteil (“The Judgment”) and Die Verwandlung (“The Metamorphosis,” both 1912), Der Proces (“The Trial,” 1914) and Das Schloss (“The Castle,” 1922). These stories and novels depict the dream world, full of fear and estrangement, into which the author had withdrawn himself. Kafka’s message is that humans are living in an impersonal, technologized, bureaucratic mass society (The Trial), whereas “up there” in the heavens, all is silent (The Castle).

Leon Pierre-Quint wrote about Marcel Proust, that “in his work, God is absent, forgotten. Neither faith, nor hatred.” Young Proust was influenced by Baudelaire, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, among others. After the devastating death of his mother in 1905, he withdrew to his room, usually lying in bed, feverishly writing, almost in trance, creating here his own, new world, like Kafka. In 1905, he wrote the first fragments of the first volume, Du coté de chez Swan (“Swann’s Way”) of the great work of his life: À la recherche du temps perdu (“In Search of Lost Time”). In a totally new way, the work, at first refused by publishers, deals with the themes of youth nostalgia, love and jealousy, the description of “moments” that, besides the normal current of time, offer a mysterious look at an absolute reality. The unique style reminds us of Wagner’s Leitmotiv and Freud’s psychoanalytic ideas.

The Irish author James Joyce’s most important novel, Ulysses (1922), describes one day in the life of the protagonist, Leopold Bloom: June 16, 1904. In 1905, Joyce completed his first important work, the strongly autobiographic story collection Dubliners, which met just as much resistance with publishers as Proust’s work had. In it, he brilliantly described all the alterations and reactions of common people to oppression and resistance. His later works – Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man (1916), Ulysses (1922), Finnegans Wake (1939) – also described the harsh reality of the world and of modern – or perhaps postmodern – humans. Again, we find parallels with Baudelaire, Freud, Schoenberg, and especially Wagner. Ulysses became the undisputed “bible” of the avant-garde, placing Joyce amongst the greatest interpreters of modern humans without God.

Painting in 1905

Around 1905, a generation of young painters lived like outcasts in major cities like Berlin, Munich, Dresden, Rome, Florence, Milan, Vienna, Marburg, and Munich. Around 1905, the first generation.”
and especially Paris. These self-consciously poor, miserable, disoriented, dispossessed, proletarians – the bohémians – were looking not only for a new art, but also a new lifestyle, a new worldview, a new society.

These avant-gardists viewed themselves as the carriers of the spirit of the time, the instruments through which new developments had to be effectively realized. Therefore, they refused to adapt to the forms and traditions of the past, of the "establishment." They had to "be themselves" in order to catch, like an antenna, the vibrations of a new time. To this end they read extensively from Darwin and Nietzsche. Their new worldview came to expression in their works, for instance, in their satirical drawings, cartoons and caricatures, and in their search for totally new techniques, new forms, colors, and styles.

We must mention especially the Expressionist school of painting, with its urge to represent reality in a distorted way in order to give "expression" to emotions in a direct and appealing way. The Expressionists did not feel at home in their own time; the world disappointed, frightened, and tortured them. They gave "expression" to their restless, fearful mind through satire, sarcasm, or by depicting a distressing, dramatic atmosphere. It was precisely in 1905 that some of these Expressionists united in Dresden in the group Die Brücke ("The Bridge"); one of the best-known of them was Ernst-Ludwig Kirchner. What the Brücke painters tried to depict – brothels, dance clubs, streets, crowds, circuses, cabarets, but also countryside scenes – was sincerely intended; at least, it was in agreement with their own way of life. They lived openly with their models, dancers and prostitutes, and took them to the countryside to paint them there naked in the open air. Kirchner wrote that these painters did not wish to impress the people around them, but only to bring their art and their lives into harmony with each other.

Die Brücke in Germany had its counterpart in fauvism in France. Besides the official "Salons," with their complacent, established paintings, two alternative expositions were set up: the Salon of the Independents and the Salon of Autumn. In 1905, one room in the latter was used for the works of avant-gardists such as Henri Matisse, Maurice de Vlaminck, and Georges Rouault. Matisse was the most influential of them; in 1905 he painted some pioneer works such as The Green Stripe (a portrait of his wife), La joie de vivre (a forest landscape), and Luxe, calme et volupté (a nude). The art critic Louis Vauxcelles, struck by the wild, non-realistic colors, sarcastically spoke of fauvism, "wild (animals)." Hence the name fauvism. The Christian art critic Hans Rookmaaker noticed in the fauvist works a wild cry, a desperate attempt to penetrate into the human, and to overcome the deficiencies of nineteenth century traditions.

In 1908, fauvism was followed by cubism, of which Pablo Picasso became the most important representative. In 1904, this Spaniard settled in Paris, at the time when his first style – that of the expressionist "blue period" – came to an end. It was followed by the short "pink period," but already by the end of 1905, Picasso developed his interest in stronger, simpler shapes, and rid himself of his morbid melancholy. He came
under the influence of Paul Cézanne, who had
written in 1904 to a younger painter that nature
to be represented by cylinder, ball and cube,
al brought into perspective. In this way, cubism
was born: a reduction of nature to the rigid forms
of technics, which was in fact a reflection of the
dynamic era of the machine. Rookmaaker
argued that for modern humans, nature is the only
ture reality, and humans are basically nothing but
biotic (cf. Darwin) and psychical (cf. Freud). The
goals of the cubists involved the making of a new
worldview, one that broke away from the cen-
turies-old humanism of Western society. The
personal had been lost because there was no longer a
personal God. Humans, animals, plants, things,
are all reduced to a stark, impersonal sameness.

In 1906, Picasso began a series of paintings, in
which we clearly observe the beginning geomet-
ricalization of the form. From these experiments,
a world-famous painting arose: Les demoiselles
d’Avignon ("The misses [whores] of Avignon," 1906/07). It became the manifesto of cubism,
and to some extent the whole of modern art
of the twentieth century, a kind of “symbol” of
modern art, a description of a world that even
today has not been fully realized, a reflection of a
breathtaking worldview and view of humanity.
The “misses” are depicted as objects, reduced to
gemetrical, stylized shapes, and yet there is an
ardent violence in the way they are presented.

Cubists strove for an irrational representation of
the essence of things in a way comparable to that
of Freud, Kafka and Proust. It was this irrational-
ist “phenomenology” (Bergson, Husserl) that later
would lead to existentialism. The pretended pov-
erty of cubism was the reflection of the shocking
spiritual poverty of the day. Precisely around 1905,
many artists (Picasso, Cézanne, Paul Klee, Henry
Moore) turned to the arts of Japan, Africa, Melan-
esia, as much as to say that Western culture was
hardly capable anymore of inspiring its artists.

The leveling out of traditional values dominated
Die Brücke, fauvism, and cubism. On the one
hand, they painted life in its banality, its common,
everyday misery. On the other hand, they painted
even the most trivial things—apples, bottles, tables,
guitars—with the almost religious inspiration with
which formerly the loftiest objects had been paint-
ed. We find the same leveling out of values in the
atonal music, in which on the one hand ground-
tones are degraded to the equals of all other tones,
and on the other hand even the most banal sounds
are “exalted” to the level of “music.” If God is re-
moved from the world, the world becomes strictly
“horizontal,” without highlights and low points.
This is because, in its utter consequence, there are
no more norms by which to measure “higher” or
“lower.” This is the tragedy of “modern” humanity:
no God, no values, no goals.

1 J.H. Van den Berg, The Changing Nature of
Man: Introduction to an Historical Psychology
(New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 1956).
2 Will Durant, Great Men of Literature (Garden
City, NY: Garden City Publishers 1931; repr.
2010), 22.
3 Wagner wrote already in 1849: “My task is this:
to bring revolution wherever I go”; quoted in
Jacques Barzun, Darwin, Marx, Wagner: Cri-
tique of a Heritage (New York: Little & Brown,
1941, 1958, repr. 2015), 231.
4 Barzun, Darwin, Marx, Wagner, 7, 14.
5 Barzun, Darwin, Marx, Wagner, 315.
6 P. Rosenfeld, Musical Portraits: Interpretations
of Twenty Modern Composers (New York: Har-
court, Brace & Howe 1922), 8.
7 Barzun, Darwin, Marx, Wagner, 236.
9 C. Baudelaire, Les fleurs du mal (1858, repr. Paris: Les Amis de l’Histoire 1968 (1860); the reprint of 1968 also gives a lot of information on Baudelaire himself.
10 See, e.g. C. Radet, Édouard Manet (Herrsching: Pawlak n.y.); F.M.L. Dony, (red.), Manet (Rotterdam: Lekturama n.y.).
14 H.H. Stuckenschmidt, Arnold Schönberg (Zürich/Freiburg: Atlantis 1951), 121.
17 Pierre-Quint, Marcel Proust, 142, 148, 340.
20 Elliott Zuckerman argued that Joyce adopted from Wagner the virtuoso technique of the Leitmotiv (The First Hundred Years, 186).
24 Rookmaaker, Modern Art, 105.
26 Quoted by many, e.g., Rookmaaker (1970), 113.
27 This becomes much clearer in the paintings by, e.g., Robert Delauney, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, and Fernand Léger (1910s), in which humans are depicted as machines.
29 Rookmaaker, Modern Art, 114.
From TELOS to TECHNOS: IMPLICATIONS for a Christian PUBLIC LIFE & ETHIC

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WHERE DO WE FIND ourselves as a culture today? What actions or attitudes impact human flourishing, to promote it or restrict it? What are the unargued assumptions carrying cultural water affecting choices and options? What is culture’s “soundtrack?” Consider two options:

Option A, courtesy of King Disney:

It’s time to see what I can do
To test the limits and break through!
No right, no wrong, no rules for me,
I’m free! Let it go! Let it go!

Option B, courtesy of King David:

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves, and
the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his Anointed,
saying,
“Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away
their cords from us. He who sits in the heav-
ens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision."

These two options encapsulate two approaches humans have taken to navigating and developing culture. The first expresses Technos, the notion that culture should seek to enhance and multiply new options for society and humans – options driven by subjective desire and impulse, and bounded only by the individual’s wants. The contours for action stem from answering the question: What can people do?

The second expresses Telos, the notion that purpose or aim must direct and shape those options – driven by external objective criteria, design, and metaphysics. The contours for action stem from answering a different question: What are people for? When a culture transitions from a dominantly Telos narrative (What Man is for) to being dominated by a Technos narrative (What Man can do), this leads to, and celebrates, the kind of things Elsa trumpets: autonomy, so-called authenticity, and radical individualism, all in the name of “freedom” – a freedom from versus a freedom to.

A SEISMIC CULTURAL SHIFT

Many consider the 2016 US Presidential election to be transformational. If this is true, it is largely because of this prior tectonic cultural shift from Telos to Technos – because politics is downstream from culture. Politics often depends upon which songs have topped the cultural charts.

Note the trends on display during the 2016 election cycle:

- populism
- alt-right nativism
- heightened conspiracy narratives
- irrelevance of morality and character in voter candidate assessment
- raw unbounded pragmatism – and yet at the same time:
- defeatism and fear

What underlies these trends? What animates these shifts? Are these cherry-picked phenomena, or do they reflect a more foundational systemic shift in the culture? Is there a theme song that connects and links them all?

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For decades the Narcissism Personality Inventory has been administered to young Americans. The past thirty years has witnessed a 30% increase in narcissism. Tellingly, the percentage of respondents affirming the statement, “I am an important person” has gone from being about 12% in the 1950s to over 80% in the 1980s. Elsa is simply echoing the ethos of this shift, a shift whose roots were in the ground long before Disney arrived on the scene.

The long-serving British Prime Minister, William Gladstone, noted a link between subjective notions of religion (Desire) and a slipping grasp of “real” reality, that is, Christianity and its objective Metaphysics: “Should the Christian faith ever become but one of many co-equal pensioners of a government [Pluralism], it will be proof that subjective religion has again lost its God-given hold upon objective reality…”

Missiologist Lesslie Newbigin interpreted Gladstone’s point as signaling a resurgence of pagan spirituality, rooted in subjective self-autonomy and unbounded desire which rejects external moral standards. In other words: What Man can do to fulfill what he wants trumps What Man is for; Elsa would be proud:

What Gladstone foretold is essentially what has been happening during the 140 years since he wrote those words. The result is not, as we once imagined, a secular society. It is a pagan society, and its paganism, having been born out of the rejection of Christianity, is far more resistant to the gospel than…pre-Christian paganism.

Cardinal Ratzinger, cutting to the quick, observed that this trend is rooted in what he deemed the “technological civilization.” A public square taken captive by this notion of Technos is not neutral, but rather impacts societal standards, attitudes, and actions. In other words, Technos precipitates real consequences with spiritual repercussions:

Technological civilization is not in fact religiously and morally neutral, even if it believes it is. It changes people’s standards and their attitudes and behavior. It changes the way people interpret the world, from the very bottom up. The Christian faith is shaken off…, and in the realm of religion, the pagan religions are restored.

What then characterizes a culture embracing Technos? Technos presupposes disenchantment (what counts as real must instead be “scientifically” sorted) as well as the technological imperative, the idea that if X can be done, it should be done – but neither presupposition is “secular” or neutral. Rather, both are at bottom religious, as Ratzinger notes, stemming from a rival religious system, and therefore Technos is a cultural move which is totalistic and thus sweepingly powerful—and it animates the culture’s theme song as well as its muzak.

This trend’s impact upon cultural and societal behaviors has recently been observed even by those lacking overt Christian commitments or methodologies. Several popular books have discerned that “something’s different” in modern society, and that ‘something’ impacts behavior, standards, and attitudes. Individualism is spiking, and yet so is loneliness and society’s fragmentation.

Overt Christian commentary concurs. Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor speaks of this being a time of the “buffered self” and living in the “imminent frame.” Rankin Wilbourne laments the increasing lack of mystery and the resulting reductionism in the church as well as culture. All this he relates to a key facet of Technos: immediate (that is, unmediated) access to instantaneous data. He describes the implications this way:

With unprecedented amounts of information at our fingertips – in our pockets, even! – we are able to cull a dizzying array of knowledge within seconds, to collect life hacks for any conceivable task; and therefore, we are less and less accustomed to sitting with questions that require sustained, subtle, and difficult work from us. Is it fair to ask if we have become impatient, even lazy?
As we communicate ideas today, simplicity is “in.” We like sound bites that we can possess quickly and digest easily, as opposed to nuance and depth that we must wrestle with at length. So we keep it simple. Give me your two-minute pitch or TED talk in under twenty. Say what you need to say in 140 characters. Better yet, just post a photo.

Even within the church, we seem to have developed an allergy to mystery. We prefer bullet points or fill in the blanks to parables that leave us scratching our heads. We prefer a theology we can articulate neatly to mysteries that will stretch and engulf us.”

This impacts us socially as well, as Os Guinness observes:

…the result of this near-miracle of the instant and the immediate is that many have fallen for an illusion. They have mistaken the compression of space and time for the conquest of space and time.

It is true that, to an unprecedented degree, modern people have conquered space with jets, cell phones, texting, Skyping, tweeting and worldwide, satellite-based communications.

He continues:

Protean flexibility has replaced the wisdom born of precedent and experience. The timeless is what lasts ten years. Know-how has been overshadowed by know-who and know-who-to-be. And loyalties born of commitment have become a liability rather than an asset.

Even relationships are renewable in short-term increments now. They are not like traditional marriage’s “until death do us part” but are limited extensions like those of a magazine subscription or a phone card. For, as far as possible, each moment must be all-new, a fresh possibility, a new choice, a blank DVD ready to record the future with the past wiped clean. The delete button is always only a click away.

Today in America, when “till death do us part” has shrunk to “as long as love lasts,” even marriages are severed with a text message.

Critically, this move also impacts plausibility narratives and the habits that animate people privately, socially, and culturally-publicly. This leads to habits that increasingly focus on and reflect sound bites and simple, “technique-oriented, solution-focused, productivity-minded” efforts.

Technology is used to select (note the supremacy of choice!) isolated bits of data; this is problematic, for it decontextualizes data from its origins and roots. More problematic, however, this habit changes the narrative itself and thereby changes three crucial areas of social engagement, thereby implicating politics:

- WHAT counts as data, and thus proof
- WHAT’s possible (unconstrained by design or purpose - Telos), and
- WHO decides and evaluates the data and by which standards. The locus of authority (real or perceived) has shifted to the supposedly autonomous individual chooser
- HOW does the culture reflect these shifts? Consider these examples:
  - If children are unwanted, Technos provides the solution: contraception by mechanism or chemistry
  - WHEN contraceptive technology fails – as all technology does at some point – Technos supplies other technology (“the next next”): Abortion

Conversely:

- If children are wanted, Technos permits them to be engineered and even designed by IVF, surrogacy, sperm banks, ART, Harvesting Eggs and Renting wombs. Such practices lead to designer babies, screened or “selected” (again
Technology used in such indiscriminate ways is incipiently, if not admittedly, eugenic, because “it can be.” This leads to treating other humans as commodities, as means to a chosen end, irrespective of the Other’s Telos. Instead of being objects of affection,15 people become objects for manipulation, means to ends. As a result, children – under this Technos-influenced, narrative – become not a gift through us, but rather, a commodity to which I am entitled.

The technological imperative becomes and shapes the plausibility narrative. The uncritical use of technologies feeds and reinforces this posture and bent. That is, the ready, instant, and personal access to (seemingly) unmediated and “objective data” thereby precipitates I (the Self) becoming Mediator, Arbiter, and Evaluator for all decisions, whether personal, private or societal, legal or political.

This thereby circumvents and under-mines mediating institutions, which in practice leads to less actual reflection, less actual dialogue, less actual depth, and less actual community, and instead produces a sense of instant cognitive “rest” (which is ironically increasingly restless, looking for the “next thing” rather than the Permanent Things, as Russell Kirk reminds us16).

We talk of googling X and finding “the right answer.” This may be fine for driving directions or a cocktail recipe, but it’s not good for policy and human flourishing.

Technos, because it does reflect an ersatz religious impulse as Ratzinger and Newbigin note, tempts us to embrace, perhaps unknowingly, but certainly, a vain and dangerous Gen. 3:5 narrative: “You will be like God, knowing good and evil.” This leads to the supposedly autonomous Self, which authoritatively determines – not discerns – Good and Evil.

This trend conflicts with Telos by subliminally re-assigning Reason to be a judge determining moral realities instead its proper role as a tool to discern moral realities. Telos informs that humans need “solid food” – something external and fitted to them. Why? Telos supplies the answer: So that our “powers of discernment [will be] trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil” (Heb. 5:14).

Accordingly, the Telos narrative says: “And God said: ‘Let there be, and it was so.’” In contrast, the Technos narrative says: “And I say and it IS so. And I will legally enforce against you” (Rom. 1:32). Technos manifests itself in society in chaotic ways:

“In those days, there was no king in Israel [no higher external standard]. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 21:25).

Culturally, the Technos narrative implies, or makes plausible, the following parameters: Nothing exists (which matters!) beyond the tangible visible world. The world is increasingly technological and disenchanted and definitively subject to my interpretation and choices, which is increasingly authoritative, which therefore needs the State to become increasingly authoritarian to enforce those interpretations and choices.

At first blush, it is counterintuitive to think of individual autonomy and an authoritarian state going together. One would think that the elevation of the Self as Judge and final arbiter as implied by Technos would oppose an increasingly invasive and totalistic State. However, expressive individualism actually requires an all-powerful State. As argued elsewhere, the idol of Self and the idol of State converge.17

Yuval Levin correctly analyzes how this process undermines a cohesive society:

Politically, such individualism tends to weaken mediating power centers that stand between the individual and the nation as a whole – from families to local communities (including local governments), religious institutions, fraternal bodies, civil-society organizations, labor groups, and the small and medium-sized businesses that make up much of the private economy. In their place, it
How can this mutually-reinforcing, yet destructive pattern be broken? The simple answer: revitalize a robust anthropology, an anthropology firmly rooted in Telos. Only by knowing what mankind is for can a society rightly direct what mankind ought to do. This means revitalizing Telos and rejecting Techno-Supremacy and its narrative by design and with intention.

**FOUNDATIONAL PARAMETERS OF A TELOS ANTHROPOLOGY**

A Telos anthropology minimally includes an understanding of humans as created (cf. Gen. 1 and 2). Mankind’s creaturely nature entails a fundamental Creator-creature distinction, and therefore a universal “Twonism.” As to his existence, then, mankind is dependent (“in him we live and move and have our being” – Acts 17:28).

Being thus dependent, mankind is therefore not autonomous, either in terms of moral norms or individual actions (ethics). This situation implies, first, that there is always, structurally, a Law above the law, and that therefore the human creature’s authority (and thus duty) is always derivative. As Jesus said to Pilate, “you would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above” (John 19:11). Though derivative, this authority is still real; mankind alone among creation bears the image of God, creating what is known as Human Exceptionalism, contra environmentalism.

Related to this, mankind is moral, contra the doctrine of the naked public square and Rawlsian Public Reason. No value-free zone exists. No neutrality exists – every act and every thought says either that God is, or God is not. And because mankind is moral, mankind is also inherently a worshipper. Man cannot not worship. Every move is a religious move; the defining question is whether the move is faithfully religious or faithfully irreligious – that is, opposed to true religion: does it manifest spirit and truth or does it manifest idolatry?

Because of our created nature, mankind is also inherently social (contra libertarianism). Mankind derives from that oldest and most perfect society – the Holy Trinity – in order that he might participate in society and thus the family is a key, pre-political foundational mediating institution.

Contrary to post-modernism, mankind is rational, designed to: make distinctions, including empirical distinctions, to reason, to communicate in both giving and receiving, and to reflect and evaluate. This is because the creation has meaning; the Creator is the Word and thus inherently rational; meaning both exists and can be understood.

Mankind is metaphysically Male and Female. There exists an Intrinsic Complementarity Effected by Design, contra Egalitarianism and faux Equality so rampant in culture these days. Not only here but in every area of society, Dimensional Realms of diverse Horizontal Human relationships Exist, CONTRA the Radical Self or the Radical Collective; there exists Pre-political Authority in the Private sphere of Self-Government; in the Social sphere of Family Government, Church...
If the public square exists in part to promote human flourishing, then any theory that guts religious expression, motivation, justification, or contribution will necessarily undermine human flourishing.

If Telos is the plumb line as outlined, and a revitalized anthropology is acknowledged and implemented, what are the implications for Public Life, including the public place and role, if any, for the Christian Religion? Assuming this Telos, how ought Religion and public order go together?

Two narratives, often unarticulated, and yet ubiquitous, dominate the plausibility structures for addressing and assessing this question. Both are deficient. On the one hand, there is the narrative influenced by the ideas of John Rawls and his view of “Public Reason.” In a nutshell, Rawlsian notions assert:

All religion is divisive and therefore must be excluded from the public square – the state must at points censor and constrict, and contain it.

Private religion is, but only if it stays private.

Religious motives, let alone religious rationales, have no place in public discourse.

On the other hand, a competing narrative, “Pluralism,” proposes as follows:

- Religion – all religion - is a value, not a fact, and each religion is therefore equally valid as a value proposition.
- The State therefore plays referee making sure no religion has any public sway – leading again to a functionally naked public square and an increasingly intrusive State.

The reality is, neither narrative is satisfactory because each rejects some aspect of Telos. Public Reason embraces the notion of a supposed “naked public square.” That is, the public square must vanquish “divisive” opinions predicated on “personal values,” – that is, religion, particularly Christian convictions.

The problem here is that this undermines and denies humanity. As we have just seen, a revitalized anthropology understands and acknowledges that mankind is inherently religious; he is by nature a worshipper. Religion is not therefore some voluntary, optional “add-on” to being human. Rather, religion is inherent to being human. The fact that some religious expression contains less ritual does not mean it is any less religious. Every move is a religious move, because every mover is inherently religious.

If the public square exists in part to promote human flourishing, then any theory that guts religious expression, motivation, justification, or contribution will necessarily undermine human flourishing. Therefore to exclude religion from the public square is to say in effect: “don’t be fully human when you participate in the public square; leave that part of you at the door.”

Similarly, Pluralism, as an ideology, denies Truth because it absurdly claims that all values are the same, that is, equally valid. This means that nationality does not apply to any religious claims; religious claims under Pluralism are deemed irrational ab initio. One cannot even attempt to meaningfully distinguish religious claims; one
can only count them and regulate them. Thus, Pluralism, in the name of “protecting and advancing religion,” actually denies God who is Truth. Put differently, because mankind is inherently rational, it follows that every claim he asserts, including religious claims, must be open to rational inquiry. To deny this as to religious claims again undermines robust anthropology.

Every religion rests not simply on the subjective value ascribed by its adherents (cf. Kant and Elsa), but each also rests on truth claims, what reality is like – evaluating that claim, its rationality, its correspondence to the truth, is necessarily external to the subject, not a product of the subject. If we cannot evaluatively distinguish between religions, it means we cannot reason about religion, which means religion is immune from truth, and any inquiry will be forever deemed axiomatically irrational.

But, content – substantive content – matters for public policy, including religious content. The public and its citizens must be able to reason about the content of religious claims and its implications. Truth matters, including with respect to religious claims, as Yale professor Miroslav Volf explains with blunt realism:

The critical issue is the content of religious teachings, for instance, whether they urge you to be merciful and love your enemies or [urge you] to kill the infidel, heretic, or transgressor.

What then is the solution, if not “public reason” or “pluralism”? The answer lies in the full-orbed orthodoxy of mere Christianity. It was this faith that incubated and animated the foundation for classical liberalism, particularly as presupposed and applied by the framers in the First Amendment, as Yuval Levin notes:

The Constitution rejects the populist view that the people have the knowledge required to rule, and it rejects the technocratic view that a body of experts has the knowledge required to rule. Instead, it embodies the view that no one has the requisite knowledge, and that government should therefore be designed to force different groups in society to bargain and cooperate. Restraining public power enables society to avoid the large mistakes that would ensue if too much power were wielded by any one group.

For example, the Church Father Tertullian saw this, resting his analysis on a robust Christian anthropology, as Volf comments:

[...] and love your enemies or [urge you] to kill the infidel, heretic, or transgressor.

Nor was coercion of pagans backed by the state. Consider this clause from the Code of Justinian (529-34): “We especially command those persons who are truly Christians, or who are said to be so, that they should not abuse the authority of religion and dare to lay violent hands on Jews and pagans, who are living quietly and attempting nothing disorderly or contrary to law.”

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Telos to Technos

And, by revitalizing the operative vocabulary: Recognizing and then contending for, affirming, and preserving an anthropology reflecting nothing less than “real Reality” – instead of some subjective virtual construct.

This last point is vital: If one calls his car “water” that is one thing. However, if he puts his “water” in his garage and closes the door, secure in his own supposed noetic autonomy that his “water” is in the garage, what happens upon re-opening the door? Will he be greeted by a puddle? Of course not; calling or labeling a car “water” does not mean that it becomes liquid. This is to confuse the language label with the actual thing. Labeling a car “water” will not convert it to a puddle.

Words do matter. And, this is why we must love God and love Neighbor – in that order. Telos must precede Technos, and thus the reality established immutably by God – as it’s His design – must control vocabulary, including anthropological vocabulary. And that means operative vocabularies must stem from Telos, that is, the Creator and HIS Plausibility Narrative, not starting with the supposedly autonomous creature and his wishes or feelings.

Mankind exists in part to think God’s thoughts after Him. And He created mankind, to take one current example, as metaphysically and immutably Male and Female. That is the controlling narrative, the Telos, “real reality,” and our vocabulary must align with it. Folks demanding “Preferred Personal Pronouns” are simultaneously denying reality and playing God – and weaponizing words to do so.

In other words, society needs Telos before Technos. Society cannot ask what Man does before it understands what Man is for. Moral truth, stemming from the Christian tradition, provides the possibility of a morally-ordered public square.

How then can a society protect and promote an ordered society that honors both Truth/morality and human dignity, conditions that provide the basis for human flourishing for all, that is, Telos:

First, by promoting Tolerance – not Pluralism, nor a Naked Public Square. But how does a society rightly tolerate? As Volf explains, we honor the integrity of other truth claims by not wrecking holy sites, burning holy books, insulting founders, or killing infidels in nightclubs.

We promote biblical tolerance by critically engaging Truth claims: appraisal and evaluation are not approval or endorsement, nor do they require “theocracy.”

In decoupling gender from biology and denying any given or “natural” meaning to male and female sexuality, gender ideology directly repudiates reality. People don’t need to be “religious” to notice that men and women are different. The evidence is obvious. And the only way to ignore it is through a kind of intellectual self-hypnosis. Gender ideology rejects any human experience of knowledge that
conflicts with its own flawed premises; it’s the imperialism of bad science on steroids. For Christians, it also attacks the heart of our faith: the Creation (“male and female he created them”); the Incarnation – God taking the flesh of a man; and the Redemption – God dying on the cross and then rising in glorified bodily form.38

Language exists to convey truth, not to utter nonsense or lies.39 So which soundtrack ought to be cultivated, orchestrated, and sung to avoid these consequences by conveying truth?

If Let it Go is an inapposite theme song, what should be the public square’s theme song, what song appropriately answers the crucial question, What is Man for? Which song shall we sing going forward? There are really two choices.

Option A:

For what is a man, what has he got?
If not himself, then he has naught
To say the things he truly feels and not the words of one who kneels
The record shows I took the blows and did it my way40

OR Option B:

What is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you Care for him?
Yet you have Made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and Crowned him with glory and honor.
You have Given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have Put all things under his feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
O Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
(Ps. 8).

How we answer this question, the defining question of this era, a question posited, yet answered diametrically differently by both songs, matters for the public square: What is Man FOR?

Telos Directs Technos, FOR Human Flourishing, FOR the Christian Public Life and Ethic

To the extent that the 2016 election presupposed, animated, and reinforced Technos, instead of Telos, it will be transformational in a decidedly negative way – but there is a way forward, a way which is good, and true, and beautiful – and we must not forget it. And, it is a way that begins by obeying and embodying a supremely political act: We must love God, the Lord of lords and King of kings, the Ruler of the kings on earth – and ALSO Neighbor – IN THAT ORDER. Telos must direct Technos! To sing any other song is just to whistle Dixie off-key.

2 David, singing in Psalm 2:1-4
3 Rankin Wilbourne, Union with Christ, (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook), 121.
4 Wilbourne, Union with Christ, (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook), 121.
6 Newbigin, Foolishness to the Greeks, 20.
8 See, e.g., James K. A. Smith, How (Not) to be Secular, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 28, and also, Wilbourne, Union with Christ, 118.

10 James Smith, a Charles Taylor scholar, provides a helpful glossary for Taylor’s unique vocabulary, including these terms: James K. A. Smith, How (Not) to be Secular, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 140, 141.

11 Rankin Wilbourne, Union with Christ, (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2016) 124, 125

12 Os Guinness, A Free People’s Suicide: Sustainable Freedom and the American Future (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 83.

13 Guinness, A Free People’s Suicide, 90.

14 Wilbourne, Union with Christ, 124.


17 Jeffery J. Ventrella, Christ, Caesar, and Self: A Pauline Proposal for Understanding the Paradoxical Call for Statist Coercion and Unfettered Autonomy (Center for Cultural Leadership: Coulterville, CA, 2016)


19 See again the books mentioned at note 9.

20 Levin, The Fractured Republic, 186.

21 Peter R. Jones, One or Two: Seeing a World of Difference (Escondido, CA: Main Entry Editions, 2010).


24 P. Andrew Sandlin, Christian Culture – An Introduction (Coulterville, CA: Center for Cultural Leadership, 2013)


26 Interestingly, this requires the development and use of technology, but technology directed by Telos rather than Technos. There is no room for the Luddite in the Telos narrative.


28 The “Pluralism” noted here is an ideology and should not be identified or confused with calls for a diverse public square, including citizens from every nation, tribe, people and language. See, e.g., Rev. 7:9.

29 Welcome to the fact-value dichotomy proposed by Kant.


33 Volf, Flourishing, 108.


37 I first heard this illustration from the British thinker and blogger, Dan Moody in 2016.


39 Taken from Matt Walsh blog entry, accessed October 2016.

40 Paul Anka, Claude François, Jacques Revaux, Gilles Thibault, My Way, Frank Sinatra, Concord, 1969, LP.
LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE:
WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?

June 13, 2018 | 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
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Written for an audience of believers and non-believers alike, *How Then Shall We Answer* seeks to both instruct, as well as model, a defense of the Christian faith. Far from a dry, academic discourse, this is a powerful combination of intellectual reflection and passionate commitment.

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In this updated version of Joe Boot’s popular work, he provides clear and engaging answers to the real questions that people are asking - questions of suffering, morality, guilt, and truth. Beginning with a basic understanding of the world, *Searching for Truth* explains the biblical worldview, giving special attention to the life and claims of Jesus Christ. *Available in English & Urdu.*

...took my intellect to a place where my heart was ready to cry out to God, and he responded.”  
Ed Pilkington, *Punch Magazine*

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*Why I Still Believe* provides a layperson’s introduction to presuppositional apologetics. This approach demonstrates that there are no neutral starting points for thought, and that ultimately, the non-Christian worldview fails to make sense of the world as it is. Joe invites the non-believer to ‘step inside’ the Christian worldview and think about how we can know anything at all. *Ahora disponible en Español!*

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*Art, for Seerveld, belongs to the very infrastructure of a good society, in the same way that a country’s economy, transportation system, or media network do: ‘With a vital artistic infrastructure priming its inhabitants’ imaginativeness, a society can dress its wounds and be able to clothe and mitigate what otherwise might become naked technocratic deeds.’ *Redemptive Art in Society,* introduced by Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin, addresses the need for Christian public artistry and ways in which Christians can be stewards of art.*
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Peter Jones
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JOIN US AT Christian Legal Institute

Windermere Manor, London ON | April 30–May 4, 2018

A week-long program designed to equip the next generation of Christian leaders to uphold and protect Biblical principles in all areas of law and vocation in the public sphere. Qualifying students will receive complimentary accommodations and scheduled meals throughout the week’s training. Travel sponsorships also available.

www.christianlegalfellowship.org/cli
office@christianlegalfellowship.org

The Christian Legal Institute is presented in collaboration with the Ezra Institute for Contemporary Christianity.
Do you know a student who would benefit from a week of Christian apologetics and worldview training this summer?

The Worldview Leadership League is designed for students aged 14 to 18 to help equip them to defend their Christian faith in the midst of the intellectual and practical challenges of our culture, to apply God’s Word to every sphere of life, and to direct their lives towards building a culture that loves and honours Jesus Christ.

TO APPLY VISIT WWW.EZRAINSTITUTE.CA

Featured Speakers:

Joe Boot  
EICC Founder, Sr. Pastor of Westminster Chapel

Andrew Sandlin  
Founder & President of the Center for Cultural Leadership

Calvin Smith  
Speaker, General Manager of Answers in Genesis Canada

Cory McKenna  
Speaker, Radio host, Open air evangelist with The Cross Current

Steven Martins  
EICC Director of Ministry Development & Advancement

Deborah Gilman  
Eastern Outreach Director of Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform