



THE CHRISTIAN WORLD AND LIFE VIEW

by

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“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

—Romans 11:36

The Christian world and life view. That is not a phrase, probably, that is intimately familiar to you. Perhaps you know it by the German term: *Weltanschauung*. No? That is no more familiar, is it? In fact, probably less. What is a world and life view—a *Weltanschauung*? Well, let me tell you. You have one. Everybody has one. Many people just sort of absorb them as they go through life. They have not critically examined them; they just are things they have come to believe in.

A world and life view is a set of assumptions or presuppositions that determine the way that we look at the world and our place in the world. These largely determine how we consider everything that comes down the path.

What is your world and life view like? Is it a Christian world and life view, or is it a non-Christian/anti-Christian view? There is a Christian world and life view, and there are a number of other world and life views that are all arrayed against the Christian view. Chuck Colson asks, “What is the major challenge today? In the broadest categories, the conflict of our day is theism and naturalism.”

NATURALISM

Naturalism has nothing to do with wildlife or vitamins. It has to do with the idea that nature is all there is—that there is nothing in the universe but matter (materialism). That is one worldview. The fact is, Colson says, that this, indeed, is what we use to explain most everything else. What is the most fundamental question? What does the universe consist of? Is it only matter? Is ultimate reality God or the cosmos?

You remember Carl Sagan, a very rabid evolutionist and naturalist, and his famous ten-part series *Cosmos* that aired on educational TV a number of times. In the first sentence, he makes this clear statement: “The cosmos is all there ever was or is or is to be.” That is a worldview. It is a purely naturalistic, materialistic, evolutionary, and atheistic worldview.

I say it is a worldview because it is an assumption. It is not the result of any scientific test. Sagan has never seen that there was never anything beside the cosmos. He does not know that there is nothing beyond it. He most certainly does not know that there is no God, no supernatural element. What is the ultimate reality? Is it matter and the cosmos, or is it God and His revelation? Those two views have been in direct conflict in our time for the last several centuries.

Chuck Colson says in his book, *How Now Shall We Live?*

A debilitating weakness in modern evangelicalism is that we’ve been fighting cultural skirmishes on all sides without knowing what the war itself is about. We have not identified the worldviews that lie at the root of cultural conflict—and this ignorance dooms our best efforts. The culture war is not just about abortion, homosexual rights, or the decline of public education. These are only skirmishes. The real war is a cosmic struggle between worldviews—between the Christian worldview and the various secular and spiritual worldviews arrayed against it. This is what we must understand if we are going to be effective in evangelizing our world today and in transforming it to reflect the wisdom of the Creator.

A worldview, said Stamar, “is simply the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the ‘big picture’ that directs our daily decisions and actions.” A worldview needs to be carefully considered and decided upon. Otherwise, we will be subconsciously directed in making decisions and may not know why we are making them.

May I point out that every worldview is based upon faith. It is based upon some kind of assumptions or presuppositions that we probably have never proved. Many of them cannot even be proved. As one writer said: “Every human being has faith in something which [faith] affects his understanding of everything . . .” A scientist operates by faith. Some have had the candor to admit it; others would deny it vehemently.

We have seen in the last several centuries, since the French Enlightenment back in the 1780s, the rise of rationalism. That is not to say anything about reason. We should be rational and reasonable, but rationalism is the idea that reason is the *only* source of knowledge and understanding, and it rules out entirely any faith in God or in His Word. Rationalism, naturalism, materialism, and atheism, are all based upon evolutionism.

Though the Enlightenment existed fifty years before Darwin, philosophers had struggled to get some kind of worldview together, but not with great success, until Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* provided for them a comprehensive worldview that made atheism palatable for the first

time and something that could be talked about in public. This view has been promulgated in Western society for the last 150 years like few things have been.

SECULARISM

At its core, it is atheistic, it is evolutionary, it is relativistic, materialistic, and secularistic (in that it is only of this world). The word “secularism” comes from the Latin word *secularis*, which means “life as conceived without any relationship to eternity or to God.” That is secularism. The Western world has become almost 99 percent secular. Listen to any talk show on television.

This smoked plastic dome that has settled down upon the city of man does not allow him to see past death into the future. Is there a Heaven? Is there a Hell? He cannot know. Is there a God? “The dome is too smoky. I cannot see up to God. I cannot see out into the future.” That is secularism, and this nation and this world (the Western world) have been overwhelmingly secularized in a Darwinian, atheistic, materialistic life.

This view is being promulgated in virtually all of the schools in this nation from kindergarten through graduate school. Dumphy, in the *Humanist* magazine, said some time ago:

The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new—the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never-realized Christian ideal of “love thy neighbor” will be finally achieved.

He says that a teacher must become as zealous as the most fundamental evangelist in propagating this faith to every student. Oh, they may learn about God and Heaven in Sunday school, “but five days a week we have them right here in our schools.”

HUMANISM

Maybe you didn’t know you had a fundamentalist evangelist teacher propagating atheistic humanism in your schools. What is this never-realized ideal of Christian love? What has it produced? It has produced not only the Enlightenment worldview that spawned the French Revolution, but in the twentieth century, it also produced World War I; World War II; and Communism, which, according to the U.S. Congress killed 135 million people during peace time—more than in all of the wars of history. It has also produced behaviorism, Nazism, and Fascism. All of these are squarely based upon the evolutionary atheistic view of humanism. That is the marvelous goal they supposedly are bringing to the world. It is not pretty, to say the least.

Humanism is just another way of talking about atheism. There was a time, years ago, when it was not politic to be an atheist, and so, instead of that, they switched to humanism. Atheism says “down with God”; humanism says, “up with man”—but the end is the same. Man is up here in the place of God, and God is down here abased.

It probably got its initial impetus from the pre-Socratic philosopher Protagoras, who made one statement which has been reverberating down the centuries for over two millennium. He said, very simply: “Man is the measure of all things.” That seems to be very innocuous, but millions of people have died—because ideas have consequences. That statement seems more true with every passing year.

Christians have always believed that *God* is the measure of all things, that God tells us what is good and what is bad and what is right and what is wrong. God tells us where to go and how to get there, but that is rejected by humanism, and man becomes the judge of all things. Man decides what is moral and what is immoral, what is virtuous and what is not, what is evil and what is good, what is right and what is wrong, and that has led to catastrophic consequences in our world.

The Enlightenment period began with two ideas—great ideas if they were true. The first one was the inherent goodness of man, and second, the inevitability of moral progress—progress of every sort in the world. That was to lead to the Golden Age. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were those who were saying, “The Golden Age is upon us. It is coming. Every day in every way we are getting better and better and better.” Then came World War I, and the blood flowed in the trenches of France; and then World War II—with Iwo Jima, Bataan, Corregidor, and all of the rest. Then came the Cold War and Communism spread across the world like a blight, killing millions.

DEATH OF HUMANISM

Among the deaths was the death of the idea of the inherent goodness of man. How could such inhumanity to man possibly be true in a world where there is no bad boy and no bad man? If the torture chambers of the Nazis and the Gulag weren't enough, in our day and age, we can just go to the Near East and visit one of Saddam Hussein's torture chambers. Learn how people who displeased him were tossed into shredders and vats of acid.

Man's inhumanity to man. The inevitable progress ended in a fiery crash, and the Golden Age turned into a bloody age. The marvelous, romantic picture of humanism, indeed, died. It has been said (DeMar describes it well) that the humanistic mentality of Western man since the Renaissance has been this belief in the inherent goodness of man and the inevitability of his progress.

However, the shocking revelations of the twentieth century have pretty well burst that bubble. That is especially true in the latter half of the twentieth century where it is apparent that the once proud dogmas of optimistic humanism are dead and buried and have been replaced by a mood of cynicism and despair. “Man,” said H. G. Wells, “is at the end of his tether.” Things looked very, very bleak, to say the least.

Why is this? [Because] “modern man has simply come to realize the logical implications of his foolish autonomy,” said DeMar, “and is beginning to pay the price.” Jean-Paul Sartre, the existential philosopher of France, was right. This fact of the logical consequences of man's foolish flight from God ought, indeed, to make man happy, gay, and joyous. That was the promise. Remember? “Ought,” said Sartre, “to give him nausea.”

REAP WHAT IS SOWED

Do you remember the “death of God” movement? It's all part of this. It is interesting that man didn't realize that when he was throwing things at God, he was throwing boomerangs that came back and hit him in the head. God is very much alive, but non-Christian man is in a state of

morbid decay and despair. He comes closer and closer to nihilism and despair as he becomes more self-conscious of the logical consequences of his view. One writer put it this way:

There is at the present time then, a radical disintegration of the non-Christian man as he reaps the harvest produced by the seed he has sown. After many years the crop is approaching full maturity, and the ingathering is proving a most unpleasant time. He has laid up treasures on the earth, and the sphere of his ultimate values, the place of his only reward and enjoyment. His values are dead on the vine, being merely the dictates of social and personal convenience. The ethic of evolution, the survival of the fittest, has yet to take its full toll. The world has still to see the full maturing of de Sade's "natural behaviour" based on the principle of "what is" is right. The simple equation—matter plus time plus chance—has yet to reveal and yield its full horror.

The Bible says, **"All they that hate me love death" (Proverbs 8:36)**. In a non-Christian world today, there has been developing a culture of death. It is not God who has died; He is very much alive. Rather, it is man who is dying. The facts of history are very discouraging and the logic of materialism is crushing him.

DEATH OF HOPE

Death. Modern man longs for death. We have in most of our schools in America today classes on suicide. The French philosopher Camus said [that] the only philosophical idea worth consideration today is suicide. Hemingway embraced it. Camus endorsed it, and thousands have followed in their train. Preoccupation with death is a distinguishing mark of our time. Indeed, when you have the death *of* hope—and materialism and humanism are hopeless views of life—that leads directly to the hope *for* death. Many people have discovered that. They have discovered that life in the humanistic world, the atheistic world, is not worth living.

Samuel Beckett, the playwright, said:

How am I, an a-temporal being imprisoned in time and space, to escape from my imprisonment, when I know that outside space and time lies Nothing, and that I, in the ultimate depths of my reality, am Nothing also?

How far removed that is from the Christian view that we have been made in the image of God, that God has placed eternity in our hearts, that God has given His own Son to redeem us from our sin and has prepared for us a place in Paradise forever and ever. We have a glorious calling in this life "to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever," and to be co-workers of Christ in the redemption of the world. Life has meaning and life has purpose. Life has a glorious future, while none of the godless worldviews offer *anything* but despair at the end.

The director of the British Humanist Association (Note well. This is not some Christian minister's opinion. This is the opinion of one of the world's leaders of the humanist movement.), H. J. Blackham, said that "the most drastic objection to humanism . . ." is what? I would love to ask a bunch of college students that question, wouldn't you? Remember the glorious picture of what humanism was going to produce over against the "rotting corpse of Christianity"—the new, the glorious, the vibrant picture of humanism was to captivate the minds of people. Well, here's what one of the world's leading humanist says: "The most drastic objection to humanism is that it is too bad to be true." Wow!

Bertrand Russell summed that up very eloquently when he said:

That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving [evolution]; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all of the labour of the ages, all of the devotion, all of the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, and on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.

There, my friend, is the world and life view of the world. It's not a pretty sight, to say the least. The most powerful objection against humanism, says the humanist, is that it is just too bad to be true.

THE TRUTH OF GOD

I have heard an objection many times when I have proclaimed the Gospel; people have said to me, "Oh, that's just too good to be true." What a marvelous contrast that is to "Too bad to be true." But *mirabile dictu*, marvelous to tell, the Gospel, as glorious and wonderful as it is, *is* true. It is truth itself. It is the truth of God. It has been established by all matter of empirical evidences, and it stands against all of the onslaughts of unbelievers.

What is your worldview, my friend? Have you embraced Christ? Have you invited Him into your heart as Lord and Savior of your life? Do you know why you are here and what you are to do and where you are going? Do you have an everlasting certainty and hope in your heart of Paradise, or are you looking at nothing but the darkness of the grave? The Christian world and life view is glorious beyond our full understanding. I hope it is yours.

PRAYER: Father, we thank Thee that what seems to many too good to be true, *is*, and it is the most glorious truth that this world has ever known. It is the good news of everlasting life to the sons of Adam, made by Christ unto the children of God. O Lord Jesus, should there be any here who are yet in the wastelands of humanistic unbelief, may they have their eyes opened and see Thee in all of Thy glory and love upon the cross, and may they say: "Come, Lord Jesus Christ. Deliver me from this darkness and despair and grant me the glorious and brilliant hope of everlasting life with Thee. I surrender myself to Thee. I repent of my sins. I confess my unworthiness, and I cast my self upon Thee. 'Nothing in my hands I bring/Simply to Thy cross I cling.'" In Thy name. Amen.

Sermon delivered by Dr. D. James Kennedy on May 18, 2003, at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

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